



Good morning!

Happy Holidays! As we close our schools for the break this year, I'd like to share our latest COVID case counts, offer an update about quarantines from this past weekend, and reflect on a personal message. Barring any breaking news, I'll send my next update letter on Monday, January 3, 2022. Please note that school resumes on Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022.

COVID Case Count Update

Since my email on Monday, we received confirmation of 8 new cases across the district. Of the 8 new cases, 6 are students and 2 are staff members. A summary of the new cases is shown in the chart below.

| Building | Total number of known, confirmed, new cases since 12/20 | *Since 12/20, the number of new cases - students/staff that were physically present in the building while infectious |
|---------------------|--|---|
| High School | 2 (both students) | 2 |
| Middle School | 1 (student) | 1 |
| Bellefonte Elem. | 2 (1 student, 1 staff) | 0 |
| Benner Elem. | 0 | 0 |
| Marion-Walker Elem. | 2 (1 student, 1 staff) | 1 |
| Pleasant Gap Elem. | 1 (student) | 1 |
| BeLA | 0 | 0 |

Parents have been notified if their children were identified as a close contact to these 8 cases since Monday. At the time of this email, there were a total of 11 students quarantined for the 8 new cases that we received notification for since Monday.

As a follow up from my Monday's email (12/20) and case count update, there were a total of 9 students quarantined for those 2 cases, as reported in Monday's email (contact tracing wasn't completed until later on Monday for those cases). However, in today's update and in the review of Monday's update, please note that some of these cases are a result of a family member, in some cases a sibling, testing positive first. Additionally, please note that some of the students quarantined are siblings of a student who tested positive.

On a personal note...

This time of year always makes me a bit nostalgic and the emotions of the season come to the surface. I was trying to find the right words to describe what this season means to me and how important it is to reflect on how truly blessed I have been when I came across the letter I sent to parents and staff last year on Dec. 23, 2020. No truer words can be spoken even a year later. This is what I wrote last year:

"...I'd like to share my personal story and maybe an idea that is helping me during the difficult times. As a disclaimer, I mean no offense to anyone in my story and narrative here. I'm just sharing (and as we all know, I tend to talk and write a lot).

The month of December brings all types of holiday celebrations, many based on faith or tradition. My family celebrates Christmas, and we have some traditions that are ingrained in my heart. While my family was quite poor when I was young, my sister and I were blessed beyond measure with parents who loved us. We had very little in material things, but we had family in the truest sense of the word. Looking back now as an adult, I realize how deeply special Christmas was. My parents taught me the importance of real giving through the life I live. My mom passed away 7 days before Christmas in 2016. She cherished Christmas and the Christmas spirit. My dad passed away on Feb. 9th this year (2020). Due to the pandemic and the loss of my parents, many of our Christmas celebrations and traditions are gone this year. It would be easy to fall into a pool of emotions, as I think many people also could feel given their own personal stories and the impact of the pandemic this year..

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to hear a motivational speech from Jon Gordon, a renowned speaker and author. In his speech and at least one of his books, he shared the idea of "get to" versus "have to." This is a principle that can be a constant reminder to myself. In short, the world and our circumstances can look very different if we use an attitude of "I get to...." rather than "I have to...." As an example, instead of saying "I have to clean my house," I can say "I get to clean my house" because I'm so blessed to have a house and a warm place to live. Changing a word or two can change my entire attitude. As difficult this Christmas is for me, instead of saying "I have to try to just get through this holiday and hope for something better next year, I can say

"I get to celebrate the meaning of Christmas, and I get to recall and relive so many incredible memories of the traditions we had and time I had with my parents and sister in the Christmases of past." I will continue to look through the lens of "I get to..." through this holiday season and beyond.

There are only 8 days left in the year 2020. It's been a wild and bumpy ride in 2020 for me personally and professionally. I'm sure if someone had asked me at the close of 2019 where I thought I would be in a year, I would have never imagined the challenges that we've faced for more than 9 months, how different my life would be and how changed our educational system would look. I certainly would have never guessed that I would be at the helm of such a great school district and community with such amazing staff, incredible parents, and absolutely awesome students. I feel so incredibly blessed. Here's to 2021 and the promise of a bright, new year! "

As I said, no truer words can be spoken again this year. And now as the year 2021 comes to a close, I'd also like to thank you for all you have done to support our students and schools throughout 2021. This year has brought many challenges, and we have had our ups and downs. But, through it all, our students, staff and our school community continue to shine. I am still so very blessed to be part of this wonderful school community with such an amazing staff, incredible parents, and absolutely awesome students. . I'd like to wish you and your family all the peace and love this season may bring, the joy of building your own cherished and deeply special memories, and the happiest of new years. Here's to 2022 and the promise of a bright, new year! (Cheers!)

Best wishes always,

Tammie Burnaford

Superintendent

Bellefonte Area School District

Note: For more information about Jon Gordon, you can google him. He's written many motivational books. His book, *One Word* has been featured nationally. In this book, he offers and explains an idea to create a mantra of one word, in lieu of new year's resolutions. Mr. Gordon spoke to our entire BASD staff several years ago, and some of our schools and teachers still use his ideas.