



**Bellefonte Area
School District**

Bellefonte Area School District

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**Mrs. Tammie L. Burnaford, Superintendent
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Inspiring and Preparing Today's Learners to Embrace Tomorrow's Challenges

March 22, 2021

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

Happy Monday! Good news! Since Friday, we have not received notification of any new coronavirus cases anywhere in the district! This letter contains a BASD covid recap for the High School and the other schools and a short summary of the new guidelines issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) late last week.

BASD Covid Update

With the high school being closed for these past two days and moving to remote learning today, this means that the count for the High School 14 day rolling calendar will reset to 0 tomorrow. Most of the active cases would have fallen out of the calendar later this week anyway, but this short closure that was recommended by the PA Department of Health may prove to be helpful, while increasing safety, in the long run. Of course, as we well know, things can change at a moment's notice. If so, we will let you know as soon as possible. Barring any complications, the High School will return to in-person learning tomorrow, March **23** (I had the wrong date on Friday's letter).

As described in Friday's letter, the Middle School currently has one positive case that counts in the PDE guidelines, and Pleasant Gap Elementary has one positive case that counts in the PDE guidelines. Both of these cases are included in the 14 day rolling calendar for the respective schools. However, both cases also drop out of the calendar on Thursday of this week as the time on the calendar will expire.

As a personal note, I want "normal" as much as anyone, and I do have covid fatigue. But, we just can't completely abandon our current rules and safe practices. Yet.

BASD Vaccine Update

Over the past few weeks, many of our BASD staff members have had the opportunity to get the vaccine, either the Moderna or the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, through various programs aimed at getting people in the Phase 1A group and those working in education vaccinated. Some of our staff qualified and may have gotten the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine earlier, too. We don't have any exact numbers, but according to a broad survey, we know that at least 72% of our staff will be fully vaccinated by the end of next week. The number may be higher, and some are awaiting a second dose of the vaccine.

CDC Changes Recommendations for Schools

On Friday, March 19th, the CDC, a federal organization, issued new guidance for schools. Most notably, the CDC clarified distancing requirements and reduced the required 6 feet of distancing to 3 feet in some situations in classrooms and schools. Prior to Friday's announcement, schools were expected to keep students 6 feet apart to the extent feasible (minimum 3 ft) in classrooms and schools. This is what we have done in our schools, as well. More details and information can be found on the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>

It will be interesting to see if our PA DoH adopts any of these new recommendations as regulations for our schools. If so, this could change the contact tracing protocols, as well. If you recall, since we began school last fall, "close contact" was defined by the PA DoH as being within 6 ft of a person who tested positive for the coronavirus for 15 minutes or more. We are still bound by these PA DoH guidelines for now. Stay tuned!

Other Reminders

Parents should continue to notify building principals if their child(ren) tests positive for the coronavirus. 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.

Of course, as previously mentioned, 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. If any of this latest information changes or our status must change, we will let you know as soon as possible. Unless we have any major news, outbreaks or changes that need

to be shared immediately, I will send a weekly update letter with case counts and other information next Monday.

Again, we encourage 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. 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.

I hope you and your family stays safe, healthy and well! Best wishes for a fabulous week ahead!

Sincerely,
Tammie Burnaford
Superintendent
Bellefonte Area School District