



**Bellefonte Area
School District**

Bellefonte Area School District

**318 North Allegheny Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823
Telephone: (814) 355-4814**

**Mrs. Tammie L. Burnaford, Interim Superintendent
Mr. Kenneth G. Bean, Jr., CMA, Director of Fiscal Affairs**

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

Feb. 5, 2021

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

Happy Friday! What a wild weather week! For a while, I thought we were living in a snow globe and someone kept shaking it up (lol)! Today, I'll provide information about our snow make up date plans and updates for our latest covid case counts.

This past week, FID's and Snow Make Up Day on March 12

I am hopeful that Monday's Flexible Instructional Day went better this time. I talked with several parents, teachers and administrators, and it seemed to be better from their accounts of the day. We truly appreciate your support and patience as we work through all of the new initiatives and changing educational requirements this year!

I also want to explain some of our thinking behind having a true snow day on Tuesday rather than an additional FID. First, we hadn't really prepared for 2 FID days in a row, especially coming off a weekend. We will review this scenario and be better prepared for it should it occur again. Secondly, I thought it would be difficult for students to try to make up 2 days worth of work that is part of a FID. The assignments that teachers give on FIDs is meant to be independent work for students. But, if the students didn't understand something on the first day and weren't able to connect to their teachers, they would have to return and make up 2 days' work. In addition, if you recall, I often talk about how our calendars must line up with CPI, our tech school, which operates with the three local school districts - Bald Eagle Area, Penns Valley, and Bellefonte. CPI is open when at least 2 school districts are in session. We built 2 snow make up days in March into our 20-21 school calendar. By being in session on those days, our Bellefonte CPI students will be able to attend their CPI classes with their BEA and Penns Valley classmates. We are making up the snow day from December on March 11, and we will make up

this week's snow day on March 12. This means that school now will be in session the entire week of March 8, barring any covid complications, of course.

Finally, this year has been incredibly stressful for staff, students, and parents. I was hopeful that taking a break on Tuesday would allow time for everyone to enjoy the day and the beauty of the snow. I was trying to balance the need to continue education with the need to relax, if possible.

As a reminder, we can use only up to 5 FID's days per school year. We have 3 left for this year, and perhaps many weeks of winter left if that groundhog is correct. Most likely, if we have to close again due to weather, we will use FID's. As we have done, when we have a weather related or emergency closure, we will announce what type of day it will be at the time. If it's a Flexible Instructional Day, students should login to their Google Classroom to get more information from their individual teachers for the day or for their classes.

BASD Case Count Update

Since my note on Monday, Feb. 1st, we were notified of 7 new, positive coronavirus cases in the district. Please note that some of the student cases are related to each other and are in the same family. A short description and the status of each, as follows:

- Bellefonte Elementary Student - The student was in school last week while infectious. The parents of students who may have been close contacts were contacted earlier this week. This case counts according to PDE regulations.
- Middle School Student - The student was in school last week while infectious. The parents of students who may have been close contacts were contacted earlier this week. This case counts according to PDE regulations.
- Bellefonte Elementary Staff - The staff member was in school last week while infectious. There were no students identified as potential close contacts in this case. This case counts according to PDE regulations.
- Middle School Student - The student may have been in school while infectious, but if so, he/she was only present several weeks ago. Due to the timelines already expiring, there was no contact tracing to be done, and the case is already outside the 14 day rolling calendar as mandated by PDE.
- High School Student - The student has not been in school and was not physically present in school while infectious. This case does not count in the PDE regulations.
- Bellefonte Elementary Student - The student has not been in school and was not physically present in school while infectious. This case does not count in the PDE regulations.
- Middle School Student - The student was in school last week while infectious. The parents of students who may have been close contacts were notified earlier this week. This case counts according to PDE regulations.

I'd also like to add that we still have no, known direct transmissions of the virus within our schools. All of our cases seem to involve outside contacts through family, work, gatherings, etc.

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 2/1	*Since 2/1, the number of cases that do “count” - students/staff that have been physically present in the building while infectious
High School	1	0
Middle School	3	2
Bellefonte Elem.	3	2
Benner Elem.	0	0
Marion-Walker Elem.	0	0
Pleasant Gap Elem.	0	0
BeLA	0	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.

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.

Unless there is any urgent information to share, I'll send my next update letter on Monday morning. 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