



**Bellefonte Area
School District**

Bellefonte Area School District

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Inspiring and Preparing Today's Learners to Embrace Tomorrow's Challenges

Jan. 15, 2021

Dear Bellefonte Area School District families, staff and community:

Happy Friday! I don't have a lot to share today. Overall, it's been a fairly quiet week, but we have had so many awesome things going on in our schools, as usual, too!

BASD Case Count Update

Since my letter and report on Monday, Jan. 11, we were notified of 8 new, positive coronavirus cases across the district, and 1 positive case that occurred over the holiday break.

- Since Monday, we received notification of 4 new cases at the high school. Of these 4 new cases (all students), only 3 count by the PDE guidelines because the students were physically present at school while infectious. Mr. Fedisson and Mrs. Michaels worked through the contact tracing and contacted parents of students that may have been in close contact with the infected student(s) at school. Please note that the High School did have a few other positive cases last week that were included in the previous updates, but at least 2 of those cases will have surpassed the 14 day rolling calendar window when we return to school on Tuesday. I know this is all very confusing, but we do keep accurate records of the PDE-mandated, rolling calendar counts, and we talk to the DoH often about the cases.
- On Monday afternoon we received notification that a student enrolled in the BeLA program tested positive. This student has not been in our BeLA center nor in our schools this year.
- On Tuesday, we received notification that a middle school student tested positive for the coronavirus. The student was in school last week. Parents of students who may have been a close contact to this student were contacted on Tuesday by middle school staff.

This student was physically present while infectious, so this case does count according to PDE guidelines.

- Very late this afternoon, we received notification of two new cases (both students) at Marion-Walker Elementary School. Neither of the students were in school while infectious. These cases do not count according to PDE guidelines.
- This week, we also received notification that a staff member at the high school tested positive near the end of the holiday break. The staff member has not been in school since mid December. He/she was not physically present while infectious.

Just to refresh your memory, per the PA Department of Education (PDE) mandates, we must keep track of the number of active cases in each district school based on a 14 day rolling calendar. Cases count in the rolling 14 day calendar only if the student/staff member was physically present in the building while infectious. Active cases move in and out of the 14 day window based on the date of symptom onset or a positive case. The case counts and surrounding circumstances are discussed with the PA Department of Health (DoH) after each new case is identified, and we are given recommendations about possible closures, if needed. This is our current summary for each school in the district:

Building	Total number of known, new cases since 1/11	*Number of cases that now “count” - students/staff that have been physically present in the building while infectious
High School	4 (students)	3
Middle School	1 (student)	1
Bellefonte Elem.	0	0
Benner Elem.	0	0
Marion-Walker Elem.	2 (students)	0
Pleasant Gap Elem.	0	0
BeLA	1 (student)	0

More information about the PDE mandates and the 14 day rolling calendar for instructional models can be found on the PDE website.

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 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.

There is no school for students on Monday, Jan. 18th. The teachers and staff will be participating in professional learning activities in their schools. Unless we have any major news, outbreaks or changes that need to be shared immediately, I will send an update letter with case counts and other information on Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning next week since we don't have school on Monday.

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.

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.

And, and once again, thank you so very much for all you do, your support, and your willingness to partner with us to do what is best for students while keeping them and our staff as safe and healthy as possible! I hope you have an awesome weekend!

Sincerely,
Tammie Burnaford
Interim Superintendent
Bellefonte Area School District