



Coronavirus Update 23

1 message

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Greetings BSD Community,

Throughout this pandemic, I have tried to recognize our different staffing groups that are going above and beyond to make life in this COVID world a little less challenging. Before I share some updates, please join me in thanking... YOU!

This pandemic has really highlighted the positive character of the people in this community. Our parents, staff, community, and business partners have continued to step up. From community members dropping off books on our employee's porches, to Fletcher Free library and companies [providing toys, books and more](#), to masks being collected and given away, computer devices being donated, restaurants offering free meals to some of our staff, and teachers leaving post-it notes on their student's doors, our community has really pulled together during this time. I am grateful to lead in such an environment of collaborative support. I appreciate you and our district/board leaders appreciate the efforts as well; thank you all for coming together!

Here are a few updates we need to share.

AOE Survey: The Agency of Education has asked us to survey families regarding their experiences with Continuity of Learning and access to education during closure. Our team has worked hard to design a survey that meets the AOE's task and will provide insight into equity issues during remote learning. Your participation is crucial for us ensure we are serving families and students equitably, and can be better prepared for potential future instances of remote learning. [Please take the survey today.](#)

Social Media Safety Webinar Series May 21st and 28th: BSD's most recent Climate Survey data showed that parents, teachers, and students were concerned about social media safety. Now more than ever children are not only allowed to spend more time online, but they are being asked to do so. As part of the work our District Climate Team has been doing, we have partnered with Winooski School District to bring Erin Walsh, of Spark and Stitch Institute, to your computer screens. Join us on May 21st and May 28th for a short series of webinars regarding social media safety for students. Save the date and find instructions on how to [attend on our website.](#)

Food Service Update - Dinner: We are excited to announce that we will begin to offer FREE dinner options beginning Monday, May 18. Picking up dinner will be the same process as picking up lunches, except now you'll grab an additional, separate meal for supper. **Dinner options will be available at Sustainability Academy and the Boys and Girls Club;** we hope to add additional sites in the future as guidance allows. View our [coronavirus preparation website](#) for days and times.

Food Service Update - Sites Closed Memorial Day: In order to give our staff a much-needed (and deserved!) break, our food distribution sites will be closed on Memorial Day, May 25th. To assist our families with the extended weekend, we will be including an extra meal during food pickup on Friday, May 22; please plan ahead and be sure to visit a meal site on the 22nd.

Still Waiting on AOE Guidance: I have received many questions regarding summer and fall programming over the past few months and want to share where we are. I have been meeting frequently with our leadership team in the District as well as with the Vermont Superintendents Association. Leaders around the state have been asking for more guidance to come from the state on a number of issues as soon as possible. Here is a partial list of things we have asked about:

- **Fall Instructional Operations:** Will fall opening of school will allow for in-person instruction, or should we be planning for a fully remote or a hybrid environment? If we are in person, we need to know school-specific restrictions for instruction (regarding number of students in a class, lunchroom, playground, etc) and attendance. We also need to know whether PreK programs will be allowed to operate in the Fall, and under what restrictions, and we need to know the projected scope of guidance regarding gathering sizes, social distancing, and mask requirements in order to make a decision on whether Fall and Winter Sports occur.
- **School Meals:** Need to know if current meal regulations will remain in place through summer, if transportation reimbursement will be available for summer meal deliveries, and if we can provide meals for those who stay home in the fall.
- **Special Education:** Need to have a complete understanding about how special education reimbursement will work as we move forward and contemplate contracted services with providers like Mental Health, OT, PT, etc. for next year.
- **Budget development for next year:** Need to know what to plan for in developing FY22 budgets, including whether there will be legislative flexibility with surpluses generated by limiting FY21 spending to absorb FY22 impacts.

Finances: Finally, some of you may have heard that the state is predicting a budget shortfall in the state's education fund. I want to reassure you that due to strong fiscal management over the past five years, we are in a position to finish this school year strong. As

in year's past, we will be able to carry over some surplus funds to mitigate the impact on taxpayers. We won't know the full impact the State's budget shortfall or COVID related expenditures will have on this District until we start planning for the Fiscal Year 2022 budget this fall.

On Tuesday night, we provided speculative projections to our board about potential implications. The numbers were presented based on the data current at this point in time and without any mitigating actions. Those numbers will continue to change over the next six to 12 months, so anything you hear or read at this time is likely speculation until definitive numbers come in. Fortunately, BSD is in an optimal financial position to plan for student programming and address potential challenges.

We will continue to work to keep our families, community, and board informed when State shares the macroeconomic impact with us in the fall before the budget process begins in November.

As I said in my last update, I do expect a number of pieces of guidance to come from the AOE in the coming days and weeks. We will do our best to get you information regarding these pieces and more.

Thanks for reading.

Stay healthy, stay inside.

Superintendent Obeng

P.S. Now would be a great time to [take the survey!](#)

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