

As I write this, I think back to March 13th and also August 20th. The days in between those two dates will always be a blur of uncertainty. We have now accomplished what many believed impossible by completing nine weeks of daily in-person instruction. Naturally, a day looks somewhat different than it did a year ago but when I step into a classroom, it seems very similar. This accomplishment is a testament to the dedication of our staff, students and community. It has required unparalleled flexibility but it is working. We rallied to provide a sense of normalcy and routine as we attempt to catch our students up from their loss of instruction last Spring. Guthrie Public Schools has been one of the few large school districts in the Oklahoma City metro area that has been open continuously for traditional instruction since the year began.

As we enter the cold and flu season, it has never been more critical to keep your children at home if they are ill. Logan County continues to see elevated COVID infection numbers. This necessitates continued wearing of masks. This inconvenience is certainly better than a loss of in-person instruction. You may have seen news articles detailing a recent report I provided to our Board of Education regarding our positive cases among staff and students. I consider the number of our positive cases to be relatively low with both students and staff. I attribute the low numbers to continued diligence of our staff, students and their families with regard to our protocols.

An area of frustration has been when a staff member or student is placed in quarantine. If anyone is determined to have close contact with someone who has tested positive and that contact meets the definition of an exposure, they are required to quarantine for 14 days. Ultimately, this determination is made by the Logan County Health Department. In most cases, the definition of an exposure includes contact closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer. If the contact occurs during a time of accelerated activity such as an athletic event, those parameters may become more restrictive. While you may receive notification from Guthrie Public Schools, the ultimate decision maker for who is quarantined is the Logan County Health Department. A letter from the Health Department will accompany our letter. The communication from the Health Department also outlines the penalties for failure to follow the quarantine order. If you have any questions about the protocols located on our website, please email them to covid19@guthrie.net.

As we move into the second nine-weeks of instruction, we are working to prepare what many indoor activities may look like. Moving forward, change is inevitable. Our goal will always be to provide a safe environment for our students and community. With what we have learned about COVID, achieving that goal will surely be more challenging as our activities move inside. We continue to learn how to manage COVID as instruction continues. I'm sure many members of our community feared we would never make it this far with school. I'll confess to my skepticism as well. The ongoing support we receive is unmatched as we continue growing our children.