



Binghamton City School District

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Dear Binghamton Families,

We are now eight weeks into the school year, and I'm hopeful that the transition to daily in-person learning has been a smooth one for your student. While we've had challenges to overcome and adjustments to navigate, I know that incredible things are happening within our schools every day. This month, I'm pleased to share with you some exciting updates and information, not only about our current academic year, but also, what our school district can look forward to in the months and years ahead.

Creating safe and respectful spaces within our schools continues to be our administration's top priority, in particular at the secondary level. As we have communicated in recent weeks, there are a number of measures in place at Binghamton HS and East and West middle schools to promote safety and security. While every incident that requires discipline must be considered on a case-by-case basis, administrators are applying the code of conduct consistently to ensure fairness and we will continue to engage with the community and parents to address any concerns. The Code of Conduct includes expectation, consequences, and interventions with the objective of preventing disruptive and dangerous behaviors from occurring. Our commitment remains to use all resources before turning to discipline of students. Our commitment has been and will continue to be to foster safe, supportive, and productive learning environments for all students. Students are removed from a traditional educational setting and provided alternative placements with interventions when they demonstrate they are not able to maintain behavior that ensures their successful engagement in our school buildings. We will not waver in our commitment to ensuring every student feels safe, included, and supported at school.

COVID-19 detection, prevention, and vaccination continues to be at the top of our minds this school year. The procedures put in place in accordance with the district's reopening plan (mask wearing, social distancing, temperature checks, etc.) continue to prevent school spread of the virus. We are offering vaccination clinics at both middle schools starting this week, and once the vaccination has received official FDA approval for younger children, clinics will be established at each of our elementary schools.

We pride ourselves in being a district that is highly responsive to the social and emotional needs of our students. National children's healthcare organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, recently declared the mental health crisis among children a national emergency. Last week, we informed families that we will soon be administering a brief baseline student survey to measure social and emotional strengths and challenges among students in grades 4-12, and we plan to administer another in the spring. Given the pandemic's impact on society and school over the last 18 months, this survey will help us identify student needs proactively and provide individualized support to students and our school community.

So much of our district's work is guided by our exceptional school board members, whom we celebrated last Tuesday during School Board Recognition Week with a breakfast at Franklin Elementary. Our board members bring a wonderfully diverse set of talents and experiences to the district. Some are parents, others are alumni, and some have even worked in our district. Regardless of their connection to our schools, all of them are passionate and dedicated to our district's students and schools. We extend our deepest thanks to President Brian Whalen, Vice President Steve Seepersaud, and board members Timothy Ames, Korin Kirk, Pamela Kollar, Ashley Montalvo, and Dr. Albert Penna.

Educating, empowering and challenging all students to become productive, global citizens through innovative approaches to learning.

I'm pleased to let you know that we've made fantastic progress in positioning our sports programs for future success. We are excited to have a new leader at the helm of Patriot Athletics. Jeremiah Johnson spent the past five years teaching P.E. at Benjamin Franklin Elementary School and coaching multiple athletic teams. One of his top priorities as athletic director will be helping to rebuild local youth sports programs and reconnecting them with BCSD school sports. We've recently launched a new dedicated online platform to highlight BCSD teams and athletes, [Showcase Sports](#). Visit the website to enjoy player profiles, highlights, and more. Players, families and coaches are staying connected through the use of TeamSnap. By downloading the BCSD app, you can receive push notifications on your phone, highlighting the athletic YouTube Channel, which broadcasts home events. Please be reminded that winter sports signups are currently taking place through [Family ID](#).

We have put in place new communication tools, such as school bus tracking app FirstView, registration software Family ID, and [TeamSnap](#) to increase student and family engagement inside and outside of the classroom. Please continue to utilize the district [website](#), and download the district app (Binghamton CSD) for the latest information about our schools and events.

Our district is building for the future through our proposed 2021 Capital Project. The \$41.7 million project has a zero tax levy impact, and includes improvements in the areas of infrastructure, technology, accessibility, expansion, health, and safety projects. For more information about this capital project, including details on the upcoming public hearing and vote, [visit our website](#).

And, we are looking even further ahead at our long-term facilities improvement plans through our ongoing [feasibility study](#). The feasibility study is a comprehensive planning process that will help shape the vision for our school buildings in the years ahead. We are currently in the process of forming an advisory group of stakeholders, composed entirely of city residents, to serve as trusted advisors throughout this process. We look forward to sharing more with you as this exciting work continues! Applications are being accepted through Friday, Nov. 5.

During uncertain times, it is reassuring knowing that we serve such incredible families that put their children first and provide assistance and insight. Thank you for your continued contributions to our students and schools!

With Patriot Pride,



Tonia Thompson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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