November 12, 2020

Greetings,

Just as our community, our state, and our nation has seen COVID-19 cases continue to increase in recent days and weeks our district has been similarly impacted.

In the month of October, across the district we saw 31 students test positive for COVID-19. Through the first 11 days of November our positive student cases totaled 32. These positive cases have resulted in 433 students to be either quarantined due to direct contact or self-isolated due to a positive test.

The impacts of COVID-19 has put a strain on both our certified and support staff. Forty-five staff members are currently out due to a COVID-19 related absence. Across the district we currently have six staff members who have tested positive. Of the 45 staff members who are currently out, 36 are certified staff members.

Absences have stemmed from positive cases leading to self-isolation, to staff showing symptoms of COVID-19, employees having to quarantine due to direct contact, or care for their own child who has been quarantined due to direct contact or has tested positive.

With the increase in positive cases and the number of students and staff absent, the district will move to virtual learning beginning Monday, November 16, 2020. The scheduled date to return to in-person instruction is Monday, December 7, 2020.

This is not an easy decision as an educator. In-person instruction is important to the development of our students. To make a swift return back to the classroom possible we need your help. I sincerely ask that our students, staff, families, and community play their part in stopping the spread. Wearing a mask, watching your distance from others, and washing your hands can help in returning our students and staff back to the classroom.

During these three weeks away from the school building we will continue to provide meals for students. Information regarding that service can be found at MuskogeePS.org. Obtain contact information for your students’ teachers and develop a plan for the coming weeks. Our staff will report to work as normal unless under quarantine.

These next few days and weeks will be crucial for everyone, students and staff, to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As we head into the Thanksgiving Holiday, I know we all prepare to gather with family and friends but I would encourage you to take precautions and rethink how you might celebrate.

I believe this move to virtual can help reset our numbers and allow us to close out this first semester strong!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jarod Mendenhall
Superintendent
Muskogee Public Schools