



Happy Friday!

Another spectacular week in the Bellefonte Area School District! As promised, I'll be providing covid information weekly in a brief email on Fridays. I was asked by several parents and persons to tell another story about my sister before the end of this school year. That story is near the end of this email. Please feel free to just skip it. My sister wouldn't read it all either - lol.

Covid Case Counts

Since last Friday (5/27), we have received notifications of 13 new covid cases in the district. These new cases involve 3 High School students, 3 High School staff members, 2 Middle School Students, 2 Bellefonte Elementary students, 1 Bellefonte Elementary staff member, and 2 Pleasant Gap Elementary students. Note that several of these cases are related to each other (ex: students may be siblings) or related to family members who tested positive last week.

As a reminder, the rules for contact tracing/quarantine were changed for schools by the PA Department of Education (PDE) and the PA Department of Health (PA DoH) several weeks ago. We are still required to report new cases to the PDE/PA DoH, but we are no longer required to report the number of close contacts/quarantines.

Centre County CDC Covid Designations

As reported and described in an email a few weeks ago, the CDC uses 2 different designations for covid (please see that email for an explanation of each type of designation). Today, Centre County is designated as having a high covid transmission rate using the previous metrics, and according to yesterday's CDC report of community level for the prior week, Centre County is designated as now having a "medium" community level rate.

I continue to follow the case counts in our local, district zip codes (as a reminder, we share our zip codes with other school districts), and we document the new cases that we get in our schools each week. Overall, compared to last week, the new positive case counts are down slightly in the 16823 zip code, up very slightly in the 16841 zip code and down slightly within our schools.

As mentioned, we are still required to report school cases to the PA DoH/PD until June 10th, so I will keep sending these covid updates for the remainder of the school year which is only 4 student days.

The Last Day of School for Students

Please note, the last day of school is Thursday, June 9th, and students will be dismissed early the last day. Middle school and high school students will be dismissed beginning at 9:30 AM, and elementary students will be dismissed beginning at 10:30 AM. We are often asked why the last day of school is only a few hours. In short, this counts as a full day of attendance for our students. We dismiss early, so that they can get started on their summer vacations as soon as possible. A quick start for a well-deserved summer vacation and relaxation!

A Story about My Sister

I knew at a very young age that I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. Mrs. Alexander, my first grade teacher was amazing and was the first teacher who inspired me to want to be a teacher (I had many teachers who also inspired me - I try to thank them every time I get a chance). I very much wanted to be like Mrs. Alexander, and I was very eager to get my teaching career started even at a young age. So, I began teaching around the age of 6 or 7, holding school in our house, for a few years. My “classes” had only a few students - my sister who is a little over 3 years younger than me, and a few of my neighborhood friends when I could coerce them into playing school with me. “Class” wasn’t held very regularly with most of my “students,” but my sister “attended” often when she got old enough due to my persistence to play school. She was a most difficult student, not wanting to follow any of my rules or do any of the assignments. She wouldn’t print her name neatly on her paper, like I learned was important from Mrs. Alexander. My sister just wrote “boo” all over anything she could (she thought if she wrote “boo” I would be scared - what kids think!). When asked to read, she often would just read the first few sentences and then jump to the end (she still does this with books!). She gave me the first chance and challenges to hone my teaching skills. I will say that dealing with her parents wasn’t always easy either (yes, they were my parents, too, lol). Every now and then they allowed her to “escape” my “classroom,” but they ALWAYS supported my goal of going to college, being a teacher and making a difference in the lives of children.

I tell this very true story somewhat in jest. The fact is that I had an incredible childhood with teachers who deeply inspired me, friends who went along with ‘playing school,’ a sister who tolerated my goals then and continues to support me, and parents who were incredible and really supported me and my dreams in every possible way. I have been so very blessed throughout my life and throughout my lifetime career in education. My mom passed away in Dec. 2016, and my dad passed away in Feb. 2020. I dearly miss them every day, but I also strive every day to make them proud, to make a difference and a positive impact in the lives of children. And, I still keep trying so hard to get my sister to be a better student (lol).

On a related note, as we come to the end of this school year, a huge congratulations to the Class of 2022! Parents, families, friends, teachers, staff, administrators and everyone in our school community - a special thank you for making an deep and positive impact on the fine young lives of our soon-to-be graduates!

Barring any breaking news, I’ll send my next (and probably last for the school year) update on Friday next week. As always, thank you so very much for your continued support, patience and understanding! I hope you have a wonderful weekend!

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Bellefonte Area School District