



## **Bellefonte Area School District**

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

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**April 26, 2021**

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

Happy Monday! We were notified of 4 new covid cases (all students) in the district since my letter on Friday. All of these new cases are related to prior cases, and the students have been in quarantine. The summary of those cases, some additional vaccine information, and some really great news are included in this letter.

### **BASD Case Count Update**

Since my letter on Friday, April 16, we received notification of 4 new covid cases in our district, as follows:

- A Pleasant Gap Elementary student tested positive for the coronavirus. The student has not been in school for several weeks and was not in school while infectious. No contact tracing required, and the case does not count by PDE guidelines.
- A Middle School student tested positive for the coronavirus this weekend. The student has not been in school since April 14, so the case does not count by PDE guidelines, and no contact tracing was needed.
- Two high school students tested positive this weekend. Both students were already quarantined and have not been in school while infectious. No contact tracing is needed, and the cases do not count.

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. The PDE guidelines for closures changed about 3 weeks ago and include shorter lengths of closures if closures are recommended by the PA DoH. As we have done all year, we will continue to follow the guidance of the PA DoH when new cases arise.

Please note, too, that the 14 day rolling calendar for the high school resets to 0 tomorrow due to the 5 day closure. A new case will count only if the student/staff member is physically present in the high school beginning today.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Total number of known, new cases since 4/23</b>	<b>*Since 4/23, the number of new cases that do “count” - students/staff that have been physically present in the building while infectious</b>
High School	2 (students)	0
Middle School	1 (student)	0
Bellefonte Elem.	0	0
Benner Elem.	0	0
Marion-Walker Elem.	0	0
Pleasant Gap Elem.	1	0
BeLA	0	0

## **More Information about Vaccines**

We have had several parents and staff members ask if quarantining is required if a person is fully vaccinated. From the PA DoH website FAQ's:

*DOES BEING FULLY VACCINATED CHANGE QUARANTINE GUIDELINES? Yes, A close contact who is fully vaccinated and has no symptoms does not need to quarantine.*

“Fully vaccinated” means that a person has received both doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than 2 weeks ago. There is a 14 day waiting period after the shots before a person is considered “fully vaccinated.”

Again, I am not encouraging or discouraging anyone from getting the vaccine. Getting the vaccine is a very personal decision. I'm simply answering a question that we have been asked several times, particularly with the current outbreak in our area.

## **Some Really Great News!!**

Last week, The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that the free school breakfast and lunch program will be extended through the 2021 - 2022 school year. This means that all of our students can get free breakfasts and free lunches again, all next school year.

## **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 7 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. The uptick in cases is concerning. If closures must occur, all other school-related activities and athletic events will be postponed, as well, during any closure. If any of this latest information changes or our status must change, we will let you know as soon as possible.

Again, we are urging 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. We are still urging parents to keep students home if they are exhibiting covid-like symptoms or if they may have been exposed to a positive case of the coronavirus. We need to work together and be vigilant in our safe practices in order to curb the spread of the virus.

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 and finish our last 27 days of school this year safely together.

I hope you and your family stays safe, healthy and well! I hope you have a magnificent Monday!

Sincerely,  
Tammie Burnaford  
Superintendent  
Bellefonte Area School District