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November 19, 2020

Dear Families and Staff,

Buchanan Community Schools is committed to being transparent by reporting all positive and probable cases of COVID-19 in our District as soon as possible. This morning the Berrien County Health Department confirmed *Ottawa Elementary School* as an “outbreak” school. An outbreak school is defined as educational institutions (i.e., grades K-12 and institutions of higher education) that have been found by their local health department to have two or more COVID-19 cases who may have shared exposure on school grounds and are from different households. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services updates its reporting ([linked here](#)) website weekly that lists all outbreak schools. In our situation, 4 out of the 7 positive COVID-19 cases at Ottawa were connected.

Buchanan Community Schools has also learned today that *a staff member at Buchanan Middle School* has tested positive for COVID-19. The staff member is currently in self-quarantine. Due to federal health privacy laws, information regarding the staff member’s identity cannot be released. Please respect the staff member’s privacy during this difficult time.

***In working through the contact tracing process, the Health Department has confirmed that when we are tracing a person's contact that we look at anyone who has been within 6 feet of a confirmed, positive case for 15 minutes, even if that person is wearing a mask. Per the Berrien County Health Department, for the safety of all people, any student or staff member who falls into the above category is required to be quarantined for 14 days.*** No contact tracing is needed for this case.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends contacting your doctor if you believe you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and other symptoms, such as coughing or difficulty breathing. More information can be found at Berrien County Health Department. In addition, please take social distancing seriously: avoid crowds, stay at home, and maintain at least a six-foot distance from other people.

We will continue to provide updates as needed. You can access all of the district’s related communication by visiting our website at <https://www.buchananschools.com>. If you have questions, please contact your building administrator.

Thank you for your continued support. By working together, we will get through these challenging times. As you know, the well-being of our students, staff, and families, is our number one priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Robinson".

Patricia Robinson  
Superintendent