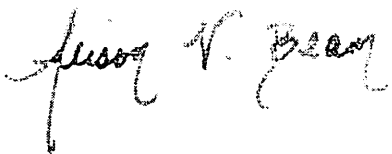


“closely monitor COVID-19 and its variants” without knowing how many cases are in schools or other non “highest-risk settings.”

- The BCHD policies regarding the isolation period and other guidance for both asymptomatic and symptomatic cases will allow for infectious people to be in schools, resulting in unvaccinated populations (e.g., children under the age of 12) being at increased risk for infection, serious disease, and death. It is unclear how BCHD conducted their analysis of SARS-CoV-2 infectiousness, as there is no definitive evidence of this published in the scientific record. For example, the BCHD suggested 3 day waiting period is completely inconsistent with CDC or DOH recommendations and is not supported by published scientific understanding of SARS-CoV-2 transmissibility and infectiousness.
- The BCHD policy of allowing asymptomatic close contacts to remain in school rather than to quarantine for the recommended period of time means that persons who go on to become COVID-19 cases will expose others. In addition to being in direct opposition to the shared stance of CDC and DOH, these BCHD recommendations are contrary to the vastly growing scientific body of evidence around SARS-CoV-2 transmission. Moreover, this BCHD policy which would allow close contacts an opportunity to further spread disease in the school setting, and in turn require more school exclusion time, could endanger our shared goal of keeping as many students and staff safely in-person as possible.

We know this has been a difficult time for our students, teachers, staff, families, and entire school communities. Our hope is that by providing clear, consistent, and evidence-based public health best practices our students will be able to resume in-person learning and some semblance of normalcy for the 2021- 2022 school year. Without this clear messaging – or worse, with the inconsistent and alarming messaging included in the BCHD guidance document – I fear our school leaders will not be equipped with the tools to keep our children safely in school. Given these concerns and concerns related to current community transmission levels, I respectfully ask you work with BCHD to update its guidance to align with the CDC and PADOH guidance, while still considering local conditions. Currently, Bucks County is experiencing high levels of community transmission according to CDC. I appreciate your attention to this issue and would be pleased to discuss further as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alison V. Beam".

Alison V. Beam, JD
Acting Secretary of Health