



BERGEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS / SPECIAL SERVICES

District Administrative Office

540 Farview Avenue, Paramus, New Jersey 07652-2915 • Tel. (201) 343-6000 ext. 4069 • Fax (201) 996-7249 • email: howler@bergen.org

Howard Lerner, Ed.D.
Superintendent

BCSS Educational Update 08/03/2020

Dear BCSS School Community,

With four weeks remaining before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, I am writing to provide you an update on our plans for reopening schools in the fall. While many aspects of school life will look different, our primary goal is to have the students and staff return safely this coming school year and to adapt as necessary to meet the current circumstances.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released state [guidelines](#) for reopening schools on June 26. These guidelines provided several mandates and gave districts the ability to develop their own plans. The BCSS Restart & Recovery Plan strictly adheres to the guidance received from the NJ DOE in The Road Back, Restart and Recovery Plan document.

There are three minimum mandates that must be followed:

- Schools in New Jersey will reopen for some type of in-person instruction for the fall.
- Students will be required to wear face coverings as soon as they enter the building, unless prohibited from doing so because it will inhibit the student's health. Social distancing will be followed at all times and classrooms and buildings have been re-structured to ensure this is a priority.
- All staff members will be required to wear face coverings at all times unless prohibited from doing so because it will inhibit the health of the staff member.

The BCSS Restart Committee

As I have previously discussed, we have a district-wide Restart Committee that is composed of the following: Central Office & Building Level Administrators, Board President, Teacher, Nurse, Association Presidents, Parent Rep, and Operations & Transportation Supervisors. On an as needed basis the committee has consulted with other specialists and agencies, such as the district's consulting physician, the Bergen County Department of Health, and a representative from the district's food service vendor. Planning efforts have included: health checks, scheduling, curriculum considerations, cleaning and sanitization protocols, measuring for social distancing, ordering PPE, technology needs, etc. The BCSS Restart and Recovery Plan meets all the state-mandated requirements. The Plan was submitted to the Bergen County Education Office for their review on July 31, 2020. Once reviewed by the County Education Office, the



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Plan will be posted on the BCSS website. Please note that although the plan is completed and submitted to the County Education Office, changes may be made to the plan based on current and future pandemic conditions.

BCSS Calendar Revision

In order to ensure a smooth transition to in-person instruction, we will revise the BCSS 2020-2021 School Calendar as follows:

- September 1, 2, 3, 4 – Staff Professional Development Days (No Student Attendance)
- September 8 – First Day for Students (Early Dismissal for Students)
- September 9, 10, 11 (Early Dismissal for Students)
- October 14, 2020 and March 17, 2021 will now be student attendance days not Professional Development Days as originally scheduled
- **Host site and consultant model programs will continue to follow the host site district calendar**

Pandemic Response Team

One important element of the NJ DOE Road to Recovery guidance was that each district school was required to establish a Pandemic Response Team (PRT) whose main focus was to modify and amend the district's plan to specifically address the protocols and procedures required to ensure the health and safety of their students and staff while providing high quality instruction both in-person and remotely. Each of our schools' PRTs have developed their plans that include student schedules for in-person instruction as well as protocols and procedures for remote instruction. **You will receive this schedule from your child's school sometime this week.**

Remote Instruction Option

On July 24, 2020 the NJDOE issued guidance allowing parents to choose all-remote learning for their children. The guidance requires all districts to set clear policies and procedures for families who want fulltime remote learning for their children. School districts also need procedures for students in fulltime remote learning to transition back to in-person services. These procedures should be designed to ensure that families can make necessary arrangements to prepare for their child's transition, and to help schools maintain continuity of services. The BCSS procedures for families opting for fulltime remote learning are as follows:



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- Notify the administrator of your child's school that you require remote learning for your child
- The administrator will ensure that you have the curriculum materials & technology needed in order for your child to effectively access remote instruction
- Your child's school will maintain close communication with you throughout the remote learning period
- When you decide that you would like your child to return to in-person instruction, you must notify your school's administrator by the 15th of the month prior to first Monday of the following month (e.g. September 15 for an October 5 start)
- It is advisable that you notify your home district along the same timeline to give the district time to put in place related services, such as transportation
- The first day of attendance for students returning to in-person instruction will be the Monday closest to the first of the month
- These procedures are necessary in order to ensure a safe and smooth transition to in-person learning for your child

Next Steps for Families

To prepare for the coming year, there are a few steps you can take now. Please prepare to help us bring students to school with safeguards and virus mitigation strategies in place.

- All parents are required to ensure that the student does not have a temperature above 100° F, or any of the COVID-19 symptoms
- All students' temperatures will be read before entry into the building
- All students must wear face coverings when entering their schools and during their entire time in the buildings unless conditions exist that make the wearing of a mask impossible
- Please find reusable/washable face coverings that your child is comfortable wearing and gradually build up the amount of time they can tolerate wearing them.
- Please ensure that you have a working thermometer in your home, personal supplies of hand sanitizer (alcohol-based) that your child can carry to school, and any other personal effects that you think will help your child feel comfortable returning to the school environment. We will have hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and appropriate PPE in all rooms



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Transportation

Please remember that BCSS does not transport students to and from school. This is the responsibility of the local district. Therefore, any questions regarding transportation to and from school must be directed to the local school district transportation department or the assigned bus company.

Lastly, thank you for your patience and support as we unveil our plans for the fall. We will address many other issues and considerations as current conditions change. We will provide additional information as it becomes available in the coming weeks.

Be safe and well.

Sincerely,
Howard Lerner, Ed.D.
Superintendent