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Belpre City Schools



Our Town. Our School.

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Dear Belpre Families,

Welcome back! We are thrilled to have had a wonderful start to our school year and overjoyed with working with you wonderful students. Other than some traffic related issues on both campuses we are working through, we have had an overall smooth start to the school year. From the outset we have stated that Belpre City Schools would carefully scrutinize the number of COVID positive cases in our district, local data from the 45714 zip code and the numbers in the districts around us in determining what future mitigation steps we would need to take.

As many of you are no doubt aware, Marietta City has moved to require facial coverings in their district and Wood County is debating as I write this whether they will require them after they have seen a concerning rise in cases. At the same time, according to the coronavirus tracking website, Belpre has been averaging around 25 cases per two weeks (today it is at 30) in the 45714 zip code – a number which is significantly smaller than what we saw most of last year. Finally, at least until today, we have not had any positive cases to report. Unfortunately we received notice today of two confirmed positive cases at the elementary school and one positive case at the high school which also resulted in a number of CDC probable cases. Similar to the numbers in our zip code, this is about the same volume of cases we saw from time to time last year in our schools. What is different however is the number of quarantines that have resulted from those cases; as a result of contact tracing 31 students were quarantined.

So what is different? Under the current guidelines we have received from the Department of Health students do not have to quarantine (even if they are a close contact) if they have been vaccinated or if they are wearing a facial covering (unless they show symptoms). Of the 31 students we quarantined the vast majority, likely 26 of the 31 students, would not have had to quarantine if they were wearing a facial covering at the time of exposure. It will be difficult for our school district, and for district families, to continue to enjoy in person school if we have to quarantine that many students on a regular basis.

At this time we are not implementing a requirement that all students wear a facial covering but I cannot emphasize enough how strongly we recommend that students wear them. We urge them not only as a way to protect classmates from possible infection but as a practical measure to lower the disruption to families with students who may have to quarantine. To reiterate, the only two ways under the guidance we have received to avoid a quarantine are if a student wears a facial covering or if a student is vaccinated. If the upward trend in positive cases or number of quarantined students seen in our neighboring districts occurs here we will likely need to implement additional mitigation measures to protect the safety and welfare of our students as well as the stability to continue to receive their education.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey S. Greenley, Superintendent