



December 6, 2021

Dear BCSD Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. I know that we are all excited that our schools are open and that events are taking place bringing our community together to celebrate our students. I also know that many are growing increasingly concerned about recent spikes in COVID positivity rates in our region. I thought it appropriate to reach out to our school community with some updates, thoughts and a request.

Here is what we know:

- I was on a call with Westchester County Executive George Latimer, his County leadership team, and the Westchester Superintendents this morning. Mr. Latimer shared the latest statistics, including concerning evidence of rising numbers of positive cases in Westchester over the last two weeks. He shared that the current infection rate as of today is 3.3% in Westchester, which is higher than the 2% rate of two weeks ago.
- Here in the BCSD, we are also seeing spikes in positive cases. There could be multiple reasons for these spikes. We are now at the time when we are seeing an increase in cases due to exposures related to the Thanksgiving holiday break. Colder weather means more time indoors. And, there are new variants that are raising concern.
- We are continuing to participate in the testing program with Westchester County, though this is due to expire with the upcoming Christmas break. The County is exploring means to continue this testing beyond that point. The Superintendents have asked for the possibility of at least supporting additional “gateway” testing for a few weeks in January due to the potential of increased exposure due to holiday celebrations, family and friend gatherings, and travel.
- Since vaccines became available to 5-11 year olds, we know that many of our families have had their younger children receive their first vaccine. We are still slated to hold vaccine clinics for 5-11 year olds in mid-January, with registration information from Westchester County coming soon.
- We are still better equipped to limit the number of those needing to quarantine based on strict adherence to masking and social distancing in school and on buses.

Here is a request of us all:

We are experiencing an increase in cases and then learning that the individuals who tested positive were experiencing symptoms for several days before getting tests and, in some instances, even attending school while ill. **PLEASE, students and staff, stay home if you are ill! If you are ill, or someone in your household tests positive, you are expected to stay home until you are cleared to return.** We have had several recent quarantines that could have been prevented or the numbers impacted reduced, had the family kept their children home or the staff member stayed out while addressing possible symptoms.

I've said it before and it is worth repeating: **We are not giving out awards for perfect attendance.** Keeping us all safe means greater attention to how we feel and vigilance about getting ourselves checked out before risking exposure to others.

This weekend and today we became aware of the following positive cases:

FLHS - one student
FLHS - staff member
PRES - staff member

Those individuals potentially exposed to these individuals have been notified separately.

Stay well.

BCSD Strong! BCSD Stronger Together!

Joel Adelberg, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools