

# Reopening BCSD Elementary



March 4, 2021

# Thoughts about 21-22 School Year

We are planning for a full return to in-person school for the 21-22 school year.

The work we are doing now and over the summer will prepare us that return.

We will follow state regulations on remote instruction.

Our planning is focused on social/emotional support and academic support along with health and safety guidelines.

I do not know the answers on continued use of masks, vaccines for children, etc.

Much depends on the NY state guidelines this summer.

# New Plan for Elementary Students

Four days a week in-person instruction

Supporting all-remote instruction

9:30 start time stays the same to continue to accommodate remote learners

Remote Wednesdays are continuing as well to accommodate remote learners and some special programming

If parents want to change from in-person to remote or remote to in-person, they have a choice

Tentative start date is April 5 or 6, Kindergarten starts March 22

# What we will discuss

What is happening with remote students

Safety protocols/standards

Ventilation

Surveillance Testing

Distancing/use of shields

Timeline

# Why Now?

Levels of faculty and staff vaccinated are growing every week

Levels of positive COVID-19 cases are decreasing in the community

We have not seen spread of the virus in our in-person schooling the entire year

We have seen an increase of mental health concerns among our students

Families are struggling under the current model

NYTimes- March 2, 2021 “ Scientists and doctors who study infectious diseases in young children largely agreed in recent NY Times survey, that elementary students should be able to attend in-person school now. With safety measures like masking and opening windows, the benefits outweigh the risks, the majority of the 175 respondents said.”

# What is happening with all-remote students?

All-remote students will stay with their current teacher

We are hiring an additional full-time teacher at each elementary school to support the remote instructional program

All-remote students will have a morning session with their teacher every day, and then two-three additional instructional sessions with either their homeroom teacher or the remote support teacher. Some instructional sessions will be direct zoom instruction and some will be live-streamed. We are not expecting students to be in front of a screen all day.

Teachers and administrators will develop schedules for all-remote students in the next two-three weeks to share with parents.

# “Live Streaming” is and is not

It is not filming an elementary class all day

It is not filming the students in a class all day

It can be a way to check in with remote students

It can be a way to teach a mini-lesson or do a check in or share with all students together

We will set up meetings on Wednesdays for teachers with in-person and remote on Wednesdays for March and April to share and discuss

# Health and Safety Considerations/BCSD emphasis on safety

American Association of Pediatrics

Dutchess County Health

Air Quality and Ventilation

Voluntary Surveillance Testing

Social Distancing and Use of Barriers

**The Beacon City School District will be utilizing all recommended mitigation strategies to provide for a fuller return to in-person school.**

# American Association of Pediatrics- January 5, 2021

“Children absolutely need to return to in-school learning for their healthy development and wellbeing and so safety in schools and in communities must be a priority” Dr. Lee Savior Beers

# Memo from Dutchess County (February 22, 2021)

The CDC states that in communities with low or moderate rates of transmission, K-12 schools may open for full in-person instruction and should implement physical distancing of 6 feet or more to the greatest extent possible. Levels of community transmission are defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days and positive case rates for 7 days. Dutchess County tracks these important metrics and will provide both on our COVID-19 Community Impact Dashboard. School districts should reference our dashboard to monitor these indicators and take necessary mitigation steps based on the rate of transmission within our community.

**When transmission rates are low or moderate, it is appropriate to consider using a variety of risk mitigation strategies when 6 feet of social distancing is not possible or practicable. Some of these additional strategies may include:**

- Use of physical barriers (such as plexiglass);
- Increased ventilation and improved air filtration; and
- Surveillance testing programs.

Dutchess County continues to observe very low rates of disease transmission in school settings, which remains a testament to the success of the risk mitigation strategies that have been in place for many months. We look forward to our continued partnership to keep Dutchess County schools safe and open for in-person instruction.

# Air Quality and Ventilation

Joseph Allen from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health- “If we put in measures like universal masking, better ventilation- which can mean opening up the windows, using portable air cleaners with HEPA filters-we know this can reduce risk.”

MERV-13 filters were installed in our unit ventilators in September and replaced on schedule

We are adding portable HEPA filters to each elementary classroom and ultimately every classroom as well.

Spring means open windows

Universal masking like before

Outdoor tents and spaces

# Voluntary Surveillance Testing

We have the capacity to continue a COVID-19 rapid testing program with our current nursing staff.

We will test on Wednesdays about 30-50 individuals at a time.

Results will be reported to the community when we have reached 10% of the population.

# Use of Plastic Barriers and Desks and Social Distancing

Classes will be capped at 17 students. There may be a couple of exceptions to this based on larger classrooms. This is based on our analysis of square footage, use of desks, etc.

Class sizes will be between 11-17 students.

We will utilize plastic desk barriers in classrooms where we cannot achieve 6 feet distancing.

New York State Department of Health School guidelines from August, 2020. **“Specifically, appropriate social distancing means six feet of space in all directions between individuals or use of appropriate physical barriers between individuals.”**

We are replacing tables with desks in classrooms where this is necessary

We are estimating we will need to add barriers in 10-20 classrooms and achieve distancing in the remaining classes

We will have an individual plan for each classroom over the next four weeks once we know the numbers of students.

# Next Steps

Parents/families fill out change electronic change form if they want to change from all-remote instruction to in-person or in-person to all remote.

Students returning to in-person instruction may be with a different teacher or even a different school.

Changes to all-remote schedules will be developed over next two weeks

Each classroom will be evaluated for need for barriers and rearranged furniture

HEPA filters will be in place by Spring Break

More communication and updates on secondary schools

We will continue to work with the health department as we do this effort for the rest of this year.

Email me questions

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