



BERLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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December 15, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff:

We hope that this letter finds you and your family staying healthy and safe.

Last night, the Board of Education voted to **adjust our school schedule to operate on a fully remote model for one week after the winter recess, January 4-8**. We will return to the hybrid model at the middle school and high school and to in-person instruction at the elementary level on Monday, January 11. Please note that we have made a change to the master hybrid schedule to better balance the weeks of in-person and remote learning. **Middle and high school students in Cohort A will return to school on January 11.**

At the elementary level, devices and go-bags will be sent home on Friday, December 18.

While we know that students and their families have developed many new skills in technology that support their learning during weeks of remote instruction, there are still times that families and caregivers have questions or need additional support. **We have created a document with technology tips for families and caregivers**, with directions for resolving many common issues. You can access the document here: [Remote Learning Tips for Families](#).

Districts across the state are struggling with substitute teacher shortages during the pandemic. **As part of the Step Up Connecticut effort, the State Department of Education has changed the requirements for substitute teachers.** In Berlin, individuals with an Associate's Degree or the equivalent (completion of two years of college) may apply to become an on-call substitute. This is a great opportunity for college students who are home on break, especially those who are planning a career in education. Anyone interested in applying to be an on-call substitute can apply here:

<https://www.applitrack.com/berlin/OnlineApp/default.aspx?Category=Substitute>

Finally, as many families begin to make plans for celebrating the upcoming holidays, we ask that you **please review and comply with the Connecticut Travel Advisory** to help ensure the safety of our students and staff. The travel advisory requires anyone traveling to (or back into) Connecticut from designated states to quarantine for fourteen days from the date he or she was last in that state. For a current listing of states on the Connecticut Travel Advisory, please go to the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/travel>. This list is updated weekly and states can be added or dropped from the list based on current health data.

In consultation with the Central CT Health District, we have the following guidelines related to travel: If you/your child are subject to the travel quarantine for the fourteen days, and wish to return to school earlier, please wait five days after returning to Connecticut to get RT-PCR tested. The purpose of this five day period is to allow any potential virus infection to incubate and aid in a more accurate test result. If this test is negative, you must provide a copy of the negative RT-PCR test result prior to returning to school/work. A rapid antigen test or an antibody test will not satisfy the state's exception to the quarantine requirement.

If family members from states on the travel advisory, or from other countries, are visiting you over the holidays, including children returning home from college, please practice all usual COVID-19 precautions during the course of the visit, including wearing masks, social distancing, limiting the size of gatherings, and frequent handwashing.

For your own personal safety and the safety of our students and staff, we strongly encourage you not to travel at this time. If travel is unavoidable, you will be required to comply with the protocols outlined above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian J. Benigni". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a distinct "J" and "B".

Brian J. Benigni
Superintendent of Schools

BJB/db