

Hi, this is Dr. Bennardo. I hope this Friday call finds you and your families well.

As I mentioned in the Newsletter, it's really hard to believe that we are already entering the middle of November. A quick look at the calendar truly confirms that time pushes forward regardless of circumstances. Of course, just as time marches on, so do we, and we are simultaneously preparing for the holidays, monitoring health and safety, and readying the district for the full return of elementary students with Kindergarten and 3rd Grade joining us on November 16th, 1st and 4th Grade on November 23rd, and 2nd and 5th Grade children back full time on November 30th. As you might imagine, there are a great number of moving parts to this and we want to do it right. To this end, new bus passes are going out early next week to any student who was remote and is now joining us on an in-person basis. Plans are in place to integrate all of those students, as well as those whose families choose to go remote in this next marking period, into the new setting. We are taking it slow and steady in an effort to do it correctly, and remind you that you can reach out to your Principals, teachers, or district office team if you have any questions.

I also wanted to share just a little bit again about our contact tracing, and explain that we conference with the Health Department whenever a positive case (be it a student or staff member) is reported to us. While we don't minimize the seriousness of those cases, they are actually easier to manage because we have concrete data in front of us. The situation becomes a bit more complicated when we receive word of a second or third person infection. In other words our student or staff member is not ill, but may or may not have come into contact with someone who is. It is in those cases that we need to gather a volume of data in terms of masks on or off; windows open or shut, closeness of contact, duration of exposure, etc. If and when that information comes to us, we share it all with the Health Department and try to help them make a collective decision for the family. The good news is that it seems like the system is working as designed, and we have been able to handle most situations with targeted quarantines that provides for both safety and the continued flow of instruction. Of course, we all look forward to a day when contact tracing and quarantines are a thing of the past, but in the meantime, have a responsibility to get it right and do the best we can with the data presented to us for each case. Again, it's been working well, our community, staff, and the Board of Health have been incredibly cooperative, and we just ask that you keep information flowing our way so we can keep everyone safe and academics moving.

With that said, I want to wish you all a very healthy weekend. Please enjoy the beautiful weather and keep your families well,

Be well,

Dave Bennardo