



Good afternoon!

Happy Friday! The weather was beautiful earlier today and so are the changing fall leaves. Last night, I was able to ride along with Officer Luse, one of our school resource officers, in the Homecoming Parade. I got to see all of our most awesome students, families and community members. It was great fun!!

The number of new cases in our 16823 zip code have increased over the past few weeks. The PA Department of Health (PA DoH) reported 89 new, confirmed cases in 16823 over the last reporting period (Oct. 1 -7). As a reminder, 16823 does span our district and Bald Eagle Area, so it is difficult to know where the cases are located. However, this number of new cases is similar to the numbers we saw in January and is higher than we have seen since school started in August. The numbers in 16841 did surge a bit in September, but have seemed to level out now with 11 new, confirmed cases during the last PA DoH reporting period.

The surge in cases in 16823 is similar to the current surge in positive cases in our district. We received confirmation of 19 new cases across the district since my letter on Monday. A summary of the new cases is shown in the chart below.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Total number of known, confirmed, new cases since 10/4</b>	<b>*Since 10/4, the number of new cases - students/staff that were physically present in the building while infectious</b>
High School	5 (2 students, 3 staff)	5
Middle School	8 (7 students, 1 staff)	7
Bellefonte Elem.	0	0
Benner Elem.	1	0
Marion-Walker Elem.	2 (students)	2
Pleasant Gap Elem.	3 (1 student, 2 staff)	3
BeLA	0	0

Please note, that the Benner Elementary student and one of the Middle School students have not been in school for a few weeks because they already were quarantining due to a family member testing positive for covid. Also please note that a few of these new cases are related to other positive cases (ex: siblings or other family members) either this week or in the past few weeks.

I'm also going to try to give a best estimate for the total number of students quarantined in my updates each time. I say "estimate" because sometimes we are notified about cases near the time I send my updates, and our principals and nurses may not have completed contact tracing and may not have identified all close contacts yet. I will note that, too, in my updates. For these 19 new cases, contact tracing has been completed by the building principals and nurses. Parents have been notified if their children were identified as a close contact to these recent cases. As I have mentioned, with the new PA DoH rules, students wearing masks has significantly decreased the number of required quarantines compared to last year. Parents keeping their students home when they have symptoms or may have been a close contact to someone else in the family also has reduced the number of possible close contacts in school. This has helped tremendously again this year. At the time of this email, there were a total of 46 students quarantined for the total number of new cases since Monday.

Barring any breaking news, I'll send my next update letter on Monday morning, as usual. I hope you and your family have a wonderful fall weekend!

Sincerely,

Tammie Burnaford  
Superintendent  
Bellefonte Area SD