



Good evening!

Happy Friday! I want to share an update for new Covid cases in the district since my last email on Monday. Since Monday, we have been notified of 8 new cases in the district. Seven of the new cases are students and one is a staff member. The principals and nurses have completed contact tracing for these 8 cases and have notified parents of any students who may have been a close contact. Like last week, please note that at least a few of the students who tested positive had a family member that had tested positive earlier, and the students were already quarantined and not in our schools while infectious (this was a term that PA DoH and PDE required last year in reporting, too). Also note that some of the cases may be related in the same family. To clarify, I'm using the old chart format from last year.

Building	Total number of known, new cases since 9/20	*Since 9/20, the number of new cases that were physically present in the building while infectious
High School	1 (student)	1
Middle School	0	0
Bellefonte Elem.	2 (both students)	2
Benner Elem.	0	0
Marion-Walker Elem.	4 (all students)	1
Pleasant Gap Elem.	1 (staff member)	1
BeLA	0	0

Please note if a student tests positive and was wearing a mask at school, another student who is identified as a close contact and who is also wearing a mask does not need to quarantine according to the PA Doh "rules" this year. This rule only applies to students wearing masks. All of our staff are required to, and do, wear masks, but the new rules for masks and quarantines only apply for students. Students wearing masks has helped to greatly reduce the number of required quarantines this year, particularly at the elementary schools. Students who are eligible and staff being vaccinated also has helped reduce the number or quarantines. However, also note, in all cases students and staff who are actually identified as close contacts and are not required to quarantine, they must wear a mask and monitor for symptoms for a period of time.

As I mentioned in previous emails, in order to stay ahead of any potential spread of covid, we ask parents to keep their students home if they have symptoms or are not feeling well. We also ask that parents let us know if their child tests positive as soon as possible, so that we can begin contact tracing. Like last year, the PA DoH is not timely in assisting parents or us in combating the spread of Covid. We sincerely appreciate parents working together with us, so that we can keep *all* of our students and staff safe and in school. This partnership worked phenomenally last year, and we are off to a great start this year. I know we can do this together!

I'll send another longer, update email and letter on Monday morning as usual. I'll try to try to answer some Frequently Asked Questions and explain more about the other mitigation/prevention strategies we have been using (carried over from last year), quarantines, local case counts, our numbers, the differences between last year and this year, etc. I hope you and your family have a safe and wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Tammie Burnaford
Superintendent
Bellefonte Area School District