

Lockney ISD
P.O. Box 428
Lockney, TX 79241

July 31, 2020

Dear Lockney ISD Parents and Students,

Thank you for your patience and understanding as you have anxiously awaited our plan for returning to school. Our School Board approved the plan last night and we can officially share it with you. Please note that this is a starting point for us and we fully expect to make revisions as the guidance we receive changes and as we develop more effective strategies and practices. To say this will be a challenging return to school would be a huge understatement.

As you read through the plan, I want you to realize that the priority of this school district is to make this return as safe and healthy as possible for our students and our staff. This means that instruction and important traditions may often take a backseat to safer practices. There is nothing normal about being a student or a teacher in 2020. We cannot control that. We can, however, control our approach to the challenges so that we might make the absolute best of the situation while enjoying small victories. I'm sorry that we are going through this.

You will have a thousand questions after reading through this plan. Please note that this plan is not an all-inclusive procedural document. In fact, almost every aspect of this plan has required a sub-plan of strategies. Each of those strategies present new challenges for implementation. This plan is a guideline that will help us interpret situations and drive our decisions. You cannot merely read this document. You must study it. We ask that you question it, but please do so in terms of whether you believe the decisions have truly been made to prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff. This is important.

There are a couple of topics within this document that were not anticipated but have been determined to be in the best interest of our students' health. First, LISD has suspended our "in-town" bus routes. The procedures demanded of our transportation department make these routes an impossibility to manage at this time. This was a very difficult decision for us to make, but the distancing and sanitation rules that govern us will prevent offering these routes. The second major decision that varies from what we have communicated up to this point is the exclusion of voluntary remote-learners from participating in UIL extracurricular activities or certain courses that require/involve extracurricular activities as part of the program. This includes athletics, band, and advanced Ag and CTE classes. In short, only students attending on-campus instruction may participate in UIL extracurricular activities and courses that require or include extracurricular activities. We needed to clear the lens to make this decision. The only valid reason recognized for choosing the At-Home remote learning model is to limit exposure to people and the virus. The reality is that participation in these courses actually carry an increased possibility of exposure. To choose remote instruction in order to reduce reasonable exposure but engage in extracurricular activities that may involve higher risks of

exposure, lacks continuity. LISD will respect the wishes of all parents regarding their choice of learning models but we will provide continuity in our programming.

While we are sharing hard news, we need to address the UIL guidelines that dictate social distancing standards to be implemented at all athletic events. Our bleachers will be limited to 50% capacity and social distancing measures that will effectively make our athletic events a family affair...much like graduation. Nobody likes this mandate, but we understand why it is in place. If this is what it takes for our Longhorns to hit the field, we will embrace it. Although this doesn't fit our tradition model, it is aligned with our health and safety priorities. In the end, that is more important. We are seeking alternatives to provide access to the game through digital media or radio. I'm sorry to have to share this news with you.

There is a lot of other information in the plan. Please read it carefully. Jot down questions as you have them but be sure to look for the answers within the remainder of the document. Again, we fully expect this plan to be revised as we receive more guidance and learn more effective practices through experience. Your participation in the process will be vital and valued. Remember, these decisions are not based on what we want. They are based on safer practices that will keep our students safe and healthy.

We want to see our children in school. We hate this nightmare scenario every bit as much as you do and we long for a time when we can engage each other without fear or trepidation. We know you will do a great job of helping your child understand our situation. We fully expect our kids to come out of this with a desire to attack their futures. Please feel free to share your concerns with us. Our email addresses are listed in the Back to School Plan.

Without a doubt, we are all disappointed. Please don't allow that disappointment to become anger. There is enough of that in the world. We are in this together. We will get through it together. I am proud to be part of this community...with you.

Sincerely,

Jim Baum, Superintendent
Lockney ISD