



BUCKS COUNTY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

Wistar Road, Fairless Hills, PA 19030

Phone 215.949.1700 Fax: 215.949.2104

www.bcths.com

A campus of Bensalem, Bristol Borough, Bristol Township, Morrisville, Neshaminy & Pennsbury School Districts

August 7, 2020

RE: Fall Re-Opening Update

Dear BCTHS Students, Parents, Staff, and Community:

As the summer weather changes, so do many schools' re-opening plans, including ours. I continue to meet with county superintendents and health officials, along with school committees that focus on all of the aspects of a safe re-opening. The number one issue that I hear is, "safety, safety, and safety." As much as I wish BCTHS could have in-person instruction for even *half* of our students at any one time (as we were planning), this just does not appear to be the safest and most prudent way at this time for us to open in the fall.

Therefore, I am recommending to our joint board committee (school board) to start our school 100% virtually/remotely for at least the first 6-10 weeks. This recommendation aligns with what most, if not all, of the school districts are doing in our region. Please understand that our joint board must approve any proposal at its August meeting.

Virtual Opening, then Hybrid for Tech, then Hybrid for All

- BCTHS would open for at least 6 weeks virtually, having teachers and students interact via Zoom or Google Meet in a synchronous (live) fashion. In other words, students would follow their normal schedule and log in to their internet device (computer, phone, etc.) to have real-time/live interaction with their teacher.
- This would be done for both their technical and academic classes, following the school's bell schedule.
- Being "live" with teachers for at least some of the class period will create greater engagement for the students and allow for students to interact with their teachers for immediate feedback.
- Depending on the region's COVID status and the school's ability to maintain safe distancing and other protocols surrounding COVID, the next step would be to rotate in one-half of the technical rotation of students each day to attend in-person instruction. This is approximately 25% of the student population (half of half) that would be in the school on any given day. During this introduction to in-person instruction for technical students, academic instruction would remain 100% virtual.
- If the school can maintain health and safety protocols after working with 25% of the students on the technical rotations, the school would then move to a 50% model, having technical and academic students move to a hybrid model whereby 50% of the students would be taught in-person, just like the earlier model (A/B Hybrid) considered.

Why Virtual, then Hybrid?

- Opening school 100% virtually and then carefully and cautiously moving into ramping up a hybrid model (25% moving to 50%) allows for a safe transition for all students and staff.
- Eventually, a hybrid model allows all students to receive the critical in-person/hands-on learning necessary for quality Career and Technical Education (CTE), even if for part of a rotational period.
- If conditions permit (i.e., COVID-19 is dramatically reduced), the school can easily and quickly move into 100% in-person learning without hesitation. Conversely, if cases rise dramatically, the school could easily move to a 100% remote/virtual learning.
- Moving cautiously allows the school to manage safe numbers in the classes, cafeteria, hallways, and buses.

Updated 08-07-20



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After the First Marking Period (or later) – 50-50 Hybrid (A/B Schedule)

- Depending on COVID conditions, the school hopes to have at least 25% of the students have in-person technical education while the remaining 75% continue virtual learning. Then the school plans to move to 50-50 (A/B) hybrid, alternating between in-person instruction and virtual/remote instruction. Current projections for a 50-50 hybrid would be some time after the first marking period, *but only if conditions permit*.
- Once instituted, the A/B hybrid schedule would alternate every other day, giving students in-person learning with their teachers 2-3 times per week. BCTHS plans to split the school in half by last names (alpha).
- Students with specific learning needs will have the opportunity to be in school every day.
- Attendance will be taken within each class, regardless of the instruction being in-person or remote.

Laptop Distribution

- Students needing a laptop will be able to pick one up at the school on designated days/times before the start of the school year.
- More information about Chromebook distribution will be forthcoming, but the distribution process will be similar to last year's distribution.

When BCTHS has in-person instruction . . .

Face Coverings

- Face coverings will be required for all students and staff and must be worn per state orders/directives.
- Bucks County and BCTHS are in the process of ordering face shields and masks for students and staff but the expectation is that all students and staff will have their own face covering.
- BCTHS will not continually re-supply face coverings, but hopes to have enough on hand if/when needed.

Wall Barriers/Partitions

- In addition to face coverings, the school is in the process of manufacturing clear PVC/Vinyl barriers for those students and staff that need additional protection and/or where state regulations (e.g., PA Board of Cosmetology) require barriers.

Transportation

- BCTHS will be allowing more students to drive to school. Students will still need to complete a parking application similar to previous years.
- Students who use school district transportation must adhere to each district's protocols.
- Revised procedures for loading and unloading will be implemented.
- Districts have assured BCTHS that enhanced cleaning protocols will be followed.
- Families should conduct a daily screening of their child(ren) at home, before leaving for school.
- Face coverings are required to be worn while riding a school bus, van or sedan/cab.
- There may be assigned seats and social distancing where feasible.

Health Screenings

- All students and staff should conduct a daily screening before coming to school. This will involve monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms and recent exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- At the start of the school year, families will be required to sign the COVID-19 School Health & Safety Agreement that says they will keep their child(ren) home when sick and seek appropriate medical care.

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Social Distancing

- There will be signs and floor markings to remind everyone of social distancing parameters and traffic flow throughout school buildings.
- Clear physical barriers will be installed in reception areas and school offices. Layouts for desks, tables, and others items will be implemented to promote social distancing in classrooms and common areas.
- Staggered times should be in place for hallway use.
- Restrooms and other facilities will be monitored to minimize the number of in the hallways at any time.

If a student or staff has COVID-19

- If a BCTHS student or staff member is confirmed to be positive with COVID-19 or is suspected, or has been in contact with someone with COVID-19, BCTHS will notify the Bucks County Health Department and receive direction for contact tracing and next steps, which could include some sort of quarantine measures.

Cleaning/Sanitizing

- Hand sanitizer stations will be near the building and cafeteria entrances/exits.
- Classrooms will also be provided with hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.
- Identified 'high touch points' will be disinfected daily according to recommendations.
- BCTHS is equipped with EPA-registered COVID-19 virucide and disinfecting equipment/supplies to support increased cleaning protocols.
- To increase ventilation, BCTHS will be replacing air filters, ensuring windows are operational and secure to allow for increased outdoor air flow and increasing circulation of air.

Meals/Water Bottles

- Students should maintain proper social distancing while traveling through serving lines and sit at assigned seats in the cafeteria, the lobby, or outside (weather permitting).
- Students should clean their hands with soap and water and/or hand sanitizer before and after eating.
- Students may bring their own water bottles and a few hydration stations will be available.

Summer Travels

- As cases of Coronavirus ebb and flow throughout the country and world, staff and students should be mindful about travel, especially two weeks prior to the start of returning to school.
- BCTHS strongly recommends that students and staff avoid regions where COVID-19 is on the rise and/or where [PA has designated as a "quarantine state."](#)
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx>

Safe Return

- Our goal remains to continue working through the details necessary to allow our students and staff to be physically present in school this fall in a safe and healthy manner.
- The school will continue to develop health and safety precautions to protect staff and students.
- Please note, these plans and procedures will need to change as more information and new strategies become available.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

Leon Poeske, Ed.D.
Administrative Director

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