

Sometimes, you just don't know where to start! We had such a busy time over the last few weeks that it all seems like a blur. I've heard from many of you about your various concerns with regard to the conclusion of the 2019-20 school year.

I will begin with some good news because I think we would all welcome hearing a positive. Because of the school building closure, we have been able to accelerate our summer construction projects. These projects include secure entry vestibules for five school buildings, new restrooms for Fogarty Elementary and a wood playing surface for the north gym at the High School. Contractors have been selected and in some cases work has already begun. The timeline to complete these projects has become much more forgiving with the additional time.

We are developing a plan that will be announced on Thursday, April 30th, which will allow parents to return textbooks, library books and safely reclaim any student belongings that are in the school. The school district has issued broad guidance to building principals and the plan specific to each school site will be emailed to families. If you don't have an email on file with the district, the plans will also be on the district web page by Thursday evening. Pickup will be May 11-12 between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at your child's school. At all times, you must maintain social distancing and please do not come if you are ill.

Mr. LeGrande and I are both committed to a traditional graduation ceremony even if that means a delay into the summer. Under current guidance, such a ceremony cannot occur as scheduled on May 19th. We are monitoring Oklahoma's progress after Governor Stitt announced his Open Up and Recover Safely (OURS) Plan. I've heard from many parents who have noticed some of our closest neighboring school districts are planning early June graduations with current social distancing protocols in place. Many of those districts have a graduating class of fewer than 30 seniors. In a district as large as ours, there is no realistic way to have what we have become accustomed to for graduation (Jelsma Stadium filled beyond capacity) and maintain accepted social distancing practices. We are holding out hope that we can honor our 218 graduates in a proper setting. We strive for a traditional ceremony while maintaining a safe environment for all in attendance.

I'm so thankful for the support our teachers continue to provide our students in what has been surreal conditions. I hear stories daily about teachers going the extra mile for their students. I know parents are working with their children and in many cases continuing to work from home as well. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't give a huge THANK YOU to our child nutrition staff. I've watched them stand outside in the cold, huddle under canopies in the rain and risk their own health in order to provide meals for our students.

I doubt any of us will ever forget the Spring/Summer of 2020!