



Knob Noster R-VIII School District

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Dr. Jerrod Wheeler, Superintendent of Schools

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Our Mission Is Student Success

Date: 11-20-2020
To: KNPS Parents
From: Jerrod Wheeler
Re: Thanksgiving Break and COVID-19 Update

Dear Parents,

I hope this memo find you well! In August, we were hopeful to make it to Thanksgiving with no shutdowns....and here we are! We made it! I want to once again thank you for your ongoing partnership this year and for making the Knob Noster community such a wonderful place to live. As we head into the break, I want to share a few brief status updates that may help you plan for the future.

Before we get to that, I have to say that despite some major issues this year, we remain very blessed in our school, our community, and our nation. I hope we all can find rejuvenation this Thanksgiving Holiday by reflecting on those things in our life for which we are most thankful. As you enjoy your holiday traditions, please be sure to take all appropriate safeguards to protect yourselves and your family. We want to see you all back after break as we sprint to the finish line this semester!!

COVID Status

Overall, our status at this time is very favorable. As mentioned prior, we have recorded zero positive student cases in our elementary buildings that can be traced back to a likely transmission related to school. At the secondary level, sports play a factor, but we have still seen very few positive cases in students that could be traced back to sports or potential in-school transmission. We are seeing almost every positive transmission case in students and adults trace back to the home and/or the immediate/extended family unit. All data has been updated on our website dashboard each Friday. Overall, our numbers look very good right now as we head into our first holiday break. This is not the case everywhere, but it is the case in KNPS right now. Our nurses have done an exceptional job in staying on top of the issues. Our protocols are working. Right now, we are on course to remain in session and remain open as we have been since August.

With this report in mind, I ask that you continue to follow and encourage your children to follow the safeguards that are making a difference....physical distance, face coverings, and hand washing. These will be more important than ever in the next few months.

Second Semester Learning Preferences Survey – Action Required

Tomorrow, you will receive a memo and survey regarding your preferred options for your child's learning for second semester. As a district, our current plan is to offer the same options as we did during first semester. Please be sure to carefully review that memo and respond to the survey for each of your children, even if you are requesting no change.

Sports and Activities Spectators

In a recent memo, I notified parents that we were limiting school events to two spectators per student participant. We have revisited that decision and will be increasing that to four tickets per student participant. We also want to clarify that students will be admitted by showing their school ID. This change will limit our capacity to around 50%. As mentioned prior, we will strictly enforce the use of face coverings during these events and will encourage physical distancing. We look forward to our parents, students, and community members responding to these expectations in a responsible manner.

Sports Cancellations

All district sports activities for the week ahead have been cancelled. This has occurred primarily due to shutdowns, quarantines, and cancellations in other school districts who were scheduled for these competitions. At this time, the health of our student athletes is very good overall. Please keep up the great work in this area!

No Planned Shutdowns at This Time

As mentioned in my last memo, history would suggest that we will see an increase in positive cases around Dec 9 +/- as a result of Thanksgiving gatherings. As of now, our plan is to remain open and to respond to any staffing challenges by flexing our staffing to get us to the end of semester. Our plan at this time is to evaluate what we experience following Thanksgiving and then determine if a different approach should be taken following the Christmas Break. When it comes to positive cases, our students are doing relatively well. However, our challenge continues to be our adult employee populations, which impacts our ability to effectively staff our classrooms. If you know of any individual who could assist as a substitute teacher or employee, please encourage them to apply online. Our decision to continue to offer in-person learning takes into account many factors, including multiple student considerations, staff safety considerations, family economic factors, COVID data, and ultimately the overall health status of our school community.

Student Meals

As a reminder, all student meals are free for all students this year. Those meals will resume when we return on November 30.

Giving Thanks

I want to wrap up this memo by providing a public thank you to the Knob Noster Public Schools Team. I am so thankful to have the opportunity to work with such a wonderful team of dedicated, professional, and caring individuals. Our award-winning educators and the amazing staff members who support them have been remarkable this year. They continue to work through this crisis every day to make sure we keep putting our best foot forward for our students and community. I will be giving thanks for this team throughout the week ahead and wanted to begin by publicly thanking them for a job well done.

From the Knob Noster Public Schools family to yours, we wish you a safe, restful, relaxing, and enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday! Thank you again for your partnership and for your time to review this memo. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I may further assist. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving Break!

v/r,

Jerrod Wheeler