



Bethany Public School District

Colleen M. Murray, Superintendent of Schools

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August 7, 2020

Dear BCS Community,

If things weren't stressful enough, Mother Nature came along and dealt us a tropical storm and widespread power outages. I hope this email finds you safe in all ways possible. First Selectman, Paula Cofrancesco, reported yesterday on the Code Red message that there have been no new documented cases of COVID-19 in Bethany this past week. Therefore, the Bethany Public School District remains on track to reopen this Fall with in-person learning. Families also have the option to choose temporary remote learning for their children. Just remember, this is a rapidly changing situation and families should be prepared to transition into a Hybrid or Remote Learning Phase if, at any time, the rate of transmission increases in our area.

Earlier this week, the District sent out a survey to our families asking them to share their intentions to have their children attend BCS later this month in-person or remotely. As I explained in the Reopen BCS Webinar last week, I understand that many families might remain undecided and need more information to make a commitment, while at the same time, the District needs this information to plan and make informed decisions regarding teacher assignments, classroom set up, and to make staffing decisions. It's the proverbial chicken or the egg question.

This week, administration and staff reviewed several digital learning platforms in order to select the best one to meet our needs whether we are in an In-Person, Hybrid, or Remote Phase of Learning. We have selected a familiar platform, GoGuardian. The GoGuardian Suite includes the following features:

- The ability to deliver instruction through audio, video, chat, or virtual lecturing, one-to-one, or with a whole class.
- Provides the teacher with the ability to see what a student is doing on their device through video conferencing to ensure that the student is on-task and engaged in learning.
- Allows the teacher the capability to share their screen with students in-person as well as those working remotely.
- Puts the teacher in control of the microphone and webcam for all students and allows for the recording and sharing of lessons.
- Go Guardian supports District safety and security policies and is a familiar and trusted vendor.
- Professional development will be provided and teachers will become GoGuardian certified through GoGuardian University.
- Training videos will be created by BCS staff for students and families.

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Next week, administration and staff are meeting to design schedules and to decide how GoGuardian will be implemented during the In-Person/Remote Learning Phase. They will develop plans for our remote learners that will provide them opportunities to access whole-class instruction and video conferencing at various times during the school day by their classroom teacher. All students will have access to assignments and receive feedback through Google Classroom. Students at home will be assigned an additional BCS support person that will check in on them to provide additional assistance. As these plans evolve, Principal Reed-Swale will communicate with them through a weekly update.

The Back-to-School Survey closes on Sunday, August 9, 2020. If you still remain unsure as to whether or not your child will return to BCS in the Fall, please select In-Person. It will be easier for us to take desks out of classrooms that are already set up for social distancing than it will be to add desks, which may impact social distancing and staffing.

Thank you for your continued support, understanding, and patience. We are working around the clock to prepare for a safe and responsible reopening for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen M. Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent