



Knob Noster Public Schools

Dr. Jerrod Wheeler, Superintendent | Mr. Michael Cohron, Assistant Superintendent | Mrs. Deenia Hocker, Director of Student Services
401 E. Wimer, Knob Noster, MO 65336 | (660) 563-3186 | www.knobnoster.k12.mo.us

December 7, 2021

Dear Knob Noster Parents/Guardians,

I hope this email finds you well! As of this memo, we have 7.5 days left until Christmas Break! We look forward to rounding out the semester with some great work by our students....along with some holiday fun.

It has been quite some time since I provided an update related to Covid-19. In this instance, no news has been very good news. Our number of positive cases and quarantines in the district has remained very low, following a brief elevated period in August when we returned to school. This data has continued to be reported weekly on our district website for the last 18 months.

As you are likely aware, this week a ruling occurred out of Cole County, Missouri regarding the discontinuation of the use of masks or quarantines. Today, Missouri Attorney General (and Senatorial Candidate) Eric Schmitt provided guidance regarding his intention to enforce this legislation. The district now finds itself in a new chapter of juggling yet another compliance issue and opinion regarding how best to protect students and remain compliant with health agencies of authority. In many ways, our district has been aligned this entire school year to the intent of the Cole County decision....but we haven't thrown the proverbial baby out with the bathwater.

Since COVID first arrived to our district in March 2020, the district administration and Board of Education have worked very carefully and cautiously to evaluate and enact new guidance when it is provided to us. In doing so, we have made every attempt to use an extra dose of common sense, while also doing our best to comply with an ever-evolving list of directives from a variety of agencies. We have also consistently made every attempt to relay the power of choice to our parents to make the decisions that they believe is right for their children.

At this time we are evaluating this new piece of guidance. As a reminder, we also currently are required to follow the guidance from CDC and other agencies of authority as a condition of eligibility for ESSR III funding...nearly \$2 million....to support our students.

As you are aware, since the start of the school year, our district has enforced the CDC mandate for the use of face coverings on buses. We have endorsed the recommended use of face coverings in our schools, but have ultimately left that decision to parents. We also have continued to impose quarantines, but have done so with new levels of discretion AND parental input. In the end, we have once again left the decision to test for COVID to the discretion of individual parents.

As a result, the number of quarantines imposed this year in our district has reduced SIGNIFICANTLY. As shared above, our process this year seems to be working well to: (1) Protect our students, (2) Maximize parental choice, and (3) Minimize disruption to student attendance and the learning environment.

Once again, we plan to carefully evaluate this new guidance before making any significant action or making any changes. Once again, we want to use an extra dose of common sense in evaluating the "how" and the "why" of this judicial ruling being enforced by the Attorney General.

COVID aside, if a student or employee is ill, we expect and will take action to ensure they stay home and away from others. If a student or employee is healthy, we expect them to attend school. Our process this year has leaned HEAVILY toward maximizing our ability to meet these two expectations. This is not a COVID protocol, this is a common sense illness protocol. Outside of this protocol, we have once again left the decision to test for COVID to the discretion of parents.



KNOB NOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Jerrod Wheeler, Superintendent | Mr. Michael Cohron, Assistant Superintendent | Mrs. Deenia Hocker, Director of Student Services
401 E. Wimer, Knob Noster, MO 65336 | (660) 563-3186 | www.knobnoster.k12.mo.us

As your superintendent, I continue to engage in a wide variety of efforts and conversations to help make the best decisions I can for our school district while working with our families to make the best decisions they can for their children. Likewise, as your superintendent, I have continued to NOT engage in the ongoing political volleying of the COVID situation. Avoiding politics has also been critical in making the best decisions we can make.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we navigate yet another chapter of the COVID storyline. As always, thank you for your ongoing partnership and respectful engagement as we move through this situation.

Very Respectfully,

Jerrod Wheeler