



Good morning!

It's Thanksgiving week! Just a short note about the notifications we received over the weekend...

COVID Case Count Updates

Over the weekend, we received notifications of three new positive cases in the district as follows:

- We were notified early Friday evening that a student at Marion-Walker Elementary School tested positive for COVID. The student already was quarantined due to a parent testing positive, so the student was not in school while infectious. As such, there was no contact tracing or quarantines needed at school.
- A staff member at the Middle School tested positive for COVID. This person was present while infectious, but there were no close contacts identified. No students were quarantined at the time of this writing.
- A student at the Middle School tested positive for COVID. The student was not in school for several days and not in school while infectious. As such, no contact tracing or quarantines were needed at school.

A Note about Local Case Counts

As you may know, I have been closely following the COVID case count numbers for the state, the county, and in our 2 main, local zip codes (16823 and 16841) for well over a year. Relative to our district, our 2 main zip codes span other school districts, so it's impossible to know where a spike in cases may occur. As I have noted in the past, there could be several other possible explanations for the spike in case counts in 16823. Within the 16823 zip code, there are 2 nursing homes, a rehab facility, a juvenile detention center and 3 prisons (SCI Benner, SCI Rockview, and the Centre County prison). We just don't know, and despite our repeated requests, the PA

Department of Health (PA DoH) refuses to break down the data by municipality or location for us.

I have been wondering about the cases in the facilities and locally. According to information released the PA Dept. of Corrections and reported on the statecollege.com website over the weekend:

“According to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Benner state prison has 75 active COVID-19 cases among inmates — three times more than the second highest state correctional facility — and 16 among staff. Rockview state prison has three active inmate cases and four among staff. Both facilities are in Benner Township.” These prisons are also in the 16823 zip code.

We just don't know exactly where outbreaks have occurred or are occurring within our district. Despite our repeated requests, the PA Department of Health (PA DoH) refuses to break down the data by municipality or location for us. I will continue to follow the local case counts closely. And, of course, we will keep and report our district data, as well.

Barring any breaking news, I'll send my next update letter or a brief email on Wednesday. As always, thank you so very much for your continued support, patience and understanding through these very challenging times. I hope you have a marvelous Monday and a great Thanksgiving week ahead!

Tammie Burnaford
Superintendent
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