



Dear Parent/Guardian:

I write to announce that I have decided to extend remote learning through to the end of this semester.

There will be a number of parents and students as well as other members of the OSSM community who will disagree with my decision so I will take a moment to explain it. Back in May, a group of us (faculty and administration) had examined the matter and decided to start and end the Fall semester early. Our intention was to go "in person" right from the start and to continue without any extended breaks to the end of the semester, finishing the semester just before Thanksgiving. Because of a surge in Covid cases in July, I decided "at the last minute" to alter our original plans and start school remotely. One of the contributing factors to this decision was the high temperatures and humidity in August. I thought that it would be better to start the semester after Labor Day when the temperature would be milder, and students could open their windows in their rooms and teachers could open windows in their classrooms. The epidemiologist from the State Epidemiologist's office with whom I am consulting, Mr. Suhayb Anwar, who is also the uncle of a current OSSM student, told me he anticipated the situation to improve following a small spike in cases due to Labor Day. He fully expected the color of Oklahoma county in the Covid map in the Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA) website to go to yellow however things got worse and the color of Oklahoma County turned to Orange-2. [The Covid map at the OSSBA website, <https://www.ossba.org/resources/coronavirus/covid-19-map/>, is different than the Covid map from the state health department. The OSSBA Covid map has two levels of orange: Orange-1 and Orange-2 whereas the state health department Covid map just has the color orange and no sub-distinctions.

[Oklahoma State School Boards Association](https://www.ossba.org)

COVID-19 Map . This map was created by OSSBA using the guidelines set forth in state Education Department's safety protocols guidance and the county-level case data as reported by the state Health Department as of Sept. 10, 2020. The state Health Department calculates a 7-day rolling average of new cases to arrive at the cases per 100,000 figure used to determine the color-coded risk level.
www.ossba.org

Unfortunately, things took a turn for the worse after Labor Day. The recommendation for schools when the color is Orange-1 is a hybrid model as is being employed in Edmond. The Edmond Public Schools is having students on an A/B schedule with the students alternating between in-person and remote. The

recommendation for Orange-2 is remote teaching. The recommendation for yellow is in-person instruction.

We are now at a point that even if the situation improves and the county turns to Orange-1 or yellow, it will not be worth bringing the students back for the Fall term since the time they would be on campus would be too short. It will take a week just to stagger the move-in of the students.

Presently the plan is for us to have final exams from Wednesday, November 18 through Tuesday, November 24, 2020. Our plan is to have students return to school during the first full week of January (January 4-10) and to have classes begin for the Spring term on January 11. (This is a little different than an earlier circulated calendar that had classes beginning on January 4, 2021. Under the earlier calendar, students would have had to start moving in at the end of December and their move in would overlap the New Year's holiday long weekend.)

The current plan is to not have a spring break and to end the school year earlier than typical. Our current plan is to have final exams be during the week of May 17-21 and graduation be on Saturday May 22, assuming the conditions permit an in-person graduation. AP exams will be given the first two weeks of May, May 3 - 14 so the final exams cannot be moved up earlier as this would cause finals and AP exams to overlap.

A number of our Board members are in the education realm: Tom Dieghan, Superintendent of the Duncan Schools; Gary Ellis, principal of Coweta High School, and Dr. Michael Jordan, a chemistry professor at Oklahoma Baptist University. I have had lengthy conversations with each and believe we can learn from the experiences of each when we bring the students back. All three institutions are successfully navigating the challenge of keeping faculty and students safe.

We have put together protocols for conducting school operations as safely as possible. These will be presented separately. The purpose of this email is to inform you of the decision to continue remote teaching through the end of the Fall semester and of our intention to begin in person instruction (assuming conditions permit us to do so safely) in January. We will monitor the situation in the meantime and anticipate that conditions will permit a full return of students, faculty and staff to campus in January.

During the past few weeks, a number of parents, students, and faculty and staff have reached out to me - via email, phone call, text, and in-person visits. I appreciate all of the input and feedback I have gotten. I know that there may be those who are unhappy with the decisions and plans described in this email and want to assure all that decisions were made only after first consulting with medical and health experts and after input was solicited from members representing all facets of the OSSM

community. (Note: Parents and students were polled via anonymous surveys; I can share the results with those who request them.)

I am grateful to you all for your patience and understanding during these challenging and unpredictable times.

Sincerely,

Frank Wang

President