



Bellefonte Area School District

318 North Allegheny Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823
Telephone: (814) 355-4814

Mrs. Tammie L. Burnaford, Superintendent
Dr. Kristopher M. Vancas, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Kenneth G. Bean, Jr., CMA, Director of Fiscal Affairs

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

May 3, 2021

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

Happy Monday! We were notified of only one new positive covid case in the district this weekend. Today's letter has information about that case, but it also has an update for the number of known cases that count by PDE guidelines for each school, as of today. Finally, this letter includes information about the end of the school year, a day off and the last day of school.

BASD Case Count Update

Since my letter on Friday, April 30, we received notification of 1 new covid case in our district. A staff member at Bellefonte Elementary tested positive for the coronavirus this weekend. The staff member was in school while infectious, so the case does count according to PDE guidelines. However, the staff member was not in close contact with any students or staff, so there was no contact tracing required.

While only one new case does seem like we could be making our way out of the woods, we still need to be extremely vigilant. All but 2 of our schools currently have cases that count towards the PDE mandated, 14 day rolling calendar. And, we have heard of many cases in all of our district communities (the numbers in our 2 district zip codes - 16823 and 16841 - are still fluctuating). The chart below shows the current number of known cases that count for each school, as of today. Only one of the cases listed on the chart will drop off the calendar for that school (Benner) this week. We are still urging students and staff to stay home if they are exhibiting any of the covid-like symptoms or if they may have been a close contact to someone who tested positive. We are not out of the woods yet.

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.

Building	Number of Cases on the 14 Day, Rolling Calendar as of 5/3
High School	3
Middle School	1
Bellefonte Elem.	1
Benner Elem.	1
Marion-Walker Elem.	0
Pleasant Gap Elem.	0

School Calendar, End of Year Preview

According to the school calendar for the 2020-21 school year, a Professional Learning Day is scheduled for BASD staff on Friday, May 28, 2021. May 28 will be a vacation day for students, and students will not have school on this day.

The last day of school for students will be June 3, 2021. All BASD schools will dismiss early. Dismissal will begin for Middle School and High School at 9:30 AM, and at 10:30 AM for all Elementary students. We are often asked why we dismiss early on the last day of school. The short answer is that the day counts as a whole day, much like it does on an early dismissal day for snow. We think students are anxious to get their summer vacation started, so we dismiss early on the last day of school. I'm guessing that students will be ready to get this

summer vacation started sooner even more than in past years. It's been a long year, and the students have worked so hard and have been simply awesome!

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 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 22 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