



Updates from the District Office

November 16, 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers –

In our recent change to our communications protocols, we had committed to sending any “new” information from the District Office on Friday’s. However, based on recent questions, new information from the state, and questions posed, we wanted to send an update today due to the timeliness of the information. For this version of the *Updates*, there are seven important items for your attention.

1. **CLARIFICATION - School Instructional Model Appeals Timeline** – A few of you have asked about the December 18 date for our next review of the appeals process as discussed in my last two *Updates*. To be clear, this is the date by which we will determine whether the rolling appeals process is indeed working and manageable or if we will instead have to return to a set date that parents will need to commit by. *This requires no action from parents at this point* as our rolling appeals are underway and being utilized by a number of you. Should we determine by or on December 18 that our process needs to be revised, I will update you at that time.
2. **Instructional Model and Transportation Appeals** – To allow us and our Transportation Department to better track the requests for changes on our buses, we are introducing a new form that will be utilized when requesting a change from remote learning to in-person or from parent/caregiver provided transportation to District transportation. If you are currently providing transportation to your child(ren) but now need them to ride the bus, please contact the Transportation Department at transportationrequest@bscsd.org to request the new form. Because of space restrictions as set by the NYS DOH requirements, we may not be able to immediately accommodate the request, but you will be put on a waitlist and contacted once an opportunity becomes available. If you wish to appeal for a change in learning model for your child(ren) *and* will need transportation, please contact your child’s building principal and they will provide you with the necessary forms.
3. **Testing and Tracing for UPDATE: New York State Cluster Action Initiative** – Over the course of the last several weeks, NYS has been detailing the Cluster Action Initiative that is intended to contain any outbreaks of the COVID-19 virus. If our region were to be designated as a “yellow zone” under this initiative, the [Department of Health](#) requires that

schools who wish to remain open either “*test 20% of in-person students, faculty and staff over the two-week period immediately following the announcement of a yellow zone designation. If the results of the testing reveal that the positivity rate among the 20% of those tested is lower than the yellow zone’s current 7-day positivity rate, testing at that school will no longer be required to continue*”, or go fully remote. We are currently working with our District Physician to see if it is possible to partner with a medical firm who can provide the testing necessary for us to meet the 20% requirement. If we are able to identify one, we will then follow up with parents and staff seeking permission/agreement to be tested in such a scenario. If neither of these things are true, we would have to go fully remote. I will continue to update you on our progress in this regard. **Again this is being done *in case* we were to become a designated yellow zone which is currently not the case.**

4. **Notification About Positive Tests** – In any instance where we have a COVID-positive case in a student, staff member that will impact the health, safety, or operations of the schools, we will communicate directly with you. Whenever possible, **we will send these communications prior to 9:00pm using the text, call, and email** features of our School Messenger system. For anything after 9:00pm, we will communicate with you first thing the next morning.
5. **Winter Sports Opportunities** – At the November 4 Board of Education meeting, we presented the Board with the status of winter sports where we proposed to offer low-risk sports (bowling, Alpine skiing, and boys swimming and diving) and, should the state allow for competition in them, high-risk sports (girls and boys varsity basketball, boys hockey, and cheer/dance) in the upcoming season. Since that time, the state has moved the start of winter sports from November 30 to December 14 and has still not made a determination as to whether high-risk sports will be allowed to start. We will update the Board again this week and will continue to keep you posted.
6. **NYS Education Department (NYSED) Digital Equity Survey** – In June 2020, NYSED released a Digital Equity Survey that asked schools to provide data on computing devices and broadband access in students’ and teachers’ locations of residence. While responses were not received from all schools, the data show that the digital divide is a very real and significant concern in our state. As many districts and schools are operating in either a fully remote or hybrid instructional model for at least a portion of their students in the 2020-21 school year, access to dedicated computing devices and sufficient, reliable high-speed internet in students’ and teachers’ places of residence continues to be a significant need. To better serve students, families, and educators, it is imperative that NYSED has, and maintains, an updated, accurate, complete picture of the state of digital equity for New York students and teachers. As such, NYSED is re-issuing the Digital Equity survey

and we are asking for parents, teachers, and administrators to [complete this survey](#) by Monday, November 30 so that we can share the results with NYSED thereafter. We anticipate this will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. We are not surveying students at this time, but do anticipate doing so at a later date. Thank you!

7. **Passing Stopped School Buses** – Please remember that when a school bus has its red lights on, it is illegal to pass it from either direction, even on a divided highway! Our transportation staff tells us that this happened a number of times on Route 9 in particular. Currently, the District is piloting a new stop arm system that is even brighter than past models in hopes of reminding drivers to follow [these rules](#) and to avoid the tragedy that all too often results from not doing so.

Should you have any questions about this information, please do not hesitate to let us know via our school opening email box at schoolopening@bscsd.org.

Our continued thanks for your ongoing support!

Ken

Ken Slentz
Superintendent of Schools