

DISTRICT UPDATE 12-17-21
DR. KRINER CASH, SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Buffalo Public Schools Community,

As we approach the winter break, we continue to be fully re-opened six days per week including Saturday Academies. Regarding local Covid-19 numbers, our post-Thanksgiving spike has subsided. Still, we remain diligent regarding the safety of our students and staff, always exercising the utmost in caution based on science concerning this devastating virus.

We thank you for your cooperation during this insidious pandemic and remind you that we must continue to exercise safety protocols, support each other, and remain a strong Buffalo Public Schools family.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Department is focusing on moving forward with the three recommendations from the Transportation Advisory Committee.

1. The District should make every effort to contract with appropriately license and qualified private transportation providers to address uncovered routes and athletics.

The Transportation Department remains in contact with several private transportation companies as well as the New York State Department of Transportation. We are continuing to explore all possible opportunities to augment our current yellow and athletic bus providers.

2. The District and First Student should maintain their urgency to strategize around recruitment and onboarding of job candidates. Further strategizing should continue around deployment of drivers and effective route creation.

First Student hiring:

In the last 30 days 19 drivers have been hired. 55 candidates have been in behind the wheel training. 7 drivers have resigned or been terminated.

Bus Aide hiring:

The Bus Aide Office in conjunction with our Human Resource Department has held two Open Interview sessions at the Adult Learning Center. These have been a tremendous success as 77 candidates were interviewed. In the last 30 days 10 bus aides were hired, 9 bus aides resigned and 1 was terminated.

3. The District should create a spring semester calendar where elementary schools are scheduled for at least one early release day. This would create a continual daily supply of extra buses in the afternoon available to address uncovered routes and maintain earlier clearing times.

Transportation has created a schedule of potential early release days for elementary students. These will take place from January 3rd until March 15th with each elementary school having two early release days during this time frame. The schedule was created with the vision of approximately 25 drivers per day finishing their routes early so that they can then assist with uncovered routes. This is attempting to ensure that all students arrive home as early as possible during our peak period of inclement winter weather. The Board and District staff are working to finalize this recommendation.

FOOD SERVICES

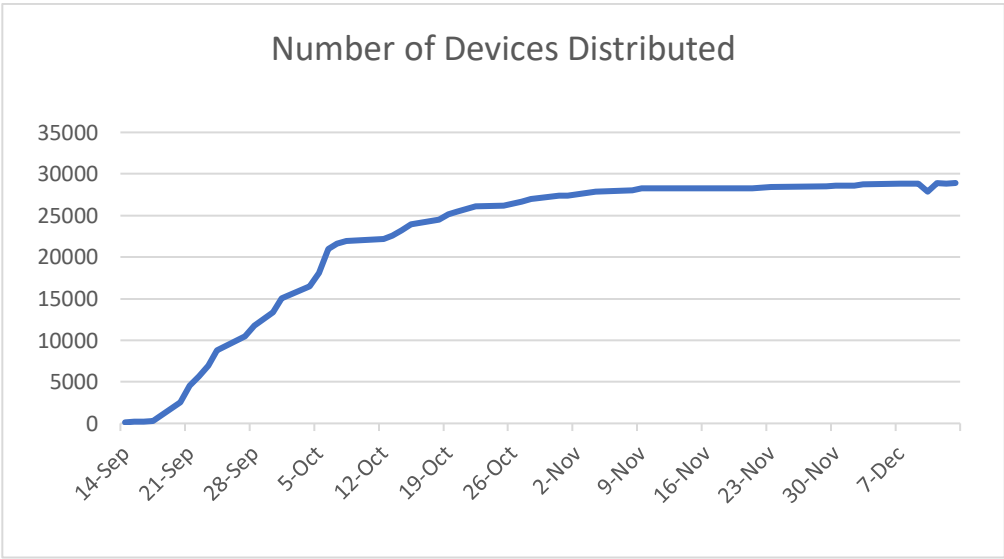
There are ongoing national and local supply chain issues that are affecting all facets of the BPS Child Nutrition program. The national staffing shortages have negatively impacted the manufacturing industry and delivery service, causing the disruption of an ample supply of packaging materials, dairy, produce, grains, and proteins to our schools. We are relying more heavily on local producers, who are coming through with supplies for us.

- Working with Civil Service to schedule FSW recruitment in January.
- There has been a great deal of absenteeism due to COVID infections, quarantines and general life changes that prevent the schools from being fully staffed.
- Breakfast ADP for Nov is 17,894
- Lunch ADP for Nov is 26,776
- Looking to add Halal menu items to more schools in spring of 2022.
- Food Service staff are currently working toward Serve Safe Certification

COMPUTER DEVICES

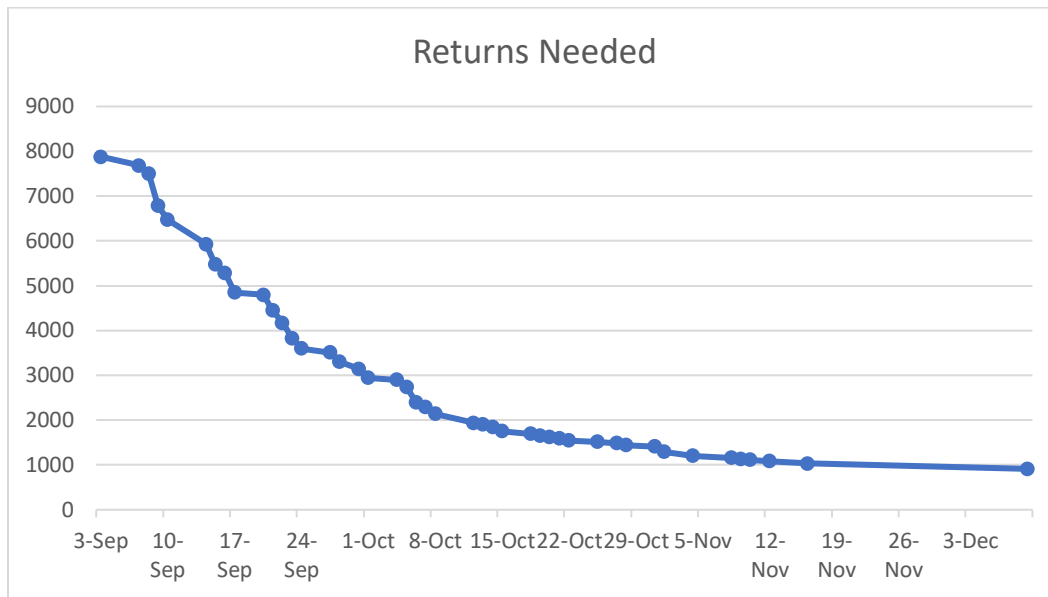
Device Distribution

As of December 15, 2021, end of day, 29,084 devices have been distributed to students. Based on current enrollment, there is a solid 95% distribution rate. The IT Department is continuing to work with schools daily to fill in any gaps or exchanges of devices as needed.



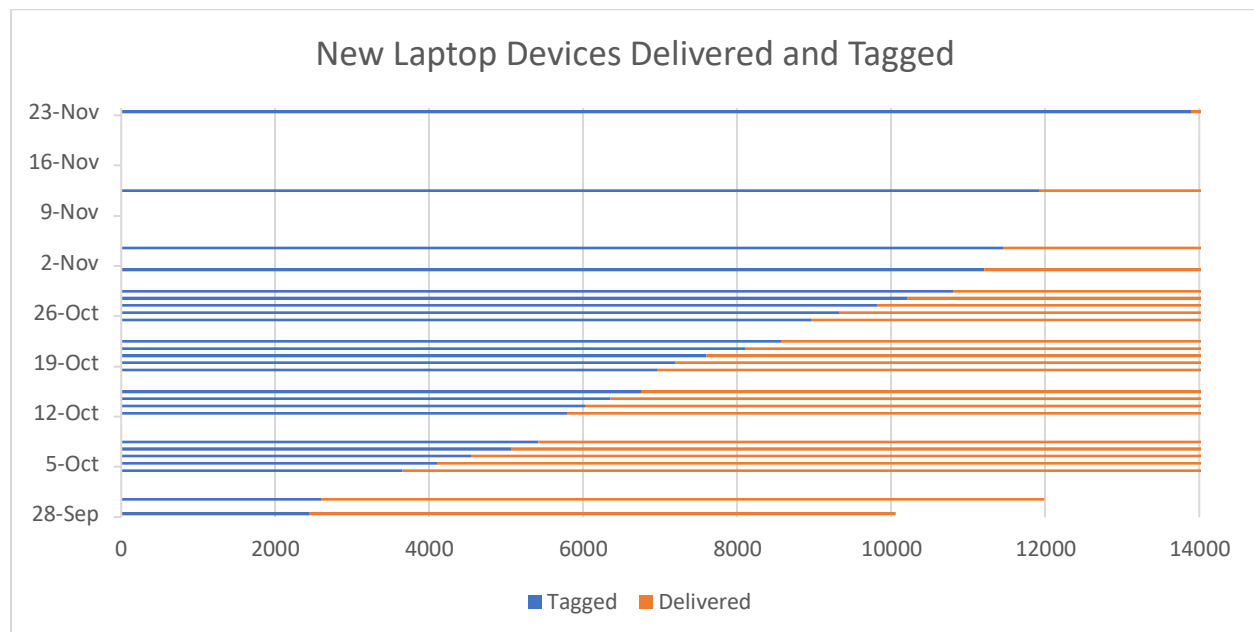
Device Returns

As of December 15, 2021, end of day, 912 devices are still needed (505 Laptops; 407 iPads). The Superintendent has authorized providing devices to students who have not returned devices. The process for providing devices to those students has been communicated and is underway.



New Devices

Fourteen thousand new laptops have been ordered and almost all have arrived. New devices will be used to cover any shortage of legacy devices due to non-returns and damages and ultimately, refresh our student device inventory. To date, we have received 13,903 of an expected 14,000 new devices (99%); 13,903 have been tagged and are ready to be distributed. We have also received 2,300 of 5,000 new iPads.



HUMAN RESOURCES STAFFING UPDATE

Districtwide Teacher Vacancies– 99% of districtwide vacancies staffed (22 vacancies).

Teacher Paid Leaves of Absence Vacancies- 55% of paid leaves staffed (54 vacancies)

*We are addressing leaves and vacancies with providing certified teachers an opportunity to teach a 6th period with 20% of their salary as compensation. *Please see attached graph.*

Instructional Staffing Summaries–

Teachers: 194 New Hires from traditional recruitment
12 New Hires from UB Residency
24 New Hires from Open Contracts
230 New Hire -Teachers (YTD) as of 12/9/2021

Substitutes: 62 New Hire Substitutes, paperwork completed & entered into MUNIS
0 New Hire Substitutes, paperwork processing
62 New Hire -Substitutes (YTD) as of 12/9/2021

***** Substitute Interview Scheduled 12/11/21
Registered to Attend Event**

**6 Substitute Administrator Candidates
50 Substitute Teacher Candidates**

Bus Aides:

Human Resources, in collaboration with The Adult Learning Center and Bus Aide Office, will hold open interviews 12/9, 12/14, 12/16, 1/6, 1/11, 1/13 and completion of paperwork to close the gap between interviews and start date.

Thank you to Board Members, Mr. Heard and Mr. Scott, for sharing the BPS Bus Hiring Event flyer in the community. We had 37 candidates attend the first event on 12/9, this is quadruple the response we have seen to date. Please keep sharing, this is an ongoing recruitment effort to fill over 100 bus aide vacancies.

8 new bus aides started with transportation in month of December

Food Service:

The Food Service Department works directly in collaboration with the City of Buffalo Civil Service office to recruit and submit paperwork for new candidates.

74 Total New Hires since August 1, 2021

16 Candidates submitted paperwork for processing on 12/1/2021, waiting civil service approval

Teacher Aides/ Assistants:

New Teacher Aide Recruitment Event 12/18/2021- Waterfront School
60 Teacher Aide and Assistants invitations issued for on the spot interviews
City of Buffalo Civil Service staff will be on-site to review and preapprove candidates

Teacher Aides:

126 New Teacher Aides hired (YTD), this has addressed over 85% of our teacher aide vacancies. Principals are continuing to conduct interviews of candidates that live near their schools.

School Security Officers:

13 Security Officers are in processing with Civil Service - physicals are required and set up by City of Buffalo Civil Service with ECMC.

6 Security Officers hired and approved by Civil Service from hiring event held on 10/25/2021. Next steps are fingerprints, start date, and assignment issued by Security leadership.

Additional Staffing Information:

BPS Demographics - BTF and BCSA

BTF contract teacher hires in 2021-22, over 81% are female, and roughly 22% do not identify as White.

BCSA appointments in 2021-22, over 79% are female, and roughly 41% do not identify as White. 34 different employees received appointments this fiscal year through the last BOE meeting.

Administrative Vacancies:

1. Assistant Principal – Emerson PS#302 – Round I – 12/15/21
2. Director CLRI – Currently Posted – Round I - TBD
3. Supervisor CLRI – Round II – 12
4. /14/21
5. Supervisor of School Leadership – Round II – 12/9/21
6. Supervisor of Guidance and Counseling – Round I - TBD
7. Director of Multilingual Placement – Dan Murtha, Probationary 12/16/21
8. Supervisor of Student Placement – Round I TBD
9. Director of Crisis Prevention- Aundrea Sanders, Probationary 12/16/21
10. Supervisor of Athletics – Patrick Ricci – Start date - TBD
11. Supervisor of Adult Education – Round I, TBD
12. Director of Libraries - Round I TBD
13. Assistant Principal - BUILD PS#92 – Karen Gantz. Probationary 11/18/21
14. Assistant Principal - Harriet Tubman PS#31 – Rachael Rizzo, Acting, Round II – 12/16/21
15. Supervisor Early Warning Indicator – Round I - 12/22/21
16. Principal – Herman Badillo PS#76 – Round I – TBD
17. Supervisor of Student Support – Round I – TBD
18. Assistant Principal – MST 5-8 PS#196 – Round I – TBD

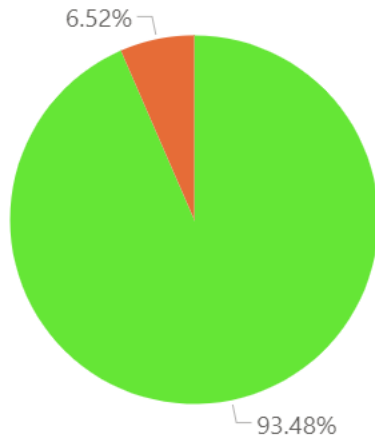
19. Director of Multilingual/Bilingual – Round I – TBD

20. Instructional Specialist III – Human Resources – Round I TBD

District Vaccination Status Update

Overall Vaccine Status

● Yes ● No



STUDENT SUPPORT

Immunization Report: The 2021- 2022 school year began with 4,048 students who were non-compliant with up-to-date immunizations.

- As of Friday, 12/10/21 the number decreased to 456

COVID-19 Data Between 9/10/21- 12/15/21:

- COVID cases ending week 12/15: Total: 97 (students 24/73 staff-)
- COVID cases ending week 12/10: Total: 225 (students 62/staff 163)
- Total Number Quarantined: 1,700
- CUMULATIVE SINCE THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR:
 - **Students:** 1,104
 - **Staff:** 462
- **TOTAL:** 1,566
- Total # of classrooms quarantined 18
- Total # of school closings: 0

Request for Mask Exemptions and Medical Exemptions:

- Approved medical exemptions requests: 192
- Mask Exemption Requests: 69 (concurrent instruction approved- due to high transmission status)

- TOTAL: 261

BPS Vaccination Clinics: The Buffalo Public School District has partnered with the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) and the Community Health Worker (CHW) Network to host clinics.

- Number of Vaccination Clinics: **8**
- Number Vaccinated at BPS Clinics: **Awaiting update information**

Dr. Dennis Kuo's Update:

- COVID cases have reduced and are at pre-Thanksgiving levels, approximately 400 cases/100K/7 days. Buffalo cases continue to parallel the county at large.
- Most cases continue to be reported in the 30–39-year age group. Highest positivity rates are in children. All rates have come down since last week.
- Hospitalizations for adults are at very high levels but have leveled off. There is a lot of turnover though - people being admitted and discharged quickly. The hospitals themselves are at capacity.
- Rates are still very high, so we need to continue all protocols. The sense is that the Omicron variant is probably circulating already and will continue to rapidly emerge.



Dr. Kriner Cash
Superintendent