



November 25, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Today, November 25, 2020 our school district was notified by the Berrien County Health Department that Mars Elementary has been identified as having a COVID outbreak in the building. This information is posted on the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services website with other state-wide school districts that have experienced an outbreak. The information is also posted on the Berrien County Health Department's website and on the Berrien RESA COVID dashboard. This is the fifth COVID outbreak that has occurred in a Berrien County school district since the start of the school year.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services defines a school-related COVID outbreak as the following:

*In accordance with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists' **outbreak definition**, educational institutions (i.e., grades K-12 and institutions of higher education) that have been found by their local health department to have two (2) or more COVID-19 cases who may have shared exposure on school grounds and are from different households are included. Case counts for school-related outbreaks include those associated with before and after school programs (e.g., school-sponsored sports). When applicable, outbreak reporting also includes cases originating from on-campus and off-campus student housing.*

The outbreak at Mars Elementary was the result of 1 student and 1 staff member who recently tested positive for COVID. Our school district is transitioning to 100% remote learning for all students in grades PreK-12 starting on Monday, November 30. The decision to transition to remote learning was not influenced by this outbreak. The district did not learn about the outbreak at Mars Elementary until today. The decision to transition to remote learning was made yesterday Tuesday, November 24. All district buildings are fully operational for in-person learning today Wednesday, November 25 for a half-day.

The district continues to implement the safety protocols and procedural guidelines recommended by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, the Berrien County Health Department and the Berrien Springs Return to School Roadmap. A copy of our district's Roadmap is available on the school district's website at www.homeoftheshamrocks.org.

Our school district will continue to follow all recommended and necessary precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at all times. Please be reminded of the importance of remaining vigilant in practicing the following safety protocols to mitigate the spread of all illness:

- Wearing a facial covering
- Practicing frequent hand washing
- Remaining home when sick
- Parents are reminded to screen students daily for potential symptoms of illness before sending them to school
- Staff are reminded to complete the daily health screener before reporting to school

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support healthy practices at home and in your personal activities as we respond to these events in our school district. I continue to be very proud of the way our staff and students demonstrate flexibility and cooperation during this very challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Eichberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

David Eichberg, Superintendent