



Bethany Public School District

Colleen Murray, Superintendent

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Dear BCS Community,

IMPORTANT READ: The State Department of Education (CSDE) in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) released a document, [Finish Strong](#), worthy of your attention, specifically page 2, "What individuals and families can do to help us "Finish Strong."

"With rising numbers of positive cases and the spread of more contagious virus variants, DPH and CSDE continue to urge individuals and organizations to take a cautious approach to planning and resumption of activities at this time, as expanding too much and too quickly could result in a significant rebound of community spread and a loss of in-person learning opportunities. Now is the time for us to maintain our efforts for the remainder of the school year and **Finish Strong!**"

PLEASE make responsible decisions to protect yourself and others in our school 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, **UPDATED Quarantine Notice and Travel Guidance**.

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 one positive case this past week and the Town of Bethany reports 27 positive cases with a rate of 35.2 positive cases per 100,000 for the weeks of March 14th through March 27th. This recent data keeps Bethany in 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, April 5th.**

The Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge, and Amity School (BOWA) Districts, along with the Orange Health Department (OHD) and the Quinnipiac Valley Health District (QVHD) have updated the BOWA quarantine policy. Effective Friday, April 1, 2020, individuals who are identified as **close contacts to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19** must **remain home** in **self-quarantine** for **10 days** from the last exposure to the person diagnosed with COVID-19 before returning to school/work. **Please note: Self-quarantine means no interaction with anyone outside of the individual's household.**

The individual close contact should continue daily symptom monitoring for an additional 4 days (days 11- 14). During the 10-day quarantine and additional 4 days of monitoring, if symptoms develop, the individual should **immediately self-isolate** and contact their healthcare provider. **Please note: Self-isolate means no interaction with ANYONE including household members, if possible.**

Travel Advisory

Guidance from [Finish Strong](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), DPH, and CSDE:

Individuals or families planning overnight out-of-state travel in the coming weeks, and even those planning in-state or regional day trips, have the potential to return home with **unrecognized SARS-CoV-2 infection**. This is especially true where travel involves states with fewer restrictions and safety measures in place, where compliance with masking and other mitigation strategies may be low, and where more contagious virus variants may be widely circulating. Of particular concern for families with members who either attend or work at K-12 schools and students and school staff returning from travel and subsequently reporting to school during their infectious period, **could significantly impact the continuing operation of schools for in-person learning** in the weeks following spring breaks.

The responsibility lies with individuals and families to take the steps necessary to protect themselves, their school communities, and others before, during, and after travel, as it would not be reasonable to expect schools to investigate or enforce recommendations related to private activities. Both the CDC and DPH continue to recommend against out-of-state travel during this time. However, for individuals and families associated with K-12 schools in Connecticut who choose to travel in the coming weeks (for spring break or otherwise) the following actions are recommended:

- Continue to utilize all appropriate mitigation strategies while traveling (including mask-wearing, distancing, symptom recognition, etc.) regardless of whether the policies and procedures in place at your destination mandate them.
- Before travel, review the current [DPH](#) and [CDC](#) recommendations for travel during COVID-19 and be sure to plan sufficient time for any necessary actions.
- Follow DPH and CDC best-practice [quarantine and testing procedures](#) upon return, including:
 - quarantining for a full 7 days, even with a negative COVID-19 test result obtained between days 3-5; or
 - quarantining for a full 10 days without testing; and
 - continuing to monitor for symptoms during all quarantine periods.
- Individuals or families choosing not to observe quarantine should at a minimum:
 - get tested for COVID-19 after they return;
 - stay out of school until they receive a negative test result back from the laboratory;
 - be acutely and continuously aware of any symptoms of COVID-19 that they or their family members may develop in the two weeks after travel; and
 - be prepared to immediately isolate/quarantine themselves if/when symptoms develop.

Post-Spring Break

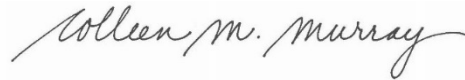
At this time, the Bethany Public School District plans to provide in-person learning the week after spring break (April 19th – 23rd). Please be advised that this decision could change based on local case rates and guidance from QVHD and OHD. Please remain vigilant in practicing the mitigation strategies that avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Responsible Reporting

Please continue to contact the school to report absences and contact the school nurse, Cheryl Santore at 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. 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.

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colleen M. Murray". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Colleen M. Murray
Superintendent