



Updates from the District Office

December 15, 2020

Dear BSCSD Parents and Caregivers: **Four** updates/reminders for you as we move through the final full week of instruction of 2020 and see the possibility of the first real snow event of the year:

1. **Snow Days in the 2020-2021 School Year** – In the October 27 Updates, I presented the following information:
 - a. **Weather-related Delay** – on those mornings where we and our town highway departments need a bit more time to clear our campuses and our roads,
 - i. Students in grades 6-12 will be fully remote and will follow their regular schedule for the day and attendance will be taken.
 - ii. Students in grades K-5 will be on a 1-hour delay for both remote and in-person learning and attendance will be taken.
 - b. **Weather-related Closure** – While full closure will remain an option,
 - i. **Advanced Notice** – on those days where the weather is such that we are able to announce a closure the day/evening before, we may utilize a fully remote, **synchronous** (*students are learning with the teacher via Google Meet*) schedule depending on whether power is available in all parts of the District. Students would attend according to the regular schedule for the day and attendance will be taken.
 - ii. **“Morning of” Notice** – on days where we have to make the call by 6:00am, we may utilize a fully remote, **asynchronous** (*students learn independently without the teacher using assignments on Schoology*) schedule depending on whether power is available in all parts of the District. Additional details will be forthcoming on this option.

Our closure announcement on TV, the website, and School Messenger would include this information as well as BOCES, ECHS P-TECH and Parochial School information. We will also be sure to note the difference between school closure and District closure so as to be clear regarding who must be on our campuses that day.

This information was based on a [State Education Department Remote Snow Day Pilot](#) project that was announced in September. The intent of the project is to allow Districts the option of utilizing remote instruction on typical snow days so as to maximize instructional time during the school year; time that may otherwise be lost based on COVID-related restrictions, schedules, and adjustments. On December 1 the State Education Department issued clarification in that if a district is to utilize this pilot project, they “*must continue to provide transportation and other required services to charter and nonpublic schools on such days if such schools remain open.*” This somewhat defeats the

purpose of calling a snow day as we would then be required to put students and staff on roads that we have already determined to be unsafe. With this in mind, while we still *may* utilize remote learning on snow days, it will only be in cases where all of the seven non-public schools that we send students to are also closed.

2. **Yellow Zone Designation and Testing** – As of the Governor’s latest announcements on Monday, December 14, we are not in a designated zone under the state’s [COVID-19 Micro-Cluster Strategy](#) that would require testing of in-person students and staff. In addition, since we have enough consent from parents and staff members to conduct such tests if and when they are needed, we have removed this portion of the morning Pinpoint screening questions. Should we receive a designation in the coming weeks and months, we may reinstate the consent registration and will provide additional details at that time.
3. **New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Festivals** – All NYSSMA festivals are being held virtually with video recording submissions this year. The March piano festival has been moved to early February this year with submissions occurring between 2/2-2/5. The **piano** registration deadline is **Friday, January 8, 2021**. A registration fee and **form** must be received by BSCSD Music Coordinator Mr. Retersdorf by Friday, December 18 deadline or students will not be able to participate in the piano festival. Students who study with a teacher outside of the district must register through their home school district. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Mr. Retersdorf at Bretersdorf@bscsd.org or by phone 518-884-7150 x2316. We are excited for this opportunity for our students and wish them all the best of luck.
4. **Community Emergency Services Donates Bleeding Control Kits to Schools** – The Ballston Spa Community Emergency Corporation recently donated Bleeding Control Kits for the district’s six schools and also provided a kit for the St. Mary’s School. The partnership between the District, the Community Emergency Corporation, and the Saratoga County Sheriff’s Office continues to benefit our students and staff in our focus on maintaining a safe, secure, and welcoming environment in our schools. While we hope that our student support network, practice drills, “See Something Say Something” approach, and our overall planning will help us avoid traumatic situations, building a skill set in our students and providing our staff with the tools to react quickly to such a situation gives us that much more confidence in our readiness if one were to occur. Simply put, this donation can help save lives. Thank you to School Resource Officer Deputy Jonathan Becker who coordinated the donation. Additional information is posted on the website news – [HERE](#).

Should you have any questions about this information, please do not hesitate to let us know at schoolopening@bscsd.org.

Thanks very much.

Ken

Ken Slentz

Superintendent of Schools