



**Bellefonte Area
School District**

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

March 8, 2021

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

Happy Monday! It was so nice to not have any weather issues and to get a 5 day week in last week. The weather for this week looks even nicer! This letter includes a brief case count update and a recap of the Governor's orders from last week.

BASD Case Count Update

Since my letter and report on Monday, March 1, we received notification of one new case in our schools or district. A Bellefonte Elementary student tested positive for the coronavirus. All parents of students who may have been close contacts were notified last week. Although this student hasn't been physically present in school since Feb. 26, the case does count in the PDE guidelines. This means that Bellefonte Elementary currently has 1 active case in the PDE, 14 day rolling calendar (this case will be out of the calendar on Thursday, March 11). There are no other, known positive cases in any of the schools in the district as of last evening. The number of new cases continues to drop in Centre County and in our two main zip codes, 16823 and 16841. But, we are certainly not out of the woods yet. Centre County is still designated as a county with a substantial community transmission rate based on the metrics used by the PA Department of Health (PA DoH) ("substantial" is defined as having more than 100 new cases per 100,000 residents and/or a positivity rate of greater than 5-10% in a 7 day reporting period). We must maintain our safe practices and not drop our guards.

Some Restrictions lifted by Governor Wolf

Last Monday, Governor Wolf revised and lifted some mitigation restrictions. If you missed the news, here is a brief summary:

- **Revised maximum occupancy limits for indoor events to allow for 15% of maximum occupancy, regardless of venue size.** Core public health measures such as face covering (mask-wearing), social distancing, and hand hygiene still must be enforced. The 15% of maximum occupancy is permitted only if attendees and workers are able to comply with the 6-foot physical distancing requirement.
- **Revised maximum occupancy limits for outdoor events to allow for 20% of maximum occupancy, regardless of venue size.** Core public health measures such as face covering (mask-wearing), social distancing, and hand hygiene still must be enforced. The 20% of maximum occupancy is permitted only if attendees and workers are able to comply with the 6-foot physical distancing requirement.
- **Eliminate out-of-state travel restrictions.** In November, the Department of Health provided an [updated travel order](#) requiring anyone over the age of 11 who visits from another state to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test or place themselves in a travel quarantine for 14 days upon entering Pennsylvania. This order was rescinded. The current downward trend of cases nationwide and implementation of testing requirements and universal face covering on public transportation and transportation hubs are reducing the risk that interstate travel is a vector of disease transmission.

The easing of these restrictions is very welcomed, but we still have restrictions and Centre County still is designated as having a substantial rate of transmission. School districts, school leaders and superintendents are still bound to the rules and regulations established on November 23, 2020. If you recall, School Board presidents and superintendents were required to sign an Attestation form that indicates the district will comply with and enforce all of the mandates while the county is in the substantial rate of transmission designation. 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

On Wednesday, March 3, Governor Wolf held a press conference to announce that PA's allotment of 94,600 doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine will go directly to teachers and those working in education. IU's in collaboration with the DOH, PDE, PEMA and the PA National Guard will implement vaccine administration for the Prek-12 school entities in their respective IU areas. For us, this means that IU 10 will be organizing the rollout and setting up a clinic to offer our teachers and staff a chance to get the Johnson and Johnson vaccine this weekend. In addition, many of our staff who are in the Phase 1A group have already gotten the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, either both shots or they are awaiting their second dose. We are hopeful that by the end of the month, all of our staff who want to get the vaccine will have had the opportunity to do so. This is also another added layer of safety for our staff and another step to get us back to “normal.”

Other Reminders

We do have school this Thursday and Friday. These 2 days are our 2 snow make up days.

Daylight Savings Time begins next weekend, so we will need to set our clocks ahead on Sunday.

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, 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
Interim Superintendent
Bellefonte Area School District