



Updates from the District Office

August 24, 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

As we quickly near the opening of school for remote learning on September 14 and in-person learning on October 5, I wanted to provide you with some important, pertinent information as well as important dates:

1. **August 17 Training Update and Impact** – As I recently noted in an update to you last week, one of our staff members tested positive for the COVID-19 virus after having participated in one of our trainings in our high school cafeteria. I also noted that temperatures were taken of those people who were in attendance. After further review of the information, temperatures were in fact not taken during this training and I apologize for any confusion this may have caused. It was certainly not my intention to provide any inaccurate information. Based on our overall review of this and of other meetings that have been held this summer, we will begin implementing the same health and safety protocol for all essential meetings and in-person trainings over the next few weeks that we will utilize during the school year and staff have been notified accordingly.
2. **Plans for Testing and Tracing** – Related to the positive case identification, we received a number of questions about what we will do in such cases if we experience them this fall. Our protocols are included in our draft plans which are posted on the School Reopening Information section of our website which can be found at <https://www.bsccd.org/Page/13199>. We will continue to revise and report these plans as we receive additional information from the county and state.
3. **Student Registration for fall** – One of the key steps for our October 5 opening for in-person learning is the registration process for the model of learning that our students will choose to participate in – remote or in-person. While the parent survey gave us a good indication that some 23% of our students will remain remote after we open, there were a number of other parents who were undecided and requested more information before making their decision. We now need to know exactly how many students will be

attending remotely, and how many will be attending in-person. To that end, this week we anticipate providing both additional information as well as the registration form for all students. Once we have the responses in hand, we can begin the work of building class schedules, assigning teachers, determining room availability, and assigning grade levels to buildings. Based on our revised model, we now anticipate that all grade levels will be able to remain in their current buildings and we will confirm this once we have the results of the student registration forms.

4. **Elementary Student Supplies List** – By Wednesday of this week, all elementary schools will have their information posted for student supplies for the year ahead. Should you have any questions, please contact the main office of your child's building.
5. **Fall Athletics** – As you may have seen in the news today, Governor Cuomo has approved limited fall sports to begin on September 21. There are a number of seeming contradictions to existing state level guidance and so the New York State Public High School Athletic Association will be meeting over the coming days to determine how they and the respective sections across the state will manage this. Once we have additional details we will share this with you.
6. **School District Finances** – We have received a few questions regarding what is happening with the tax dollars due to our three week delay for in-person learning. As I mentioned during one of the community forums this past week, the Governor's Division of the Budget (DOB) issued their latest fiscal update recently (see [FY 2021 First Quarterly State Budget Financial Plan Update](#) if interested – warning – it's a 403 page document!) in which it was stated that, because no additional Federal pandemic aid has been authorized, DOB began withholding 20 percent of most of our state aid payments in June, and that all or a portion of these withholdings would become permanent unless additional federal aid is received, and even then it depends on the amount of aid received. While we had made initial plans to help offset any potential reductions as noted in our budget communications, those plans had to quickly change based on our re-opening planning and the state requirements under which we have to operate. Specifically, we have had to hire additional staff and purchase additional equipment including PPE, cleaning materials and supplies, and cleaning equipment in order to manage our reopening plans. The combination of additional expenditures and decreasing revenue has left us with little to no remaining flexibility in our plans going into the fall and we continue to utilize the tax dollars accordingly. As we expect this situation to continue to evolve, we will continue to update the Board of Education at their upcoming meetings on this topic and I will include information in future updates as well.

Despite the many challenges that we face in our reopening planning, it is nonetheless very exciting for us to think about seeing our students on September 14 and to then begin an in-person transition on October 5. Virtual grade level meetings are taking place, orientations are being planned, Chromebook and materials pick up schedules are being built, and our planning teams continue refining the details of our reopening. So long as we all continue to do our part in managing the virus, I fully expect that I will be able to announce on September 18 that we will in fact be ready to go for in-person learning on October 5.

On behalf of our entire team, thanks so much for your understanding, support, and partnership as we continue through these uncharted times.

Thanks very much.

Ken

Ken Slentz
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Ballston Spa CSD