October 23, 2020

Warrior Country:

As you are probably already aware, COVID-19 incidents have increased in Bradford County in recent weeks. The Pennsylvania Department of Health reports these incidents on its [*COVID-19 Early Warning Monitoring System Dashboard*](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx)*,* which is updated with the latest information every Friday.

The Canton Area School District relies on this data to inform its decisions about the appropriateness of instructional models. This past week, I met with the other superintendents of Bradford County, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Below is a bulleted list of items discussed at this meeting:

* There has been an uptick in the county of cases, specifically in individuals who are 25 years and older.
* This week’s numbers are reflective of cases found in a long-term care facility, one workplace, and what they called “limited social events.”
* Our community transmission has dropped from the prior week from 70% to 50%, which can be attributed to the uptick in what DOH defines as “outbreaks” in the above bullet.
* A recommendation was given to consider a remote learning model. If we were not going to use a remote learning model, we should move toward a model that mirrors a type of hybrid learning model. Because we have so many students who have joined our Warrior Academy at the start of the school year, the state deems our model as a “scaffolded hybrid model.” We also were reminded to be aware of the intentions of our school boards and community members as we make these decisions. It was also stressed to use localized data to the maximum extent possible; however, the DOH will not be providing data to school that is any more granular than the countywide data.

The data for the report week (Tuesday to Thursday) in Bradford County was as follows: 20, 25, 13, 9, 20, 28, 34. This is an increase, countywide, by 13 from the prior week. Locally, we have not seen any additional COVID-19 cases with students or staff in our buildings. We have had to remove 6 students this past reporting week from our school district as they were deemed close contacts to other members in their family who were identified as cases. We did not have any “presumed positive” cases in our district this week either.

Our next scheduled meeting with the Department of Health and the Department of Education is scheduled for next Monday. It will be my intention to continue to keep the community informed of not only the county data, but the local data that is assisting us in making our decisions around school closures and in-person instruction. Also, I would like to remind the community that our administrative team and school board is currently evaluating whether or not we will allow “non-school” sanctioned activities and events to occur on our campus over the winter months. Our hope is to provide the community with a definitive answer by the middle of November.

In summary, I want the community to be aware that our intention is to continue with our current instructional model until we are unable to function as an educational institution due to lack of staff or an outbreak within the school. Finally, I would like to thank the school board for supporting our administrative team as we continue to move through this pandemic with an “uptick” in cases in the county. Stay safe, stay healthy, and please do not hesitate to reach out to us should you have any questions.

Yours in Education,

Eric Briggs, D.Ed.

Superintendent of Schools

Canton Area School District