



**BOYERTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
EDUCATION CENTER

**“to enable all students to succeed in a changing world”**

August 12, 2019

Dear BASD Community,

I want to begin by acknowledging our amazing district-wide school family and our entire community for their incredible support and unity during the recent difficult time for Pine Forge. The loss of a child is devastating to all who are touched by it. The generosity and outpouring of goodwill demonstrated by ALL have had a direct impact on this grieving family, our district, and our entire community. We have truly demonstrated what it is to be One Boyertown!

The celebrations of Preston’s life will continue throughout the 2019-2020 school year as many of our buildings have plans underway for special projects in his memory. From restoration projects at Ironstone Park to Kindness Rock Gardens and beyond, we will continue to rally around our Pine Forge family.

As you may know, on Tuesday, July 23, 2019, our School Board approved the resolution to consider the closing of Pine Forge Elementary. This resolution moves the process forward to a public hearing, an eventual board vote regarding potential closure, and what could be another poignant feeling of loss for this community. The public hearing to close Pine Forge is scheduled for Monday, August 26, 2019, in the Boyertown Senior High New Auditorium at 6:00 PM. This date is also, unfortunately, the first day of school for our district and, in-light-of this summer’s tragedy, will inevitably be an extremely emotional day at the school and beyond for our district and community.

Please know the decision to schedule the public hearing for this specific date was unavoidable and not made lightly. Do we schedule the hearing over the summer when our families are away and not available to participate if they so choose? If you are a stakeholder who wants to be heard, you should be at the hearing. We want to provide an opportunity for voices to be heard. Do we wait until September and push the decision off again to a new board? The law requires that a minimum of 90 days pass before a vote. Assuming that new board members would need time for due diligence, waiting could potentially push a vote off until spring or even later and put us all in a time crunch or even continued uncertainty for what needs to be a careful, thorough, and well-thought-out process.

Why August 26<sup>th</sup>? This date is the very first date that the majority, if not all of our families, will be back from vacations and available to participate in the public hearing. It allows 90 days to pass before the November School Board Voting Meeting (the last for this current school board) – with a few days for anything unexpected like early snow days. It allows the current board which has been actively involved with the process to see the process through to a final decision. Should the decision be to close the school, it will give all of us the time needed to work through our emotions and to better prepare for the complexities involved in taking such action. Last, but not least, it gives us the time we need to devote to celebrating the history and people of this amazing school.

The truth is we, as a district, will continue to face challenges moving forward. There is never a good time for difficult decisions and the events of this summer compound the sensitivity surrounding the potential closing of Pine Forge. It is my sincere hope that we will continue to come together in support of one another as we move to a resolution regarding Pine Forge Elementary School. Together we can end the uncertainty that has negatively impacted the school and move forward in continued support of the children of our Pine Forge community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana T. Bedden".

Dana T. Bedden, Ed.D., CAA  
Superintendent of Schools