



BENTLEY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
1170 North Belsay Road
Burton, MI 48509

DR. KRISTY SPANN, SUPERINTENDENT
kspann@bentleyschools.org
(810) 591-9120

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Dear Bentley Community,

We continue to be challenged by the COVID19 pandemic. Cases continue to rise in the community and that impacts us directly and indirectly. Directly in that staff and students are being quarantined due to exposure or illness. Indirectly in that many staff and families are anxious about the possibility of becoming ill or bringing illness home to families. While our job is to educate students, I have always maintained that we must first keep our students safe.

After two nights of board meetings and many impassioned comments from staff and community this week, our Board of Education decided to leave Barhitte Elementary in a remote learning environment through Thanksgiving break. The next week will be spent determining the best next steps for our younger bulldogs so that they and the Barhitte staff can be as safe as possible.

However, the middle and high schools will continue with their current plan with students coming on either Mondays/Tuesdays or Wednesdays/Thursdays. Having only just gotten started with it yesterday, they need to actually be in this mode long enough to evaluate it. Based on the first two days, it is going quite well, and many students have expressed joy at being back on campus with their friends and teachers.

These decisions are not made lightly—hence meetings on back-to-back days in which many people spoke. Our Board recognizes that school plays an important role in childcare as well as education, that most students learn best from school rather than home, and that face-to-face interaction better meets the needs that humans so typically feel . . . the need to be social, to belong, and to connect. All of us are seeking ways to meet our students', families', and staff's needs in ways that keep everybody as safe as reasonably possible.

Our Board is committed to having students at school—at a minimum providing the choice. Thus, Barhitte students will continue to learn from home for the next two weeks and have a choice come November 30th—assuming that it is deemed safe to do so. Those details will be worked out over the next week and a half and communicated. We continue to be grateful for your patience as we continue to seek better and safer ways to educate our youth.

With gratitude,

Dr. Kristy Spann, Superintendent