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November 5, 2020

BPS Families and Staff,

As I discussed in my [previous update](#), the current rate of COVID-19 transmission in our community is making it very difficult to minimize exposure and prevent further spread among our students and staff. Yesterday, the City of Bixby reached another all-time high mark for COVID cases with 119 active individuals from 92 separate residences. This represents a nearly three-fold increase in the past six weeks.

This community surge is significantly impacting our schools, in particular our high school and Ninth Grade Center. After conducting contact tracing on four new student cases yesterday, we are up to 16 active cases and over 250 students currently under isolation or quarantine in grades 9-12. This represents about one in seven students, or about 15% of our high school enrollment.

I am proud of the job our teachers have done balancing the demands of teaching their in-person classes while also serving the academic needs of high numbers of quarantined students learning from home. Despite their strong efforts and positive attitude, we all recognize this approach is not ideal. Additionally, we now have some students experiencing their second or third quarantine from school who are suffering academically. Coupled with a continuing shortage of qualified substitutes, we have reached a point where a temporary return to distance learning has become necessary.

Accordingly, we will transition **all students in grades 9-12 to distance learning** for the next two weeks, beginning on **Monday, November 9** and running through **Friday, November 20**. This period precedes the Thanksgiving holiday break from November 23-27 which is already on our school calendar. Therefore, we anticipate students will return to in-person instruction on **Monday, November 30**. **Students in ALL other grades will remain in regular, face-to-face classes during this time.**

High school families who wish to take advantage of our free breakfast and lunch service can pick up meals in front of the Ninth Grade Center or North Elementary School from 8:45 to 10:15 am each day during this distance learning period. To ensure we have adequate meals prepared for families, please complete [this form](#) if you would like to participate in this program. **Families wishing to request meals for next week should fill the form out TODAY. Next Tuesday, November 11, families should complete the form for the following week.** The district will send a reminder via text message. This service is available for ALL students.

Student medications held in the school nurse's office may be picked up by the parent or guardian if needed during the distance learning period. Please call the school from 8:15 AM - 4:00 PM to make arrangements. A picture ID will be required to pick up medication.

In most cases, students who are involved in seasonal sports and activities will be able to continue participation in practices and competitive events. Individual coaches and activity coordinators will contact their students with additional instructions and guidelines tomorrow. Additionally, administration of the Pre-ACT exam will be rescheduled from November 20 to December 11.

For parents of high school students, I regret we are having to make this decision. Ultimately, the safety and well-being of students and employees has to remain our primary focus. We appreciate your support and understanding. We hope that this reset will get us to the other side of this current COVID surge and that we will be able to finish the final weeks of this semester strong and together at school.

Finally, for all parents, we need to continue to work cooperatively to keep ourselves, our children, and our community safe. Please continue to coach your children on the protocols for staying safe from COVID -- avoiding large gatherings, wearing a mask, washing hands frequently, staying six feet apart, avoiding direct physical contact, and diligently monitoring our own symptoms to protect others. We know this is a challenging time for you and your families. Let us know if we can help in any way.

Respectfully,

Rob Miller  
Superintendent