

August 16th, 2021

Dear BCCU2 Families,

I am writing to share some information regarding the 2021-2022 school year. We are excited to have our students back to full time “in-person learning”! The first day of student attendance is Thursday, August 19th. As a reminder, both Thursday and Friday will be 1 hour early dismissals.

Our district's goal throughout this pandemic and moving into the new school year has remained the same. Balance the health and safety of our students and staff while maximizing “in-person” instruction. Although universal masking is not exactly what we consider “normal”, our district is in a much better place than where we were a year ago regarding COVID-19 and our learning format. As I said at the special board meeting last week, if a year ago we were given the option of having full day instruction, 5 days a week with extracurriculars and clubs, and limited quarantine, we would have been thrilled.

We understand that the mask mandate is widely debated and met with both community support and dissent. We acknowledge the frustration and concerns surrounding the mask mandate and ever changing guidance. While we sincerely wish the circumstances were different, our Return to Learn Plan, which includes universal masking, will be in full effect to start the school year. **Be advised, the plan may change!** In mid July, our Board of Education approved a return to school plan where masks were “highly recommended”. When the Governor issued the mask mandate, our Board of Education had a special meeting, heard public feedback, and ultimately voted to amend the plan to adhere to the mandate. Therefore, we respectfully request for your cooperation in the School District’s efforts to make the 2021-2022 school year as safe, healthy and interruption free as possible. This is and will remain our end goal. If you have concerns about the Governor’s Mandate, please contact one of his offices at:

**Springfield**

Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706  
Phone: (217) 782-6830 or (217) 782-6831

**Chicago**

Office of the Governor  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 W. Randolph, 16-100  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Phone: (312) 814-2121 or (312) 814-2122

A few reminders as we start the 2021-2022

### **Health and Safety**

We continue to provide layered mitigations to fight the spread of communicable diseases including but not limited to:

- Promoting vaccinations
- Frequent hand washing and sanitizing
- Physical distancing
- Universal use of masks/face coverings
- Monitoring illness and keeping students home if ill
- Increased cleaning/disinfecting
- Increased ventilation

### **Contact tracing, Quarantine and Isolation**

The Bond County Health Department is responsible for issuing quarantine/isolation orders. Our district must comply with such orders. A few reminders about contact tracing that is different from last year:

- Vaccinated students who are cited as “close contact” do not have to isolate if they are asymptomatic
- If students (regardless of vaccination status) are masked and greater than 3ft apart, they do not have to isolate if they are asymptomatic
- Unvaccinated students who are identified as “close contacts” and are asymptomatic may, with parental consent, participate in a “Test to Stay” program where they can stay at school by participating in a rapid antigen test on days 1,3,5,7.

### **Water bottles**

To limit the use of water fountains, we are asking all families to have their child bring a water bottle when they report for in-person learning. Filling stations will be available throughout our campus.

### **Transportation**

Transportation times will be approximate and likely vary the first few days of school. Parents/guardians can access bus times and locations on the district website under the “Bus route info” tab.

Our students’ safety, education, and overall well-being are our priority. Please help us make the start of the year a positive experience for all of our students.

Professionally,

Wes Olson

BCCU2 Superintendent of Schools