

November 18, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Belvidere School Cluster, which includes the School Districts of Belvidere, Harmony, Hope, and White, have been working closely together during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we continue to monitor this evolving situation, the most recent data reported by the Warren County and New Jersey Departments of Health (DOH) indicates that the number of positive COVID-19 cases continues to rise as our region and New Jersey experience a second wave.

Each week, the DOH releases a Weekly COVID-19 Report. This report includes multiple measures of COVID-19 data, and utilizes these data points to evaluate a region's COVID-19 risk level. When we opened our schools earlier this fall, our region was low risk (green) for the majority of September. In October, we started to experience an increase in COVID-19 cases and as a result, our region transitioned to moderate risk (yellow), which it has been since October 3<sup>rd</sup>. As we continue to keep a watchful eye on the pandemic, the current data suggests our region is close to becoming high risk (orange) in the very near future. These Weekly COVID-19 Reports are released each Thursday, and we believe it is likely our region will be elevated to high risk in this week's report.

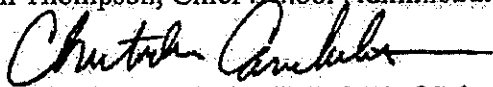
If our region becomes high risk and we continue in-person learning, DOH protocols require schools to treat symptomatic individuals as positive COVID-19 cases until the symptomatic individual produces a negative test result. This guideline would require enhanced contact tracing and quarantining for our school community creating significant logistical hurdles to continuing in-person learning. Additionally, we are entering the holiday season, which increases the likelihood of gatherings and travel. In return, this could make it more difficult to ensure a safe learning environment for our school community.

If this week's COVID-19 report changes our regional status to high risk, it is likely we will pivot to remote learning for all students beginning Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> to keep our school community safe. We understand the challenges this change may create for your family, and want you to know the direction the pandemic is trending so you can plan accordingly. We will send an update to you by Friday morning once we have received and reviewed this week's report notifying you of our decision for this coming Monday as well as any other pertinent information for remote learning. Please know the health and well-being of our entire school community is of the utmost importance, and we appreciate your ongoing support during this difficult time.

Sincerely,



William Thompson, Chief School Administrator (White Township School District)



Christopher Carrubba, Superintendent of Schools (Belvidere & Harmony School Districts)



Kevin Newman, Chief School Administrator (Hope Township School District)