

# **Ballston Spa CSD DRAFT Reopening Plan Framework**

*Revised September 1, 2021*

*(Changes from August 18 Draft indicated in **RED**)*

## Summary of Changes Since August 18

- *Masking is required* in all school buildings at all times for students (including student athletes and spectators), staff, and visitors as required by the NYS Department of Health.
- *Vaccination rates* for students and staff continue to increase.
- *Instructional plans for students/staff in quarantine* are complete, but may change when quarantining rules are released from Saratoga Public Health.
- *Cafeteria plans* are complete, but may change as additional usable space is determined that will allow for increased physical distancing.
- *Band, Chorus, and Physical Education plans* are complete, but may change if additional guidance from the state is received.
- *Additional information* from NYS has been added to the Resources section.

## Background

This *Reopening Plan Framework* is built utilizing the guidance documents, **NYS requirements**, and information listed in the *Resources* section at the end of this presentation; guidance from the Saratoga County Public Health Services; conversations with and feedback from the BSCSD District Physician; conversations and planning with the WSWHE BOCES and Suburban Council school districts; input and communications from parents, caregivers, and staff that we continue to receive; and on the work of our BSCSD internal workgroups. Our Framework will continue to evolve based on conversations with those groups listed in the *Next Steps* section and any additional **requirements** from Saratoga County and/or New York State.

## Reopening Planning Measures

Many of the *Key Elements* of our *Framework* will depend on the status of the virus in our schools, in the community, and in the Saratoga County region. As the status of the virus may change during the year, any changes to our plans will be informed by the following **requirements and** measures:

1. **Requirements from NYS and Saratoga County – Regarding masking, quarantining, social distancing, and virus management strategies in general.**
2. County transmission rates (*Low, Moderate, Substantial, or High*) as determined by the CDC.
3. Daily averages of positive cases in Saratoga County as determined by the NYS Department of Health.
4. Vaccination rates for students, staff, and the community as determined by the District reporting portal and the NYS Department of Health Vaccination database.
5. Assessment of School Environment
  - Number of positive cases in classrooms and individual schools as determined by the BSCSD COVID Coordinator and Saratoga County Public Health Services.
  - Screening test results of students and staff if necessary/required (*parent permission required to test students*).
  - Student and staff absences due to quarantining/illness.

## Reopening Goal

*In-person learning for all students 5 days per week with minimal disruption.*

- The District will take proactive steps to meet this goal including:
  - **Maximizing vaccination** availability for students and staff.
  - **Minimizing quarantining** for students and staff by:
    - **Requiring masks** to be worn indoors at all times **per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021** except during designated mask breaks and while eating and drinking.
    - **Monitoring daily cases** in classrooms and buildings through staff and parent reporting.
    - **Conducting contact tracing** of positive cases as quickly as possible.
    - **Conducting screening tests** of students (*with parent permission*) and staff as warranted by our reopening planning measures.
  - **Encouraging students and staff who are not feeling well to stay home.**
  - **Monitoring the overall wellness** of students and staff.
  - **Encouraging handwashing** and/or hand sanitizing, and good sneezing/coughing etiquette.
  - **Maximizing ventilation** in school buildings and on buses.
  - **Frequently reevaluating** our plan based on new information and changes to our reopening planning measures.
  - **Continuously updating staff, parents, and the community** and requesting feedback on proposed changes to our plans.

## Quarantining/Closure Rules

**(DRAFT pending release of rules from SCPHS)**

- Student, staff, and class quarantining determinations are made by Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCPHS).
- If quarantining of students, staff, or a classroom or closure of a school is required by SCPHS, the District will utilize a combination of the following to maintain our quality of instruction:
  - Utilizing lessons on Schoology.
  - Utilizing a hybrid learning model (students in class and a student or students on Google Meet) and/or teacher teaching remotely (with class supervised by another staff member)
  - Providing additional tutoring for individual and small groups of students.
  - Shifting to a fully remote model *only* during the limited period of required classroom quarantine or closure.
- Specific details vary by grade level and duration of quarantine and will be communicated by teachers and/or building principals.

## Current Vaccination Status<sup>(1)</sup>

Group	First Dose	Fully Vaccinated
BSCSD Faculty and Staff <sup>(2)</sup>	87%	86%
BSCSD Students 12+	60%	53%
Ballston Spa Zip Code <sup>(3)</sup>	73.6%	69.3%
Ballston Lake Zip Code	82.4%	77.9%
Saratoga Springs Zip Code	75.8%	71.4%
Mechanicville Zip Code	68.3%	63.6%
Middle Grove Zip Code	62.5%	57.7%
Rock City Falls Zip Code	59.2%	54.7%
Saratoga County (12 years old and older) <sup>(4)</sup>	82.6%	77.6%

(1) As of August 31, 2021.

(2) BSCSD Faculty and Staff rate is based on self-reported data. Due to incomplete data, it is possible that this rate is higher.

(3) Information retrieved from <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/vaccination-rates-zip-code>

(4) Information retrieved from <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/e56ae5bf0064452fb7b6aa2933f79f8e> and <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations-county-view>

## Masking for Students, Staff, Visitors, and Spectators

- ***Always required***<sup>(1)</sup>
  - On our buses for students and staff per CDC order. (See *Resources* section.)
  - In school buildings **including for indoor sports (student athletes and spectators)** except during designated mask breaks or when eating or drinking **per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021.**
- ***Recommended but not required***:\*
  - **For students, staff, and spectators/visitors when outdoors and in close proximity to others.**
- ***No requirement***:\*
  - While students are outdoors (e.g., recess) so long as distancing can be maintained.
  - During **outdoor** athletic competitions (*pending decisions from Saratoga County Public Health, Section II, or the Suburban Council Athletic League*).

*\*Students may choose to wear masks at any time during the school day. By CDC “close contact exception”, students who are exposed to an infected student will not have to quarantine, regardless of vaccination status, so long as they are wearing a properly fitted mask during the time of exposure.*

(1) Any changes to this requirement must be made by the NYS Department of Health.

## Common Question – *What Happens if the District does not follow the State Requirement for masking?*

Under the emergency regulations developed by the NYS Department of Health<sup>(1)</sup>, the following language is included:

*(f) Penalties and enforcement.*

(i) A violation of any provision of this Section is subject to all civil and criminal penalties as provided for by law. ***Individuals or entities that violate this Section are subject to a maximum fine of \$1,000 for each violation.*** For purposes of civil penalties, each day that an entity operates in a manner inconsistent with the Section shall constitute a separate violation under this Section.

(ii) All local health officers shall take such steps as may be necessary to enforce the provisions of this Section accordance with the Public Health Law and this Title.

(1) Emergency Regulations Promulgated by the NYS Department of Health retrieved at [https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency\\_regulations/Face%20Coverings%20for%20COVID%2019%20Prevention.pdf](https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency_regulations/Face%20Coverings%20for%20COVID%2019%20Prevention.pdf)

## Key Elements based on **NYS**, CDC, and AAP Guidance<sup>(1)</sup>

- **Transportation** – In our current plan,
  - Masks are required on buses by federal order for students and staff.<sup>(2)</sup>
  - *Social distancing* is not required, but will be done where possible. **Students will have assigned seats.**
  - *Bus Schedule* will be the same as in pre-pandemic years with similar number of buses and runs.
  - *Student drop-off and pick up* by parents/caregivers are encouraged to lessen the number of students on our buses. **Instructional schedules will not change to accommodate transportation choices at each building.**
  - *Ventilation* will be maximized as weather allows (windows and vents open).
  - *Kindergarten students* will be oriented to our buses and the rules before school opens.
- **Entering School** – In our current plan,
  - *Masks* are to be worn at all times except during designated mask breaks or when eating or drinking **per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021**
  - *Social Distancing* of at least 3 feet will be maintained between students and 6 feet between staff and students wherever possible.

(1) See *Resources* section on slide 16. As research continues to emerge, we will adjust our plans as necessary in consultation with medical professionals.

(2) See <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/masks/mask-travel-guidance.html>

## Key Elements based on **NYS**, CDC, and AAP Guidance<sup>(1)</sup>

- **In School** – In our current plan,
  - **Masks are required in school buildings except when eating or drinking per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021. Mask breaks are TBD.**
  - Students and staff will be encouraged to *wash hands or sanitize often during the school day.*
  - *Staff in classrooms* will maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and students.
  - *Full-time Remote Learning* will not be an option. Program options for students who are homebound due to quarantining for **COVID-19** (as directed by Saratoga County Public Health) and other documented medical issues will be provided. (See Quarantine Slide.)
  - *Classroom setups* will look very similar to pre-pandemic rooms.<sup>(2)</sup> Additional details on science labs, group work, etc. will be addressed.

(1) Please see *Resources* section on slide 16. As research continues to emerge and/or additional requirements are issued by the New York State Department of Health, we will adjust our plans as necessary.

(2) Additional teachers have been hired to reduce class sizes at certain grades in K-5.

## Key Elements based on **NYS**, CDC, and AAP Guidance<sup>(1)</sup>

- **In School** – In our current plan,
  - *Schedules* will be the same/very similar to those in pre-pandemic years (e.g., 60 minute periods at high school).
  - *Hallway Locker Use* details for middle and high schools will be shared by building principals.
  - *Cafeteria/Lunch time* **details will vary by building as NYS will follow the CDC rule for flexibility.<sup>(2)</sup> Locations for breakfast and lunch will vary so as to maintain as much physical distancing as possible while students are eating.**
  - *Band, Chorus, and Physical Education* will require masking or distancing **per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021.**
  - *Symptomatic students and staff* will be sent home and may need to be tested for the virus before returning. This will be clarified once quarantining rules are in place.

(1) Please see *Resources* section on slide 16. As research continues to emerge and/or additional requirements are issued by the New York State Department of Health, we will adjust our plans as necessary.

(2) As clarified by the Governor's Office on August 28, 2021 referencing the CDC Guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html#physical-distancing> which states, in part, that "Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement."

## Key Elements based on **NYS**, CDC, and AAP Guidance<sup>(1)</sup>

- **After school Clubs and Athletics** – In our current plan,
  - *Meetings/games* will be the same/very similar to schedules in prior years.
  - **Masking is required for all indoor clubs and athletics except during designated mask breaks or when eating or drinking per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021.**
  - **Masking** will not be required for outdoor athletics (pending changes from the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Education Department, Saratoga County Public Health, Section II or the Suburban Council Athletic League).
  - **Screening Testing** for the COVID virus *may* be required (with parent permission) for student athletes in high-risk sports<sup>(1)</sup> who are not vaccinated as warranted by our reopening planning measures.
- **Visiting the Schools/Attending Events** – In our current plan,
  - *School Visitors* must wear masks at all times while in our buildings **per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021** and *may* be limited based on our Reopening Planning Measures.
  - *Spectators* at indoor athletic events and student performances must wear masks **per NYSDOH requirement issued on August 27, 2021.**

(1) Fall season high-risk sports as defined by NYS are Football and Volleyball.

## Monitoring the Overall Wellness of Students and Staff

- **Utilizing additional federal funds, the District has added:**
  - A 2<sup>nd</sup> school counselor at our Title I school (Wood Road Elementary).
  - The *Primary Project* school readiness program at Milton Terrace Elementary (currently in place at Wood Road Elementary).
  - Staffing including a social worker to support students and families enrolled in the Spa Academy program for certain students in grades 9-12.
  - Expanded counseling capacity at the high school.
  - A school-family liaison to support our homeless students and families (as defined by federal law).
  - Behavioral support coaches at the elementary and districtwide levels.
  - Additional support for K-12 students and families through *Parsons Family Services*.
- **The Office of Personnel Management and Development will continue to work to ensure staff have access to various employee assistance resources.**

## **Next Steps:**

- Continue refining planning with administrative council, Saratoga County School Districts, Saratoga County Public Health Office, and the School District Physician. (*Ongoing*)
- Meet with union leadership groups to review Framework and get feedback. (*Ongoing*)
- Meet with Suburban Council School Districts to review options. (*Ongoing*)
- ~~Survey BSCSD parents and caregivers on revised framework for feedback. (August 6)~~
- ~~Present revised Framework to the Board of Education. (August 18)~~
- ~~Video meeting with the community with a Q and A video on the current Framework. (August 19)~~
- ~~Finalize cafeteria and quarantining plans. (Week of August 23)~~
- Meeting with BSCSD staff to review revised Framework and get feedback. (Week of August 30)
- Final Reopening Plan presented to the Board of Education. (September 1)
- Communicate changes to plans to all groups above. (*Ongoing*)

***Welcome all students, faculty, and staff to school on  
Wednesday, September 8!!***

## Resources:

- *Your Guide to Masks* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>
- ***NYS Department of Health Commissioner's Determination on Indoor Masking***  
[https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/08/2.61\\_determination\\_0.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/08/2.61_determination_0.pdf)
- ***Emergency Regulations Promulgated by the NYS Department of Health retrieved at***  
[https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency\\_regulations/Face%20Coverings%20for%20COVID%2019%20Prevention.pdf](https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency_regulations/Face%20Coverings%20for%20COVID%2019%20Prevention.pdf)
- *NYS Centers for Disease Control Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- *Centers for Disease Control Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People*  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
- *Centers for Disease Control Appendices* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>
- *CDC Order for Masks on Buses* <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/masks/mask-travel-guidance.html>
- *American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools* <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- *NYS Education Department Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year* <http://www.nysed.gov/back-school/health-and-safety-guide-2021-2022-school-year>
- *Statement from New York State Department of Health Commissioner* <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/statement-new-york-state-department-health-commissioner-dr-howard-zucker>
- *NYS Department of Health Vaccination Tracker by Zip Code* <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/vaccination-rates-zip-code>
- *NYS Department of Health Percent Positive Tracker* <https://forward.ny.gov/percentage-positive-results-county-dashboard>
- *NYS Department of Health Progress on Combating COVID-19* <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-updates-new-yorkers-states-progress-combating-covid-19-1>
- *Centers for Disease Control Community Transmission Rate* <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- *Saratoga County Public Health Positive Case Tracker* [insert link once live]
- *BSCSD Coping with COVID Resources* <https://www.bsccd.org/Page/13113>