



BERGEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS / SPECIAL SERVICES

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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](mailto:howler@bergen.org)

**Howard Lerner, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

### **BCTS Educational Update 08/03/2020**

Dear Bergen County Technical School District Community,

With four weeks remaining before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, I am writing to provide you an update on our current 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 – many suggestions – and gave districts the ability to develop their own plans that work best for each district. The Bergen County Technical Schools Restart and Recovery plan strictly adheres to the guidance received from the NJDOE 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 faculty will be required to wear face coverings at all times unless prohibited from doing so because it will inhibit the faculty member's health.

As I have previously discussed, we have assembled a district-wide Restart Committee with many subcommittees that address scheduling, curriculum, special education, cleaning and sanitization protocols, social distancing, PPE, technology, etc., and we continue to meet weekly. We have included parents, students, teachers, nurses, Sheriff's officers, Bergen County Board of Health representatives, OEM, Teachers' Association President and Vice President, Lead District SAC and EMS during the planning stages. Planning efforts have included measuring every classroom – with central office and building administrators walking every classroom and



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building to determine the maximum number of students permitted in each room while maintaining the six-foot social distancing requirement mandated by the NJDOE.

We completed and submitted our district reopening plan to the Bergen County Education office on July 31, 2020 for review. Once the plan is reviewed by the County Education Office, the plan will then be posted on the BCTS website. Below is our road map regarding our reopening plan for students. Please note that although the plan is completed and submitted to the County Education Office, changes may be made to the plan as a result of current and future pandemic conditions.

**BCTS Calendar Revisions** – in order to ensure and optimize in person and remote learning instruction, we will revise the BCTS school calendar to the following:

- September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> are full days for staff only.
- September 3<sup>rd</sup> will be early dismissal for students.
- September 4<sup>th</sup> will be early dismissal for staff and students.
- September 8th-11th will be early dismissal for students.

### **Grades 9-12**

Due to enrollment, building size, classroom size, and the daily academic schedule, students in grades 9-12 will follow a flex/hybrid schedule consisting of onsite and distance learning. These grades will follow an alternating A/B weekly schedule. Teachers will be delivering curriculum using a hybrid model with 50 percent of the students in-person, and 50 percent of the students remote. Each cohort will alternate each week with in-person and remote learning. Additional information regarding your child's cohort schedule will be sent to you by your building administration this week. Students attending BCTS Northern Valley Institute for Interactive Design will be following an A/B half day schedule, and will receive their schedule from the Northern Valley district.

I understand that the proposed hybrid schedule for grades 9-12 may present difficulties for some families, but it is required for student and staff safety. A fifty percent reduction of students onsite is necessary to allow for proper social distancing.

### **Distance Learning Committee**

We have established a Distance Learning Committee to plan and prepare for students who **opt out** of our proposed "in-person/remote" hybrid model, as well as the possibility that schools



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may close again. During this week, you will be receiving a Google Doc to be completed if you are opting out your child from school. The opt out will be reviewed on a monthly basis.

### **Next Steps for You at Home**

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

- All parents will be required to complete and submit a health assessment questionnaire for their students each morning prior to coming to school. This questionnaire assures that the student does not have a temperature above 100° F, or any of the COVID-19 symptoms identified by the CDC.
- 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.
- 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 in every room, but personal supplies will facilitate quick and easy access for each student.

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



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Lastly, thank you for your patience and support as we unveil our plans for the fall. We will address many other issues and considerations with respect to PPE, health screenings, school routines, bell schedules, instruction and assessments, curricular resources, extracurricular activities, technology support, and more. We will provide additional information as it becomes available in the coming weeks. If you have any questions, please contact your child's building administration.

Be safe and well.

Sincerely,  
Howard Lerner, Ed.D.  
Superintendent