



Updates from the District Office

December 11, 2020

Dear BSCSD Parents and Caregivers: Before we get to this week's seven updates, on behalf of our entire BSCSD Team, I send *a very Happy Hanukah* to our families, partners, and community members who celebrate.

1. **Yellow Zone Testing and Consent to Test Update** – As of today, Friday, December 11, we are still not in a designated zone based on the regional metrics that the state is using under the Micro-Cluster Initiative. On a call with the new Saratoga County Commission of Public Health Services this morning, he noted that they do not have the information that will tell us when we might be designated as that information comes from the state-level. So you are aware, since our reopening, the District has had a total of 29 positive cases in students and adults which, although very low (less than 1% of our in-person attendance on any given day), continues to challenge us by the number of individuals who are then placed in quarantine as a result of these cases as well as the cases in the community and cases in the larger region. We will continue to closely monitor these numbers as we get ever-closer to our holiday recess.
2. **Continuing our Instructional Model Rolling Appeals Process** – In our last update I noted that it was our intention to continue this practice for requesting a change from in-person to remote learning or remote learning to in-person learning as we moved closer to our December 18 decision date noted in prior communications. We can now confirm that this process will remain in place. Each such appeal goes through a multi-step process and we are grateful to our parents, transportation staff, principals, and teaching staff for working together to maintain as much flexibility as possible as we keep our focus on teaching and learning.
3. **Revision #9 to our Reopening Plan** – As the changes to guidance and associated requirements from the state continues, we in turn continue to update our Reopening Plan and are now on Revision #9 which can be found on our [School Reopening Resource Page](#). As you review this plan, please do not hesitate to send us any questions you have by emailing us at schoolopening@bscsd.org.

4. **Winter Sports Opportunities** –

- a. *Low-risk sports* – At the November 18 Board of Education meeting, the Board approved our recommendation to allow low-risk sports which includes bowling, Alpine skiing, and boys swimming and diving for varsity and modified levels. However, this week, Section 2 made the decision to move Modified Swimming to the “Fall 2” season which is scheduled to start on March 1st.
- b. *Moderate-risk sports* – As noted in previous *Updates* and in Board of Education presentations, there is still no decision on Indoor Track and there is still no location at which to hold events nor is there a schedule in place for the season.
- c. *High-risk sports* – Today, the NYS Public High School Athletic Association announced that high-risk winter sports which were slated to start on January 4 have been postponed until such time as the NYS Department of Health provides authorization for these sports to begin.

For additional information, please see the [Winter Athletics Program DRAFT Plan](#). For news on our fall sports season and the fantastic accomplishments of our student athletes, please see the story [HERE](#).

5. **Computer-based Testing for Grades 3-8** – At this time, the NYS Department of Education is preparing for 3-8 ELA and Math Assessments this spring. As we have done in the past two years, we will be providing the students with a testing simulation in January that will also allow the state to test the system so as to minimize disruptions and interruptions on the days of actual testing. More information on the January Testing Simulation will be shared in the coming week from your child’s building principal.

6. **District Wellness Policy** – At the November 4, 2020 Board of Education meeting, the Board adopted a new [District Wellness Policy](#). This policy has been updated and it prioritizes a number of areas related to health and wellness including Social and Emotional School Climate and Mental Health and Counseling. Please review this policy and let us know if you have any questions. In the coming year, the District’s Wellness Committee will convene to begin to address a number of critical issues that impact student and staff health and wellness which in turn, impact successful teaching and learning. In addition, the new policy also addresses a key area related to student nutrition - Classroom Parties/Celebrations. The policy states,

The BSCSD encourages and prefers the use of non-food items at classroom parties and celebrations. If food is going to be served, staff must arrange for it to be purchased by the parent/caregiver from and/or prepared by the [District’s] food service company. No outside food or drink is permitted at classroom celebrations, including birthday and holiday celebrations.

As this is the time of year where we like to send in holiday snacks to our students and staff, please be aware that this policy no longer allows for that so as to better ensure the health and safety of those students and staff who have food allergies.

7. **Board meetings** – On December 3rd Governor Cuomo again extended [Executive Order 202.1](#) which allows for Board of Education meetings to be held remotely so long as the community has the ability to view or listen to any such meeting. With this authorization, the regular meeting of the Board of Education which will be held on Wednesday, December 16 will be held remotely. Members of the community may watch and/or listen to this meeting and send in public comments as detailed [HERE](#).

Thanks very much for your time and ongoing support. We truly appreciate it. Be well.

Ken

Ken Slentz
Superintendent of Schools
Ballston Spa Central Schools