Bethany Public School District

Colleen Murray, Superintendent

44 Peck Road
Bethany, Connecticut 06524
cmurray@bethany-ed.org

Phone (203) 393-1170
Fax (203) 393-0239
www.bethany-ed.org

May 14, 2021

Dear BCS Community,

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 reports zero positive cases this past week and the Town of Bethany reports <5 positive cases with a rate of <5 positive cases per 100,000 for the weeks of April 25th through May 8th. This recent data puts Bethany in the Gray Zone.

The District remains committed to providing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible while mitigating health risks to students and staff. Based on the most recent COVID-19 metrics for Bethany, and in collaboration with our local health advisors at Quinnipiack Valley Health District (QVHD), **BCS will remain in-person learning for the week of Monday, May 17, 2021**.

Pfizer Vaccine Available for Children Ages 12-15

This week, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for use among children ages 12-15. Therefore, as outlined in the Governor's press release, the State of Connecticut is preparing to make the Pfizer vaccine available to children as young as 12 through several channels. More information to follow.

On May 9th, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CDSE) released Connecticut's American Rescue Plan (ARP) 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) Guidance: Reimagining Schools to Transform Students' Lives. The Bethany Public School District has been allocated $429,524 in ARP ESSER grant funds. While ESSER I funds created opportunities to survive, and ESSER II funds created opportunities to thrive, the ARP ESSER funds offer our District opportunities to transform. These funds may be used for the following priority areas:

- Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment
- Family and Community Connections
- Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of the Students and Staff
- Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and the Digital Divide
- Building Safe and Healthy Schools

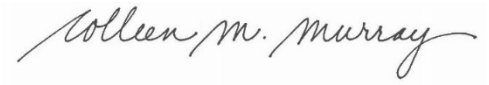
The ARP grant application process requires Districts to develop a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan by June 23, 2021. As Bethany has been able to offer in-person instruction throughout the 2020 - 2021 school year using a suite of mitigating strategies, and we haven't received any new guidance from the CSDE or Department of Public Health, other than that school districts are not mandated to offer voluntary remote instruction, we do not anticipate many other changes to the BCS Reopen Plan 2020. As District stakeholders work exponentially to develop the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, we will keep our school community informed and provide opportunities for input and feedback.

Responsible Reporting

Please continue to contact the school to report absences and contact the BCS Nurses' Office at (203) 393-3350 x615 or Tom Reed-Swale at treed-swale@bethany-ed.org or (860) 933-2381 if a student/staff, or a household family member, tests positive for COVID-19 or if student/staff has been identified as a close contact requiring quarantining. In order to determine an individual's quarantine time and return to school/work date, we must ask questions regarding their exposure which requires your cooperation. Please do not send your child to school to be assessed by the nurse if they are experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms. Please do not give your child fever-reducing medicine and then send them to school. By doing so, our chances of controlling transmission and preventing quarantines become significantly challenged.

The end is in sight, but we are not out of the woods yet. If we all continue to work together, with the goal of keeping our school open and do all we can to keep each other healthy and safe, we will have a successful end to this school year and Finish Strong! Thank you to all the staff and families who are working collaboratively with the school to keep everyone safe. Your ongoing cooperation and responsible reporting is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent