

We hope you have had a great week. We wanted to update you on some key changes across the Bethalto School District. We hope you take the time to listen to the video message that is being shared. We will also send this information out in an email as well.

**1. Return to Learn Updates:**

- a. A reminder if you have a K-5 student, that they will attend every day Monday through Friday starting Monday, October 26th. Times of attendance are 8:30-2:15 Monday through Thursday and 8:30-12:00 on Friday. Students may still be dropped off between 8:00-8:30.
- b. The Board of Education also approved changes for our 6-12 students last night. They will now be trialing a new schedule at the middle and high school. Students will attend on a block schedule that includes a full class of students working through all their classes over two days. For example a student at TMS would go to 1st, 2nd, & 5th hour one day and then 3rd, 4th, & 6th the next day. CM will follow a similar schedule; however, on one day they will go 1st, 2nd, 4th and 6th, and then the following day, they attend 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th. Please note that the first hour will meet daily for a shorter period of time. All students will attend school every day but will only attend  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their classes. All students will attend everyday and class sizes will be full. You can see specific information regarding the changes from the building administration below.
  - i. [HS Return to Learn Letter](#)
  - ii. [TMS Return to Learn Letter](#)
- c. We want to be very clear that this means our students, at all grade levels, will NOT have the ability to remain 6 feet apart at all times. We will do our very best to keep them as far apart as possible to reduce the possibility of transmission; however, IDPH and the MCHD require 6 feet of physical distance to break the chain of transmission which is why the quarantine numbers are likely to increase. We will continue to put as many other safety measures as possible in place: self-certification, random temp screenings, masks, facing one direction, practicing healthy hand hygiene, remaining as far apart as possible, minimal time in hallways, scheduled times to use the restroom, scheduled times to leave the classroom, etc. We want to stress that we still believe that COVID-19 poses a health risk to our buildings, but we are continuing to stress safety measures across our district as we work to bring students back for more in person instruction.
- d. We want to inform everyone that we will have to quarantine students that are in “close contact” with a positive or probable positive COVID case. Per recent changes to the IDPH guidance we no longer are required to quarantine students who are in “close contact” with other students who may be sent home because of COVID symptoms. This was an important change for school districts, as our quarantine numbers have decreased significantly. Students should be mindful both inside and outside of school to stay as socially distanced as possible from one another, wear masks, and practice hand hygiene. Again, our students will not always be six feet apart and we do anticipate sending students home due to close contacts that on a hybrid schedule were not a concern. The block schedule in grades 6-12 allows us to quarantine half the number of students in our secondary buildings that we would on a traditional schedule. For example, on a traditional schedule, if we had a positive COVID case, there would be 7 classes X 4 close contacts could result in at least 28 close contacts being quarantined. Whereas, on a block schedule, 3-4 classes x 4 close contacts could result in approximately 12-16 students being quarantined.
- e. Please be mindful when you receive a phone call that your child will be serving a quarantine due to a close contact that our nurses, secretaries, teachers and administration are simply following the IDPH guidelines when we cannot remain 6 feet apart and we would ask you not take your frustration out on them. They are the messenger and are simply enforcing the rules we are all asked to follow. They are

working to keep themselves and our students as safe as possible. When we send students home, we are following the guidance from the IDPH and the MCDPH. We would ask you to remember to give them all grace and to be patient with them if/when you receive a phone call that your child has to quarantine. We also want to make it clear that you can't test out of a close contact quarantine. If a student is sent home because they were in close contact with a positive or probable case, then they will have to quarantine for 14 days since the last point of contact. Again, we ask you to understand that we are trying to balance the best way to ensure effective instruction with our students and the safety of our staff and students. This will be the most significant change on a traditional model of instruction is our inability to remain 6 feet apart; however, we are working to work on improving the amount of instruction our students are receiving knowing that other issues arise with this model of instruction.

- f. Please know that we are going to pilot this schedule. We will be constantly watching our internal numbers and will be prepared to make a decision to return to hybrid learning if the number of close contacts/quarantined students become too high in any of our buildings implementing the new schedules. We will be reporting numbers out to you regularly as well so you can remain informed as we work through this transition together. Keeping the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront while meeting the instructional needs of our children is a delicate balance and are not decisions we take lightly.
- g. For families that wish to move from our current schedule to full remote learning due to safety concerns for their child(ren), please complete this survey by Wednesday, October 28th.
  - i. [OPT IN TO REMOTE LEARNING SURVEY FOR 6-12 FAMILIES](#)
- h. Regarding Friday's: our buildings will have students on Fridays but will have early releases with some amount of work expected to be completed at home. Please see the times below.
  - i. **PreK:** --students will remain remote on Friday
  - ii. **K-5:** 12:00 PM early release
  - iii. **6-12:** 11:10 AM early release

## 2. Upcoming Dates:

- a. October 27th/29th: Parent-Teacher Conferences (full day for students)
- b. October 30th: No School
- c. November 3rd: Election Day: No School (required federal holiday we exchanged for Columbus Day)
- d. November 11th: Veterans Day: No School
- e. November 25th, 26th and 27th: Thanksgiving Break: No School

We thank you for your continued support of our district and your unwavering patience as we work through our new circumstances together. Please continue to communicate with us, so we can address your concerns collaboratively.

Respectfully,

Jill Griffin, Ed.D.