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Amsterdam District

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Fincastle District

Dr. JONATHAN D. RUSS
Superintendent

Superintendent's Update – October 16, 2020

Dear Botetourt County Students, Staff, Parents, and Community:

As we complete the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year, I want to take the opportunity to say *Thank You* to several groups of people!

- Thank you to our **students** for being resilient and proving to us time after time that you always adapt to change better than we expect.
- Thank you to our **custodial staff** for willingly accepting a dramatically increased workload to ensure that you keep our buildings clean and sanitized for the safety of all.
- Thank you to our **bus drivers** for adjusting your bus routes without notice and for ensuring that our students follow our mitigation plan while in route to school and home.
- Thank you to our **food service** staff for changing the way you prepare and serve meals to our students who attend school each day, and our remote learners who pick up meals from school each day.
- Thank you to our **administrative professionals** for providing a calm atmosphere in a time where chaos would be the easy way out.
- Thank you to our **instructional assistants** who have accepted more responsibilities this year to ensure our students are obtaining as much instruction as possible.
- Thank you to our **administrators** for providing leadership to our schools and school division in ways you never imagined were even possible.
- Thank you to our **parents** for your patience, understanding and for serving in a profession you probably never planned...teaching.
- Thank you to our **School Board** for always keeping our students and their safety as priority number one as you continue to make decisions for our division.
- Last but certainly not least, thank you to **each and every teacher of BCPS!** No one truly knows the amount of work, dedication, energy, and love you are putting into this profession right now. We all appreciate you more than you know!

As we move forward, I would like to ask everyone to stay vigilant in your efforts to remain safe and COVID-free. It is a goal for myself and the BCPS School Board to be able to bring more students back into the schools for in-person instruction. However, according to reports from the Virginia Department of Health, our region is currently seeing an uptick in positive cases and now is not the time to relax our mitigation efforts. Thank you for your cooperation.

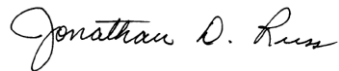
The next BCPS School Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. Agenda topics to be discussed include: the current school calendar, how and when more students can return to in-person learning, and the results from the recent survey sent to parents and teachers.

The Virginia Department of Health recently released [Pandemic Metrics](#) on their website. We continue to monitor the COVID-19 metrics within our region and county. These metrics, along with the school community's input, will dictate any changes we make to the 2020-21 school calendar.

BCPS will continue to communicate specific COVID news (positive cases, quarantine requirements, etc.) through School Messenger. Please contact your school if you need to update phone numbers or email addresses to make sure you get news as it is disseminated from your child's school.

As I have stated before, to make this a successful school year, it will require teamwork and flexibility from all of us. We will continue to work collaboratively in our decision making to make this year the best year possible for our students. Thank you thus far for all of your support!

Be safe,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan D. Russ".

Jonathan D. Russ, Ed.D.
Superintendent