

November 29, 2020

Open Letter to Mangum Parents and Community Stakeholders:

On Friday, November 20th, Greer County was elevated by the State Department of Education to the highest COVID alert category, Red. This was the first time we had been placed in the Red category. We were hopeful that the spike was temporary and we would return back into the green or orange threat levels during Thanksgiving break. In fact, we had plans to resume rural bus routes on December 1st. Unfortunately, the positive cases have only increased over the past week, leaving us in the Red once again.

There have been over seventeen hundred COVID deaths in Oklahoma and several here in Mangum. Fortunately, the virus does not seem to have the same impact on our young people as it does on our older adults and we have been able to continue in-person learning to date. Our administration has asked a lot from our faculty and staff. As expected, they continue to come through time after time and if given the challenge, they would continue to selflessly serve our students. However, their selflessness must have boundaries and I am not going to ask them to risk their lives during the highest outbreak of this pandemic. The health risks to our students, faculty and staff simply do not outweigh the benefits associated with continued in-person instruction at this time.

Therefore, Mangum Schools buildings will be closed on Monday and Tuesday as we transition to 100% virtual education. Students who need devices should reach out to their building principal or homeroom teacher in the case of Edison Elementary on Tuesday. Starting Wednesday morning, Mangum schools will implement a 100% distance learning platform until January 5th. Unlike the virtual program that has been employed to date, students will be expected to log-on to receive their instruction via interactive video. Lower elementary students will receive packets that can be picked up and returned during meal service on Monday and Wednesdays. The first packet will be available on Wednesday. Free meals will be available from 11:30-1:00 at Edison Elementary on Mondays and Wednesdays. Meals must be ordered by 10 AM on the day of pickup.

Students who are on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will transition to their contingency plans. Each IEP is designed individually, so no two plans or services will be exactly the same. The special education staff will work with each student one on one to make sure extended services are provided and FERPA is met. If you have any questions, please email your building level special education teacher and carbon copy the building level administrator and counselor.

As part of the approved matrix, Mangum Public Schools will not host any extracurricular activities or public gatherings while in the threat level Red and our building capacity will be capped at 15% of our student population. Hopefully, a vaccine is on the horizon and these measures won't be employed very long. These protocols and procedures were approved earlier this summer by the State Department of Education and Mangum Board of Education in an effort to remove emotion from the decision to go virtual, if we were elevated to Red. Unfortunately, we have met that threshold and we must comply with the restrictions set in place.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dr. Shane Boothe  
Superintendent, Mangum Public Schools