

Updates from the District Office

January 25, 2021

Dear BSCSD Parents and Caregivers: A few updates for your attention today

1. **Snow Days Update** – In the [October 27 Updates](#), I noted that we *may* utilize remote learning options on snow days depending on the situation of the day as we were uncertain how the year would go and needed as much flexibility as possible. As we are at the midpoint in the year now and have a better sense of our operating rhythms, ***we will not be using the remote option in the remaining three snow days that we have available to us*** should we need to use them. However, if we do use all three and need a 4th snow day, we would then have to utilize the remote option so as to maintain the state required 180 days of instruction that I discussed in my message to you on [December 16](#).
2. **Tracking Positive Cases of COVID in our Schools** – Because the number of positive cases in the district had been increasing prior to and during the holidays, I had noted to you in previous updates that I would only be reporting those cases that had an operational impact on us (e.g., required a classroom or school to be closed). As an example, today we have been informed of four students testing positive, with one each from Milton Terrace, Malta Avenue, the Middle School, and the High School. Because we have been fully remote and these students were not in school today, there is no impact on our ability to keep school open.

That said, some of you contacted me and asked if it was possible to still see those numbers regardless of impact so as to make decisions about whether to keep your child in-person or, perhaps, shift them to remote learning. As a result and as noted to you in the [January 25 Updates](#), we have added a [new section](#) to our Health Services webpage where we will post a weekly running total of positive cases for students and adults in each of our buildings and in our transportation department. Thanks again to those who suggested this. We hope it is helpful.

3. **Impact of Mandatory Quarantines** – Each week we continue to have a number of students and staff in mandatory quarantine to exposure to a positive case. The vast majority of these exposures have been happening outside of school which, given our closure over the last two weeks, only makes sense. That said, over the weekend we had 29 students quarantine as a result of two positive case exposures. This is but the latest example of this and is what puts us at risk of having to move back to a remote setting. Please continue to diligently practice [all social distancing and hygiene precautions](#) so as to allow us to stay open. This will be particularly important in the upcoming February break given the mandatory [quarantining rules in place by the state](#). We are desperately hoping that we can avoid a repeat of the post-holiday closures that we and a number of districts in the region experienced, particularly given the possibility of sports options being expanded effective February 1, 2021.

4. **Winter Sports Season Update** – Last Friday, January 22, the New York State Department of Health released guidelines which allow for winter season high-risk sports (in addition to low and moderate-risk sports being already allowed) to begin on February 1, 2021 *if the local county health department approves this*. If the County Health Department approves, then each individual school district must determine whether they will allow those sports or a subset thereof to be played. If a district chooses to allow sports to proceed, additional decisions have to be made as to whether they will allow limited spectators, for example (if spectators are to be allowed, [NYS Department of Health rules](#) (see page 5) only allow two per student athlete). *As of this writing, no decision has been made yet by the Saratoga County Department of Health as they too received this new information late on Friday.*

As we await their decision, a number of meetings were held yesterday and today with Section 2 officials, regional athletic directors, and superintendents with additional meetings coming on Tuesday in an effort to answer a number of outstanding questions. Once we have these answers, we will then meet with the Board of Education in a special meeting to present the details and our recommendation which will be based on information noted above. Please be patient with us as we go through this process. We are acting as quickly as the information allows while also keeping the health and safety of all students and staff at the forefront of our minds so that our instructional program can continue.

5. **Reporting of Cases** – Please continue to use our COVIDreport@bscsd.org mailbox to report positive cases and quarantining to us. While the county is working hard to make the needed adjustments for timely reporting to us, they are not always able to do so and thus we need your help. Please contact us as soon as you are aware of your situation.

Should you have any questions regarding this information, please let us know by sending an email to schoolopening@bscsd.org.

Thanks very much. Stay warm!!

Ken Slentz
Superintendent of Schools