



GILMER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Gilmer ISD Families,

After months of planning and understanding how student and staff needs have changed because of COVID-19 closures, Gilmer ISD is still waiting on specific guidance from State officials on the re-opening of schools in the Fall. As it currently stands, Gilmer ISD will open for face-to-face instruction on August 12, 2020 with parents being able to choose a traditional classroom or a remote learning classroom. This format represents the best solution which balances our two most important priorities: the health and safety of our entire community and student learning.

As you can imagine, this will be an evolving process. We have received some guidance from the Texas Education Agency, Commissioner Mike Morath, and Governor Abbott during this time. We have reviewed all recommendations from the CDC and the Department of Health. We have also gathered information and opinions from our GISD families in the form of a survey and we have taken recommendations from our School Health Advisory Council (SHAC Committee). We know that all State and Local officials will continue to release information as it becomes available. In the meantime, we want to immediately address some of the questions that are in the minds of our parents, students, and community. Our hope is that the answers to these questions will help families make decisions for each of their students as to whether they will return to school for face-to-face instruction or choose the remote learning option.

What measures will the District take to lessen the spread of infectious disease for those who attend school in person?

The list below is not an exhaustive or fully detailed explanation of efforts to stop the spread, but it is what we can confidently communicate at this time. We are likely to take steps beyond what is listed below, but we are waiting for TEA requirements before sharing more information.

- *Hand sanitizer will be in every classroom, common area, and entrance to facilities.*
- *At the start of the school year, all students will be taught how to appropriately wash their hands and our younger students will participate in supervised hand washing.*
- *Visitors to campus will be limited and those who do enter a campus will be required to engage in certain screening/health protocols prior to accessing a facility.*
- *Face masks will not necessarily be required all day. Students and staff may be required to wear a mask at times during the school day in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained such as on the bus or during small group instruction. While face masks will be strongly encouraged among our staff and*

students, wearing them may not be feasible for students under 10 years of age, for individuals with certain medical conditions, while participating in physical activity, or while consuming food or drink.

- The District will modify its practices to promote social distancing and avoid group gatherings such as assemblies, pep rallies, field trips, etc.
- All District/Campus staff and students will be trained on protocols associated with minimizing the spread of COVID-19. In addition, staff will be trained on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- School nurses will routinely screen students and staff for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Educational posters and signage will be prominently displayed across all District facilities.
- Each campus will have designated staff to serve as COVID-19 contacts.
- All District and Campus staff will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming to work each day.
- All parents/guardians will be required to screen students using a provided checklist each day before sending them to school.
- Each campus will immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school and provide isolation areas for these students until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- The District will follow all requirements associated with response to an exposure to or diagnosis of a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Staff will be cleaning and sanitizing facilities (including buses) regularly with disinfectant spray. Particular attention will be focused on cleaning and disinfecting doorknobs, handrails, and other highly used surfaces during the day and at the end of each day.

How will remote learning be different during 2020-21 than it was at the end of last school year?

- Parents and students should be prepared to attend remote instruction every day, at set times, and follow a daily schedule.
- Assignments must be completed daily to meet attendance requirements.
- Student attendance will be recorded daily and the State's rules regarding required attendance will apply.
- Remote instruction will match the level of rigor used during in-person instruction.
- Remote instruction grading guidelines, GPA calculation, time on tasks, attendance requirements, and other practices and expectations will match in-person instruction.
- Gilmer ISD has a limited number of devices such as tablets, laptops, etc. that can be provided for remote learning. Most of our devices will be occupied by students who are in the building being taught face-to-face. Gilmer ISD is not able to provide homes with internet access. Parents/guardians need to anticipate providing a device and internet connection daily for students to access remote learning.
- Those who select remote instruction will be provided an "acknowledgement form" that will detail more information.
- Students in grades Pre-K – 12 will learn from instruction that is not necessarily being delivered in real time and may include various forms of digital and online learning. The State will still require attendance to be taken daily and parents should anticipate assignments to be completed daily to meet the attendance requirements.
- All remote learning will be online. No paper packets will be distributed or collected.

- *Students choosing the remote learning option will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities.*
- *At this time, lunches will not be delivered to students as we did during the Spring of last year.*
- *Parents/guardians will not be able to change their decision from remote learning to face-to face learning until the beginning of a new grading period.*

In preparation for our “face-to-face” model, we will be asking you to choose the classroom environment which is best for you and your family. You need to record your choice at the following link by July 31, 2020: <http://c19.gilmerisd.org>

Both face-to-face and remote learning options will be available for all students, in all grades PK-12. If you choose remote learning, you will be asked to certify that you have access to a device, the internet, and are committed to the remote learning environment for the first grading period at your student’s school. (Either six weeks or nine weeks) If you choose face-to-face learning, you will also be asked if you intend for your student(s) to ride the bus. If your student is new to the District for the upcoming school year, they must first be registered as a Gilmer ISD student. There will be an enrollment fair at Gilmer Elementary all day on July 27th and 28th.

We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our staff and our students. We will continue to be in regular discussion with state and public health officials as their guidance is updated. We appreciate your input on the survey that was posted in various formats and we also appreciate your support as we attempt to customize learning for every Gilmer ISD student during these unpredictable times.

Thank you,

GISD Administration