

DEWEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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UPDATE REGARDING STUDENT HEALTH CONCERNS

11/7/2017

My objective is to provide an update on our current student health issues and how we are moving forward. Let me first share with you that from the initial stages of these concerns, we have had students who have shown marked improvement in their symptoms and in some cases, are symptom free and have remained that way. Also, as of this date, we have not had any reported students in our Elementary School with associated symptoms. All of these items are certainly good news. I also would like to share with you that after reviewing our case, the Washington County Health Dept. along with the Oklahoma Office of State Epidemiologist have no evidence that we're dealing with an infectious issue that would be the cause of the health concerns. In addition, due to amount of concern that has developed, the Oklahoma Dept. of Environmental Quality is going to provide us some assistance in reviewing possible environmental factors and have assigned an environmental specialist to our case. The scope of their work is undetermined at this point but as their work unfolds, we'll update with information.

In recent days, we've had the opportunity to speak with concerned parents and citizens about our issue and I certainly understand and empathize with the many positions that people have shared. I can only trust that our parents and community members understand that if we had any information that led us to believe that our students were in a harmful environment, we would not place anyone, student or employee, in that position. Furthermore, there has and never will be an attempt to withhold information but there must be an understanding that a level of privacy is required in these circumstances. At times, this makes it very difficult to provide the kinds of answers that people are seeking. As we have throughout the school year, we will continue to work through the situation and make decisions based on the information we have available. The ultimate goal in this situation is for all of our students to be healthy and feel safe. I understand this is a difficult goal to achieve at this particular time but I'm proud to say that our entire staff at Dewey Schools is committed to this goal. Lastly, I understand that there has been and is misinformation being distributed via social media sites. What you can do to help us is please be mindful of what you give credibility to regarding the information you see on social media. If you ever have any questions, please contact my office or come see me and I will provide any information that I can legally share.

Please know, we are working very diligently on the issue and are attempting to gather more information daily and make appropriate decisions.

Thank you.

Vince Vincent

Superintendent