BHSD parents/guardians-

Welcome to 2021 :)

We are prepping hard right now for the return of our students on Tuesday, January 19th in the blended-hybrid schedule.  You should be getting information from your building principals and teachers regarding schedules and procedures as we make this transition.  Here are a few updates that I would like to share for this week:

* As we make this return to school, I have to be very blunt about one topic.  It is absolutely essential that students do not come to school unless you can answer “no” for your child on each of the following questions:
	+ Have you experienced any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 48 hours?
	+ Have you been in close contact (in the past 14 days) with anyone who is known to have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

If we all do our part in making sure we only come to campus if healthy, then I am confident this will go well.  My hands will be tied if we start having quarantine situations due to students/staff having symptoms and being in close contact with each other.  It will not take long for us to lose capacity in staffing to keep the buildings open.  Taking this mitigation strategy seriously is essential for all of us.

* **School related COVID-19 Questions?** If you have any questions about anything COVID-related in our schools, you can probably find the answer in one of the three documents below.  I do realize this is information overload, but I also know that some of you may find this helpful:
	+ Click [HERE](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/y83cHq0uLLl_psaQwnY24w~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRh2gLXP0RSaHR0cHM6Ly9kcml2ZS5nb29nbGUuY29tL2ZpbGUvZC8xWms0V0Z0V21OUGJOSmYzYlNyTWJGeE1nV0FvOXFNTUMvdmlldz91c3A9c2hhcmluZ1cHc2Nob29sbUIKX_VXz_hf0lwh91IabWVsaXNzYW1vcmxleUBiaWdob2xsb3cudXNYBAAAAAE~)to view a guidance document that our nursing staff will utilize to determine if students/staff need to be excluded for COVID related reasons from school and for how long.
	+ Click [HERE](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/sfzs-mTHd0TDQMVuq7s__g~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRh2gLXP0RgaHR0cHM6Ly9kb2NzLmdvb2dsZS5jb20vZG9jdW1lbnQvZC8xVkZQUFN4eWF3cDBtT2hubjlpZ3J4UER0aDJnTmdIY3kyUmdBNG1CQkp5Yy9lZGl0P3RzPTVmN2YzYWIyVwdzY2hvb2xtQgpf9VfP-F_SXCH3UhptZWxpc3NhbW9ybGV5QGJpZ2hvbGxvdy51c1gEAAAAAQ~~) to view an FAQ document that we have created which addresses a very wide range of topics.
	+ Click [HERE](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/ajhh7WG0kAuWW1nLV5OSHg~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRh2gLXP0RgaHR0cHM6Ly9kb2NzLmdvb2dsZS5jb20vZG9jdW1lbnQvZC8xZmtsU19pYkRBZ0U3TzNWVW00d2FPSlpyRGJ2Z1Yxazk4U0RkanRPc01PWS9lZGl0P3VzcD1zaGFyaW5nVwdzY2hvb2xtQgpf9VfP-F_SXCH3UhptZWxpc3NhbW9ybGV5QGJpZ2hvbGxvdy51c1gEAAAAAQ~~)to view a COVID-19 Handbook addendum that provides more details regarding procedure changes at this time.
* **Board Meeting**
	+ We have a Board meeting schedule for Monday with the closed session beginning at 6:00 p.m.  The open session will follow immediately after, usually between 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.  You can click [HERE](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/badr3YOkc55WCrJgDrpE1w~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRh2gLXP0Q7aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmlnaG9sbG93LnVzL2JvYXJkLW9mLWVkdWNhdGlvbi9hZ2VuZGFzLW1pbnV0ZXNXB3NjaG9vbG1CCl_1V8_4X9JcIfdSGm1lbGlzc2Ftb3JsZXlAYmlnaG9sbG93LnVzWAQAAAAB) to view the agenda and Board packet if you are interested.
	+ To view the board meeting on livestream, you can go to this website ([https://www.bighollow.us/board-of-education](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/q_ul1UkoDXoKuRM3WhlROg~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRh2gLXP0QraHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmlnaG9sbG93LnVzL2JvYXJkLW9mLWVkdWNhdGlvblcHc2Nob29sbUIKX_VXz_hf0lwh91IabWVsaXNzYW1vcmxleUBiaWdob2xsb3cudXNYBAAAAAE~)) to access the link the night of the meeting.
* **Vaccination Update**
	+ All of our staff have been asked to voluntarily sign-up for the COVID-19 vaccination, and it is anticipated we may get the first shot by the 1st week of February.
* **Transportation**
	+ Our transportation department is working hard to finalize transportation schedules and routes.  You will receive more information early next.  If you have not yet signed up for transportation but would like to do so, please email Derek Swiderski for more information (derekswiderski@bighollow.us).  We do have seats open, and I’m hopeful we can reduce the car traffic during drop-off/pick-up times if at all possible.
* **Food Deliveries** (for families receiving deliveries each Friday)
	+ As the winter weather is upon us, we ask that you please keep your sidewalks free of ice/snow when our staff is delivering food to houses.  We have asked our staff to call back to the office if a situation is not safe, and we will call and ask for you to come out to get the items off the bus.
* **Statement regarding recent events**
	+ Everyone is aware of the disruptions that have occurred in our Country over this past week.  Situations like this put us as educators in a tough position with our students.  As parents, I want you to know our thought process in how to support our kids when they have questions about current events that draw so much attention.  Please see the statement below that I sent out staff on Wednesday evening:

*"The unrest in our country over the past 9 months has had an impact on each one of us. The events that took place today in Washington D.C. will just add to the increased stress levels for our Big Hollow community, including our students.*

*As educators, we cannot take a political stance with our students, but we also should not ignore events when they occur. It is possible that your students will have questions tomorrow and in the coming weeks about some of these events that are taking place. You will not have all the answers, and that is okay. It is important to listen to students’ questions and to have age appropriate conversations about current events. During these conversations we need to show our students compassion and empathy while reinforcing appropriate behavior and communication for students and adults.*

*To say that you are all on the “front lines” is an understatement right now. It has never been more true during my 27 years in education. Our kids have been inundated with “once in a lifetime” events, and I cannot imagine what is going on in many of their heads right now. As classroom teachers, you are a source of strength and normalcy in their lives at this time. If there is ever an opportunity to be a role model and support for your students, it is now."*

* **Upcoming School Calendar**
	+ **Monday, January 18th**
		- No School:  Martin Luther King Jr. Day
	+ **Tuesday, January 19th**
		- Return to Blended-Hybrid Learning Model for all grade levels.
	+ **Friday, January 29th**
		- No School:  Final Remote Learning Planning Day for staff
			* This day will be utilized for us to make adjustments/improvements to the blended-hybrid schedule after being in the schedule for 2 weeks.

That is all that I have for now.  Have a great weekend, and do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Bob Gold
Superintendent
Big Hollow School District 38