



## RINGGOLD SCHOOL DISTRICT

400 Main Street  
New Eagle, PA 15067

Randall S. Skrinjorich  
*Director of Operations and Financial Services*  
*Acting Superintendent of Schools*

(724) 258-9329  
FAX (724) 258-5363

October 14, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On October 10, 2020 I wrote in regards to the positive COVID-19 case that was reported at Ringgold Middle School. In that letter I outlined the District response and the immediate actions taken by the District which were aligned with the District Health and Safety Plan. Those actions included immediate calls and notifications from our Pandemic Coordinator to the Department of Health (DOH), contact tracing to identify any students or staff who had been in close contact with the person(s) who had tested positive, and notification to parents. The DOH did not recommend closing any classrooms.

This week, I received correspondence from the local media inquiring as to the number of cases in our schools. It is important to note that the District is not at liberty to provide any information that may identify any person(s) who test positive for COVID-19, or who may be required to quarantine, with the exception of providing information to those who may have been deemed to have been in "close contact" with a person who has tested positive, and as a result may need to quarantine. The District continues to use the definition put forth by the PDE and DOH when determining "close contact". That definition stipulates that "close contact" is 6 feet or less, for more than 15 minutes, with or without a mask.

The DOH has been very responsive and has taken a proactive role in communicating with schools and Pandemic Coordinators across the Commonwealth, including ours. As has been the case from the onset of the pandemic, new information about COVID-19 continues to emerge and as a result State and Local officials are changing guidance accordingly. This includes determinations for what constitutes "a case". It is important to note that a 'single case' may in some situations, involve more than one person. This is based on a number of factors that are carefully considered by the DOH. For example, three family members who test positive, may be determined to be one case based on a host of other factors that the DOH considers. These factors may include but are not limited to: adherence to social distancing guidelines, use of masks and other factors determined by contact tracing.

As of this morning and after review of all contact tracing information and a host of other information, the DOH had NOT recommended closing Ringgold Middle School or any classrooms at Ringgold Middle School. However, later today we were informed of an additional instance in which a person(s) tested positive for COVID-19. This was not related to person(s) involved in the information provided yesterday.

As per protocol, our Pandemic Coordinator contacted the DOH to provide the new information we had received. Based on that information, the DOH determined this to be a separate case and recommended closure of the Ringgold Middle School for a period of 5-7 days.

*~ Preparing students today for the challenges of tomorrow ~*

As per our Board approved Health and Safety Plan, in the case of ANY positive test, the District consistently takes following actions:

- Deep cleans and disinfects locations visited by the individual(s) who test positive with COVID-19.
- Identify individual(s) who qualify as having had close contact with the infected individual(s).
- Communicate directly with all individuals identified as having had close contact with the individual(s) who tested positive for COVID-19.

We recognize that information regarding the existence of positive cases can be unsettling and that people may have a desire to have detailed information about the person or persons involved. Please remember, that privacy laws provide protection for those who are impacted by the COVID-19 and the District will continue to adhere to those laws. Be assured that our foremost priority is the safety of our students, staff, and community members.

During this period of closure, all students will transition to remote learning (Option #2) and students should log into their classes via the Moodle at their regular school hours. Teachers will begin remote instruction effective Thursday October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Students will return to school on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We will continue to provide updates and keep you informed throughout the next 5-7 days.

As always, I thank you for your continued support as we continue to move our District forward.

Sincerely,

*Randall Skrinjorich*

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Acting Superintendent