



July 28, 2020

Dear BCSD Parents and Guardians,

I hope you and your families are well.

I want to take this opportunity to provide some updates on planning for September. As we all know, information changes almost every hour and as a result we are developing a number of plans with the knowledge and expectation that we could find ourselves having to pivot or change at a moment's notice.

This week, the New York State Department of Education is requiring every school district to submit **three** plans for delivery of school services for the fall: **in-person, hybrid, remote**. In previous letters, I've described the definition of each of these plans as they are being used by policy makers and communities throughout the country, though local districts are able to define the parameters for each of these to match the needs of their local communities and taking into account the district's ability to ensure the best possible educational program while protecting the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff.

I know that there is a lot of information out there, in the press, through parent-generated social media platforms, and coming out of a number of task force meetings that members of our community have participated in during the last few weeks. I want to offer some clarity about where we are and exactly what you can expect to receive from us in the coming days and weeks.

Next week, we will have, on our website, a link to our "plan" for September. What you will see will include the following:

- At this time, we anticipate opening plans for September in a hybrid format for grades 3-12.
- At this time, we are looking at the possibility of bringing back our youngest students, K-2, full-time, as well as students, K-12, in our self-contained Special Ed classes.
- Our hybrid model will mean that we are teaching 50% of our students, in-person, all five days each week. Students will have a defined schedule, assigned by alphabet, that will have them attending school 2 days one week and 3 days the next week.
- Schools will provide in-person instruction with each school operating at 50% student capacity. Classrooms will be retrofitted to accommodate 50% of the students in each class. Desks will be spread out to accommodate 6 ft social distancing between students and between the students and their teachers. Elementary students will remain in their classrooms for the day, including lunch and specials. Secondary students will travel between classes, with staggered passing times, directions for movement through the corridors, and an expectation that students will assist in keeping surfaces sanitized as they exit and enter each classroom.
- Our schools, classrooms, and offices will receive appropriate deep cleaning and sanitizing every afternoon and evening.

- At this time, we will not be offering after school activities. This will allow us to sanitize and clean our classrooms and schools for opening the next day.
- On days when students are learning from home, they will follow a defined schedule as if they were in school.

The plan you receive next week will include the following **assurances**, per New York State:

- Each school and/or district reopening plan includes an educational program that is aligned to the New York State Learning Standard regardless if instruction is delivered in-person, remotely, or in a hybrid manner.
- Each school and/or district reopening plan provides for a program that includes regular substantive interaction between teachers and students whether delivered in-person, remotely or through a hybrid model of instruction.
- Equity must be at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction should be developed so that whether delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to all students. Such opportunities must be aligned with State standards and include routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers.
- Each school and/or district reopening plan, whether services are provided in-person, remote, and/or through a hybrid model, addresses the provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services.
- Each school and/or district reopening plan must ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modification, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

Many more details are still being developed. You'll note that I used the term, "at this time" in many of the bulleted particulars above. I did this on purpose. We anticipate changing and adapting our plans as circumstances demand or permit. While starting on a hybrid model, for instance, our hope, pending favorable data, is that early in the school year we might be able to move to a full in-person model for more of our students and staff.

Our principals will continue to reach out in their August mailings, outlining how they have worked with us to prepare our schools for a safe reopening in any of these three formats. Our transportation office is working with our bus company to assure all necessary standards, including appropriate safe seating and distancing, and the requirement that all students wear masks.

We will be sending information in August about how we will be asking families to "screen" students prior to arriving at school each day, the requirement that students and staff wear masks while at school, and how we will ensure social distancing rules and protocols. We are ordering signage for our buildings, and incorporating age-appropriate lessons on proper health, safety and hygiene.

I write today to assure you that we are preparing for our opening, in any of three formats, with due diligence. We know you are anxious to know the plan and you will receive these next week, knowing that they might still change from early August to early September and even after we return.

While we can create plans for opening, **I understand that each family will have to make a decision that is most comfortable for them regarding sending their children back to school.** We had large participation from Bedford in the 14 district collaborative Thoughtexchange. When asked about your readiness and comfort regarding returning to school, there were a significant number of families, in Bedford and throughout the region, who stated that they were not yet comfortable making that choice.

We will be sending a questionnaire to all families later this week to assist our planning process. We will ask you how you feel about sending your children to school at this time or if you would prefer to begin the year in a remote format. Should you prefer to send your children to school in an in-person or hybrid model, we will ask if you plan to drive or if you will require bussing. We will ask you to identify yourself and your child's grade level and school to help us plan further. We will ask you to complete one questionnaire for each child. We know that these are difficult questions to answer and that we anticipate a range of responses. Please know that we will make every effort to best accommodate all of our families as you are most comfortable starting a new school year, one like we have never experienced before. Look for this questionnaire later this week and please respond to it ASAP.

Finally, please know that we are committed to teaching our students five days a week, regardless of the model. We are committed to meeting all State standards and even surpassing these with high expectations for students and staff. We remain committed, as we always have been, to focusing on Social and Emotional learning as well as aspiring to meet the highest academic standards for all of our students.

Stay well, and stay informed.

Sincerely,

Joel Adelberg

