



Troup County School System

Your Future Starts Today

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March 25, 2021

Dear Troup County School System Families:

Thank you for your continued support of the Troup County School System as we all have navigated this school year inside and outside the classroom. As you know, there are school systems all around the country which have yet to open schools. As I watch the national news, there is no mention of school systems like ours that have managed to open schools and remain open through this pandemic. All I hear is how national experts are going to help us get it done. The reality is our community had the courage and collaborative spirit to open our schools eight months ago, remain open and work together utilizing every safety precaution we could fathom. This took sacrifice on many levels including continuous mask wearing, social distancing, temperature taking, offering very few field trips, limited recess for elementary students, limited events and restricted visitation on our school campuses. I applaud all of our collective efforts and I believe the sacrifices we have made have allowed us to continue to remain open.

As you also know, the amount of positive COVID cases among our staff and students has continued to decline in the past six weeks, most likely due to the vaccination efforts. I am concerned there is a sense of relief and we may become less attentive to the safety precautions that have allowed us to remain open. I would like to ask that we continue with all of the safety precautions throughout the remainder of this school year. It is imperative we not let up on our efforts. After the end of this school year, we will see what the summer brings as we move into the 2021-22 school year in terms of our current limitations and restrictions. Like most of you, I do hope to return to normal, but it may take time.

As we progress throughout the spring, we cannot randomly allow large numbers of parents and visitors to enter a school during the school day for traditional end of the year parties, awards ceremonies, promotions ceremonies and field day events. While many people are anxious to get back into schools, we also have people who do not wish to have their children exposed to random visitors during the school day.

On that note, in the current year, we have made many accommodations regarding athletics and high school and middle school events. While we want students, especially our graduating seniors, to have as many normal activities as possible, we still must exercise precautions. We are going to have in-person high school graduations where students will be distanced on the football field, will be required to wear masks and parents will have limited seating in the bleachers. We will also have proms at Sweetland Amphitheatre (an outdoor venue) and a few select awards ceremonies in the large gymnasium spaces. These events will be held outside of the school hours for the most part, held in expansive spaces, with separation between students and families and are voluntary for both the students and families.

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For elementary and middle schools, we also want to accommodate families to attend promotion/graduation ceremonies on a limited basis. We are planning to have voluntary promotion/graduation ceremonies for Kindergarten, 5th grade and 8th grade students with some restrictions. The restrictions are:

1. Principals may choose to have the events during school hours or after school hours.
2. The ceremonies will most likely not include every student from that grade group but may be held in smaller groups (e.g., 1 to 3 classes per ceremony).
3. Parents who do not wish for their student(s) to attend, may opt out of allowing them to attend.
4. Parents will enter the venue (cafeteria or gymnasium) through an external door to that space.
5. Masks will be required.
6. Temperature taking will be required.
7. Two tickets will be allocated per student.
8. Siblings in the school will not be allowed to attend.
9. Parents will be asked to sit in bleachers or perimeter seating and away from students.
10. These ceremonies will only be held for Kindergarten, 5th and 8th grades. Due to limited time in the last week of school, principals are working on plans to offer celebrations/awards ceremonies for the other grades and provide a video or virtual option.

Note: The restrictions above are for the Kindergarten, 5th and 8th grade promotion/graduation ceremonies only. Field day events and all other student gatherings will be students and staff only.

I realize these restrictions may seem extreme, but we are trying to honor some of our traditions, while remaining as safe as possible. We need your support and understanding. Again, our number one priority is student and staff safety and to honor our students after a very challenging year. If positive cases spike in the remaining weeks, we may have to reconsider these plans. In the meantime, we ask for your continued cooperation and support and want you to please know how much we appreciate our families in helping us through this process. Troup County has much in which to be proud as we have managed this pandemic and kept our kids strong and vibrant throughout this crisis. We will emerge from this better than ever!

Again, thank you for your support and understanding.

Sincerely,



Brian T. Shumate, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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