



## Bethany Public School District

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February 26, 2021

Dear BCS Community,

This correspondence serves as an update to the current levels of COVID-19 in the Town of Bethany and in the Bethany Community School (BCS), as well as the instructional model decision for next week. This letter also includes information on vaccination plans for our educators and weather-related decision-making.

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 two positive cases this past week and the Town of Bethany reports 20 positive cases with a rate of 26.1 positive cases per 100,000 for the weeks of February 7th through February 20th. This recent data puts Bethany back into the Red 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 Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD), **BCS will remain in-person learning for the week of Monday, March 1st.**

### **Vaccination Plans**

I am thrilled to report that we've been able to successfully collaborate with QVHD and the school districts of Amity, Woodbridge, and North Haven to prepare for vaccinating school staff, at a North Haven site. As a reminder, QVHD is in immediate need of Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers. The most critical need is for medical personnel who are qualified and can volunteer as vaccinators. If you are interested and able to help in this effort, please register for the MRC [here](#). On behalf of the BCS educators, thank you for your support.

### **Weather-related Decisions**

Delayed Openings, Early Dismissals, Remote Snow Days, or Traditional Snow Days ... Oh My! For every phone call or email I receive in support of recent weather decisions and/or remote snow days, I receive another one in opposition. While some are in favor of the remote learning snow days, others would prefer to make up the time in June. Call me Pollyanna, but I am optimistically hopeful that Spring is around the corner and these winter days are behind us. But just in case I'm wrong (and I probably am), I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone how these decisions are made. As you might recall, from an earlier correspondence, the Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge, and Amity (BOWA) Superintendents must collaborate on these decisions because we share buses, bus contracts, and families with Amity. Decisions are made after consulting with meteorologists, multiple weather models and predictions, the Public Works Director, State Police, Transportation Coordinators, Eversource, and the BCS Facilities Director, often in the wee hours of the morning. We also consult with our neighboring school districts; Bethany has seven towns that touch its borders. Despite what some may think, we are not calling remote learning snow days, just because we can, but rather based on information and predictions we are given at the time, and always with safety as a first priority. Sometimes our calls are spot on and at other times we get duped by the weather folks. We are human.

At the start of this winter season, we treated the first three significant inclement weather days as traditional snow days, but as we faced additional days, the BOWA partners decided to use remote learning days rather than extend the school year into a later week in June. Moving forward for the remainder of the 2020 - 2021 school year, unless weather conditions are such that connectivity is poor, or childcare facilities are closed, we will continue to utilize the remote learning option. We can revisit these decisions next fall with input from the school community if the State Department of Education should offer the remote learning option again next year. Until then, fingers crossed that Spring is around the corner and we've seen the last of these wintry mixes.

### **Responsible Reporting**


I know I must sound like a broken record, but your responsible reporting is what has allowed us to keep our doors open.

Please continue to contact the school to report absences and contact the school nurse, Cheryl Santore at [csantore@bethany-ed.org](mailto:csantore@bethany-ed.org), BCS: (203) 393-3350 x615 or cell (203) 494-8156, 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.

**Please do not send your child to school to be assessed by the nurse if they are experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms. By doing so, our chances of controlling transmission and preventing quarantines become challenged.**

Thank you to all the staff and families who are working collaboratively with the school to keep everyone safe. The goal of having children attend school, in-person, is only safe when a community works together to control transmission and the spread of the virus. Your ongoing cooperation and responsible reporting is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colleen M. Murray".

Colleen M. Murray  
Superintendent