



BERGEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS / SPECIAL SERVICES

District Administrative Office

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Howard Lerner, Ed.D.
Superintendent

COVID-19 Educational Update 5/22/20 BCTS

Dear Administration, Faculty, Staff and Parents/Guardians,

We are ending another week where these unprecedented times have been the catalyst for extraordinary innovation in our school district. BCTS has always prioritized social/emotional learning and well-being, for both students and staff. Our pandemic-driven "remote operation" framework, however, gave us the opportunity to amplify that priority, and to apply our unique staff expertise and deep resources to create a two-day online social/emotional learning "symposium" for our students. This event was all the more timely because May is recognized across the United States as Mental Health Awareness Month.

We all know that the stress created by our current public health crisis, along with the stress of operating in this new "remote" framework that requires constant focus, creativity and flexibility, have led to anxieties and disappointments that some students (and adults) have struggled with. Over the last two days, our administrators and counselors presented an array of over eighty online meetings, lectures, videos and activities for our district's entire student population. This "symposium" was designed to provide information and skills, reassurance and empowerment, healthy (and safe) social interaction, and...in some cases...plain old entertainment and "distraction". Our two-day "bctSELebration" was a resounding success, and I want to thank and congratulate everyone involved!

Finally, Monday (May 25th) is Memorial Day. I'm sure we are all looking forward to a three-day weekend break from our day-to-day responsibilities; and with more beaches and outdoor activities opening up in the state, many of us will celebrate the "unofficial start of summer" with a bit more "normalcy" than we have been used to. As we do, please remember to be safe and responsible. Our progress through this crisis continues to depend on us taking care of ourselves and each other even as the "health news" in New Jersey seems to be improving. More importantly, though, as we enjoy the long weekend, we should remember what this holiday is for: to reflect on all the members of our country's Armed Forces who died while serving our country. We owe every one of them a debt of gratitude for the ultimate sacrifice they made for us all.

Stay safe, be well and enjoy the well-deserved break.

Howard Lerner, Ed.D.
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