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September 1, 2020

Dear BCSD Community,

Welcome Back to the 2020-2021 School Year!

I know that starting a letter with a Welcome Back might make some wonder given this day and these times. While recognizing the challenges of the moment upon which we return to school, I remain hopeful and optimistic that we are well poised to make this a meaningful return and a powerful year for all of our students. Whether returning to school next week in-person, hybrid, or remote, our staff is getting ready to greet our students with the commitment to engagement and connection that I believe speak to what we always expect of a BCSD educational experience.

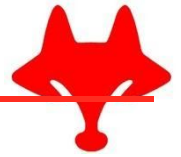
What our students will experience will be different than previous September openings. If returning in person or hybrid, classes will be small, as we have had to construct our classrooms to accommodate appropriate social distancing between students and between students and their teachers. If remote, students will follow a defined daily schedule, as distributed by our building leaders, with opportunities to engage with their teachers, to participate in streamed lessons, and to work independently and in small groups. Days will be full, regardless of the model selected. Our district website and materials sent by each school provide the important information parents and students will need to understand what a day will look like in each of these models. All students will learn with technology and we are preparing to distribute laptops to those students who do not have them in the event that we ever have to pivot to a full remote model. If we do go all remote, we will be much more prepared than last March.

Each of our schools have already sent or will be sending shortly their welcome back letters including important information on arrival and dismissal, what to bring to school, lunch procedures, and the many other important and necessary steps families will be asked to follow to make sure that our students and staff are safe at all times as we continue to respond to the challenges of COVID-19.

Shortly, families will receive information on how to use our new app which will serve as our screening tool each morning. Families will be asked to screen each student at home before arriving at school. There will be some simple questions about possible exposure to COVID-19, as well as identifying potential symptoms. Your agreement to complete the screener will support our efforts to safely and efficiently allow students to enter our buildings in the morning. We ask that you make completing the screener a regular part of each day. Please know that repeated failure to complete the screener will result in our asking that students learn remotely.

Students should always come to school with a mask. We will have masks available for those who forget, but it is important that students not leave home without a mask. I also suggest students carry an extra mask in their backpacks for added security.

If students are ill, please keep them home. The days of celebrating “perfect attendance” have passed as we continue to educate students during a pandemic. A day or two at home is safer than potential exposure to others.



Our website has an important statement of New York State policy regarding travel restrictions for those who visit states with higher levels of COVID-19 cases and the requirement that those who travel to these states observe a 14 day quarantine period. We recognize that some have made final summer trips and some have taken older siblings to college out of state. Please carefully review the policy and the list of states, and if your child has visited a state on the list, please observe the mandated quarantine.

Much as our families have had to carefully consider their own levels of comfort in selecting a model for the start of the school year, our staff members have also experienced the same concerns regarding a safe return to our schools and to the schools that serve many of their own families. We are fortunate to have a BCSD faculty and staff of the most committed individuals. They care deeply about our students and I take great pride in leading their work each day. Please know, however, that while we learned a lot from our experiences last spring, and I am sure you and your children will experience significant changes in organization of learning time and days, in instructional methods and assessments, and in technology, much of what we are doing this September is still very new. Teachers will be teaching students in their classrooms while also teaching students at home. Please be patient and be our partners as we manage education for our students in ways we have never been asked to deliver before. This will continue to be a time of new learning for our students and for our staff.

As students and staff return, while much of our preparation is around academics, we are also focusing on Social and Emotional Learning and the mental health of all BCSD community members. All students will engage in daily check-ins with faculty and staff, kindergarten thru 12th grade. Students and staff will be learning strategies for identifying their feelings and knowing how to access support. Establishing meaningful relationships and connections matter now more than ever. We offer [these materials](#) to our parents and guardians that you might find helpful in supporting our students in the coming days, especially amidst the many challenges of these times.

Many are apprehensive about 2020 and especially about the opening of schools. This apprehension is, of course, understandable. I chose to remain optimistic. I am not ready to write off 2020! With a supportive community, the most dedicated staff, and the best students ever, I believe we are well positioned to give our return next week our best effort. I also believe that we will continue to learn from our experiences, identify mistakes, make corrections, and emerge stronger than ever before. We remain committed to our BCSD Core Values, Vision and Mission.

I wish all a Happy Labor Day Weekend and a healthy end to summer, as we mark the beginning of the 2020-2021 School Year.

Sincerely,

Joel Adelberg



**BEDFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
*Inspiring and Challenging Our Students*

