

October 15, 2020

On September 4, 2020 I notified parents and guardians that Portales Municipal Schools planned to open all of our elementary school in the hybrid mode on October 20, 2020. In that letter I explained that we can only open if Roosevelt County meets the gating criteria and turns green on the COVID-19 map released every two weeks by the Department of Health. Unfortunately, our county is still red and cannot open schools in the hybrid mode as planned.

Since September, Brown Early Childhood Center and James Elementary School has been open allowing groups of five students to one teacher to meet with their homeroom teachers at least one day each week. We feel that this in-person time is important to allow students to be with others and to have a day that they can get personal, in-person instruction and assistance that can help them through the rest of the week. The Public Education Department has also allowed us to bring in some of our most at-risk students with disabilities during this time. Even with the new Governor's Health order that takes effect on October 16, our schools will continue with this practice. Our athletes and activities students have also been allowed to work out in groups of 9:1 over the past couple of months. This will also continue, except the groups must transition to groups of 4:1.

While we wait for Roosevelt County to turn green, our distance/online education will continue. While many of our students are doing very well in this virtual environment, I know that there are those who are struggling or wanting to give up. Please remember that our teachers, administrators, and counselors are there for you and your student. Do not hesitate to call or e-mail your teacher, the principal, or your child's counselor if you or your child are in need of assistance. All schools can offer your child after-school one-on-one or small group instruction and support. Although this after-school instruction may still be online, it will allow for a teacher to help your child without other distractions in a more personal way. If you feel this would be of help to your child, please contact your school so that this assistance can be arranged.

Finally, everyone at Portales Municipal Schools is anxious to get our kids back in school. We know that school is where they need to be. Therefore, as soon as Roosevelt County turns green our elementary schools will open. Our plan is to start school the Tuesday after the county turns green. Our reentry plans have been approved, we are working to meet air filtration requirements, and our teachers will be ready. Although we hope to begin the Tuesday after the county turns green, the Public Education Department requires an inspection by one of their staff and the Fire Marshall's Office. If those meetings can't take place prior to that Tuesday, we will begin as soon as those inspections have been completed and we are given the green light to open by the State.

Please help us all to make Roosevelt County green and get our kids back to school.

Johnnie S. Cain

Superintendent