Bethany Public School District

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October 30, 2020

Dear BCS Families,

I hope this update finds you well and enjoying the first snowfall of the season. I continue to be proud of our entire school community and the efforts that everyone has taken in order to keep BCS open for in-person learning up to this point. This correspondence serves as an update to the current levels of transmission of COVID-19 in the Town of Bethany and the Bethany Community School.

The Department of Health (DPH) continues to report town-level data for the number of new cases per 100,000 population and for the percent test positivity in the following dataset: COVID-19 Case Rate by Town. BCS continues to report zero (0) positive cases and the Town of Bethany remains at a rate of 10.4 positive cases per 100,000 for the time period of October 11, 2020 to October 24, 2020. At this time, BCS will remain in full in-person.

The DPH and State Department of Education (SDE) recently launched a new public reporting dashboard Connecticut Open Data Portal. In addition to case rates per 100,000 by town, data will reflect all positive student and staff cases in schools for the previous week, Thursday – Wednesday. The data tables of new confirmed cases in staff and students by school is fully searchable. Note that suppression rules apply. If a school reports 1-5 cases, <6 is displayed. If 6 or more cases, the exact number is displayed. If no cases are reported, 0 cases will be displayed.

I'd like to thank the parents and staff that were able to attend the Board of Education Open Forum on Wednesday night. I appreciate the feedback and continue to use it to review and revise our District's practices and protocols in order to improve performance and communication.

On October 29, 2020, the SDE released an Attendance Revision Addendum including a Frequently Asked Questions section, which serves as clarification for how schools should report absences during hybrid and remote learning models.

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Quinnipiack Valley Health District (QVHD) has provided the Bethany Public School District with a protocol for reporting school-related COVID-19 positive individuals, identifying close contacts, and related communications to close contacts. The purpose of the QVHD Reporting Protocols is to provide directions on reporting COVID-19 positive individuals to the local health department, as well as to clarify roles for timely communication as it pertains to close contacts. Local health departments are short-handed and overwhelmed with contact tracing, so whenever possible, school districts have been asked to support them in their efforts to keep everyone safe.

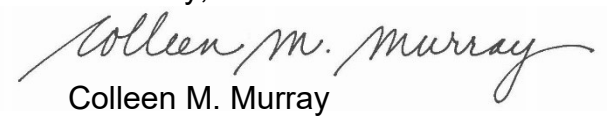
It is inevitable that sooner or later the District will need to transition into a hybrid or remote learning model. Principal Tom Reed-Swale and the BCS staff have created hybrid and remote learning guidance which will be shared in the Principal's weekly once finalized.

This pandemic has disrupted and impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and continues to present new challenges every day. We are navigating through uncharted territory, and while the DPH learns more about the virus, the SDE responds with guidance for the impact on teaching and learning, and subsequently, we adjust our "sails". We are all in this together and by coming together as one community, together we will persevere and remain strong.

Please continue to be vigilant in following the health and safety guidance recommended by DPH. This includes the use of face coverings, social distancing, and hand hygiene. Please do not send your child to school when ill or when waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test. Additionally, it would be greatly appreciated if any member of your family has tested positive or is being quarantined as a contact that you inform the school.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support. Stay safe. Be well.

Sincerely,



Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent