



Good evening!

Happy Friday! It seems as if winter weather is here to stay for the next few months. Today was our first winter weather delay for this school year. The first one usually brings to light some glitches in both communication and transportation, and we did have just a few this morning. We worked through those and will continue to try to improve. But, overall, the entire day went very well! Thank you so much for your understanding and support!

This is just a quick update for positive COVID cases since Tuesday. This is a little confusing today. Due to the long break, our count clock was reset on Tuesday. We did get many emails and notifications of positive cases that occurred over the break. Since most of those are past, and school was not impacted at all, the case counts I'm sharing in this email reflect the notifications that we received since school began on Tuesday. In other words, the summary of cases today includes only the students/staff that had symptoms on or after Tuesday OR had a positive test taken on or after Tuesday. For this week, all were present while infectious. Since my email on Tuesday, we received confirmation of 23 new cases across the district. Of the 23 new cases, 21 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 1/4	*Since 1/4, the number of new cases - students/staff that were physically present in the building while infectious
High School	9 (all students)	9
Middle School	8 (all students)	8
Bellevue Elem.	0	0
Benner Elem.	2 (1 student, 1 staff)	2

Marion-Walker Elem.	4 (3 students, 1 staff)	4
Pleasant Gap Elem.	0	0
BeLA	0	0

This is confusing this week, and I tried my best to give an accurate count of the notifications we received since Tuesday. If I made any mistakes, I will correct them in the next email update.

We also received late notifications today, so contact tracing may have not been completed. Most parents have been notified if their children were identified as a close contact to these 23 cases this week. However, the middle school and high school administrators and nurses were still gathering information and working on contact tracing into this evening. At the time of this email, there were a total of 139 students quarantined for the 23 new cases that we received notification for since Monday. Of the 139 total quarantines, 127 of the students quarantined were middle school or high school students. And, as mentioned in the past, please note that some of the 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.

We need to work together and get through these next few weeks, one day at a time. We are urging parents to work with us and support personal safety measures, such as:

- Parents **MUST** keep their students home if they are sick or have any symptoms. They also should keep their students home if someone in the house is sick and awaiting test results or if the parents have any notion that their student may have been exposed to a positive case.
- Parents are encouraged to email their children's principals if their children test positive, as soon as possible. Principals also can and will provide answers to any questions parents may have. Please reach out to them.
- We want to encourage parents to notify their children's nurses regarding their vaccination status, if they have gotten a vaccination. This is simply to help cut down on the length of time it takes for contact tracing.

Barring any breaking news, I'll send my next update letter on Monday morning, as usual. I hope you and your family have a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Tammie Burnaford

Superintendent
Bellefonte Area SD