



Good morning!

I hope you and your family had a most wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday break. On a personal note, it was so nice to be with family and to relax. My sister did most of the cooking on Thanksgiving, and my pumpkin pies (Mom's recipe) were awesome, so that made it even nicer for me (lol).

Each weekend, I usually write these update letters during the night before, and then I schedule them to automatically send between 8:00 and 9:00 the next morning. I worked on this letter until 10:00 last night. I'm sharing the information that I had up until that time. It is possible that we received more notifications very late last night or very early this morning. If we do receive more notifications today, I will include that information in my update on Friday.

Over the long weekend, we received notification of a total of 14 new covid cases, 11 are students and 3 are staff members. Most of the students or staff members who tested positive over this long weekend were not in school while infectious (their symptoms only started recently or they were recently tested). However, the principals were still working on contact tracing late into the night last night for some of the known cases. Here is a summary of the new cases, as of 10:00 last night:

- At the High School, 5 students and 1 staff member tested positive for covid. At least one of the students was not in school while infectious. No close contacts were identified for the staff member. So, no quarantines were needed for at least 1 of the students or the staff member. In addition, contact tracing was not yet completed for at least 3 of the high school students. The number of students who need to quarantine for these cases is still pending.
- At the Middle School, 2 students tested positive for covid. One student was not in school while infectious. So, no quarantines were needed for this case. In addition, contact tracing was not yet completed for the other student. The number of students who need to quarantine for this case is still pending.

- At Bellefonte Elementary, 1 staff member tested positive for covid. No close contacts were identified. No quarantines needed for this case.
- At Marion-Walker Elementary, 3 students tested positive for covid. One student was in school while infectious, but no close contacts were identified. No quarantines needed for this case. The other 2 students who tested positive were not in school while infectious. No quarantines needed.
- At Pleasant Gap Elementary, 1 student and 1 staff member tested positive for covid. Neither were in school while infectious, no contact tracing needed. No quarantines needed.

Please note that a few of these new positive cases are siblings or from the same families.

Mask Mandate Status Update: The legal wrangling continues. As of Friday, the Governor did not file an emergency regulation. However, Alison Beam, the Acting Secretary of Health and the PA Attorney General did ask the Supreme Court for a stay of the Commonwealth Court Order until the Supreme Court hears the case (this is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 8th). The Supreme Court hasn't ruled on this latest motion yet. If nothing occurs with the Supreme Court in the next few days, the Mask Mandate will expire on Sat, Dec. 4th. If so, the Bellefonte Area School District will revert to the previously approved Health and Safety Plan which makes masks optional beginning on Dec. 5th. From our understanding, the PA Department of Health's definition of a "close contact" and the PA DoH quarantining rules will remain the same which include exceptions to quarantines according to mask wearing and/or vaccination status. We hope to get verification or clarification of the "rules" over the next few days or weeks.

COVID Vaccination Booster Clinic: For any adults who are interested, a COVID-19 booster shot clinic will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wed., Dec. 1 at the Bellefonte Area High School Cafeteria. Register here: [Registration \(https://12562083901.as.me/schedule.php?appointmentType=19787689\)](https://12562083901.as.me/schedule.php?appointmentType=19787689) If this link does not work, the link is also available at the top of the BASD website (www.basd.net).

Important Reminder: Students who are exhibiting symptoms of covid (or any illness) should stay home from school. In addition, students who may have been exposed to someone who tested positive should also stay home.

Barring any breaking news, I'll send my next update letter on Friday. I hope you have a terrific Tuesday!

Sincerely,

Tammie Burnaford
Superintendent
Bellefonte Area SD