



**Bellefonte Area  
School District**

## **Bellefonte Area School District**

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**Mrs. Tammie L. Burnaford, Superintendent  
Mr. Kenneth G. Bean, Jr., CMA, Director of Fiscal Affairs**

*Inspiring and Preparing Today's Learners to Embrace Tomorrow's Challenges*

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**March 29, 2021**

**Dear Bellefonte Area School District Parents, Families, Staff and Community:**

Happy Monday! As I mentioned in last week's letter, we are continuing to see an uptick in cases in the district, as well as in the county and in the state. Centre County is still in the substantial rate of transmission according to the PA Department of Health (PA DoH), as both the number of cases and the positivity rate are on the rise in Centre County. We are still bound by all of the PA Dept. of Health (PA DoH) and PA Dept of Education (PDE) mandates. Upon the recommendations of the DoH, we could be required to close schools if an outbreak occurs.. This could curtail any and all school activities, as well. We must continue to practice safety by wearing masks and social distancing. We are also asking parents to please keep their children home from school if they have covid-like symptoms or may have been exposed to a person who has covid. We absolutely must be as vigilant as always.

### **BASD Case Count Update**

Since my letter and report on Monday, March 22, we received notification of 13 new cases in our district, as follows:

- A Bellefonte Elementary student tested positive for the coronavirus. The student was in school while infectious, so the case does count by PDE guidelines. Mr. Park worked on the contact tracing and the parents of all students who may have been close contacts were notified last Monday.
- A Pleasant Gap staff member tested positive for the coronavirus. The staff member was not in school while infectious, so the case does not count by PDE guidelines, and no contact tracing was necessary.

- Two Marion-Walker staff members tested positive for the coronavirus. Both staff members were physically present while infectious, and the cases count by PDE guidelines. These staff members were tested a few days apart and had been in close contact with each other. This could be our first known transmission within our schools, but that is difficult to determine completely. The staff members had very little contact with students, so no contact tracing applied for students.
- A Marion Walker student tested positive for the coronavirus. This student was present while infectious, and the case counts by PDE guidelines. Mrs. Krisch notified parents of all students who may have been close contacts yesterday.
- The rest of the new, known district cases involve high school students (all student cases). Keeping track of these cases has been somewhat difficult because we received very late notification of some of them, as some cases actually occurred prior to the closure last week and some involved students who have not been in school. To the best of our knowledge, here's what we know:
  - ❑ 3 students actually had symptoms and tested positive for the corona virus prior to March 19th and the closure. These cases do not count due to the closure, but a minimal amount of contact tracing was necessary and was done last week.
  - ❑ 1 student tested positive for the coronavirus, but was not in school while infectious. The case does not count by PDE guidelines, and no contact tracing was necessary.
  - ❑ 2 students (related to each other) tested positive for the coronavirus, but both students are enrolled in remote learning this semester. Neither one has been in school while infectious.
  - ❑ 2 students (related to each other and to another district case) tested positive for the coronavirus. Both students were in school while infectious, and both cases count by PDE guidelines. Parents of all students who may have been close contacts to these students were notified by Mrs. Michaels and Mr. Fedisson last week.

Just to refresh your memory, per the PA Department of Education (PDE) mandates, we must keep track of the number of active cases in each district school based on a 14 day rolling calendar. Cases count in the rolling 14 day calendar only if the student/staff member was physically present in the building while infectious. Active cases move in and out of the 14 day window based on the date of symptom onset or a positive case. The case counts and surrounding circumstances are discussed with the PA Department of Health (DoH) after each new case is identified, and we are given recommendations about possible closures, if needed. We have been in touch with the DoH several times over the past week and have been following the DoH guidance.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Total number of known, new cases since 3/22</b>	<b>*Since 3/22, the number of new cases that do “count” - students/staff that have been physically present in the building while infectious</b>
High School	5 (students) Note: 3 other student cases were identified this week, but were prior to 3/19	2
Middle School	0	0
Bellefonte Elem.	1 (student)	1
Benner Elem.	0	0
Marion-Walker Elem.	3 ( 2 staff members, 1 student)	3
Pleasant Gap Elem.	1 (staff member)	0
BeLA	0	0

### **Other Reminders**

Parents should continue to notify building principals if their child(ren) tests positive for the coronavirus as soon as possible, so that we can provide information for parents and we can stay on top of any contact tracing that may need to occur.. The best way to get in touch with the building principal in the evenings, on the weekends or off times is via email, as our principals

check email regularly even during the evening hours and on weekends. The quick notifications really have helped our administrators to act quickly to begin contact tracing and to lessen the spread of the disease over the past 6 months.

Of course, the PDE mandates, the DoH directives, increases in new cases or unforeseen issues can happen rapidly, and we may need to change our plans at a moment's notice. If any of this latest information changes or our status must change, we will let you know as soon as possible.

Again, we encourage everyone in our school community to continue to follow the guidelines and practices that can help lessen the spread of the virus. This includes washing hands frequently, wearing masks, social distancing and practicing personal responsibility. Now, as much as ever, we need to keep up the great work in order to keep our students, staff and community safe and healthy. Please use good judgement and practice safety at all times, so that we can return to normal.

Following the school calendar, this Thursday, April 1st is designated as a Professional Learning Day for teachers and staff/ Students do not have school. In addition, Friday, April 2nd and Monday, April 5th are vacation days All schools will be closed. I may send a quick update later this week, but I will send my usual update letter next Tuesday, April 6th.

I hope you and your family stays safe, healthy and well! Best wishes for a fabulous week ahead and a Happy Easter!

Sincerely,  
Tammie Burnaford  
Superintendent  
Bellefonte Area School District