



MEDINA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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What is right or wrong in a Pandemic?

One thing I have learned since last February is that this world is full of truths, untruths and everyone has an opinion. I have learned that I better be selective on who I listen to and I am certainly convinced I may never trust some media sources ever again. Social media has allowed anyone in the world to post whatever they want, whenever they want without any supporting documents or proof. Unfortunately, I have also learned that the majority of people believe what they read on social media without questioning the validity of it. There are so many arguments out there about whether masks work or not, “Is the vaccine going to be safe?”, “Are children in danger?” and originally whether COVID-19 was even real. I have certainly learned the answer to the last one as has the rest of the world. I don’t remember at any point in my lifetime losing so many close people or seeing so many funeral announcements. The pain and suffering brought on by this pandemic will never be forgotten by any of us in this country.

As a school leader that is responsible for the safety of the students and staff, I’m often questioned on how we plan to keep our school families safe. My answer is one that every school leader knows and that is to be DUE DILIGENT in all you do. Am I sure masks work or not? I don’t know that answer but I am not willing to take that chance when it comes to your children and our staff. Does sanitizing your hands every time you enter our building kill the COVID-19 virus? Another instance of “we are not going to find out”, so sanitize your hands every chance you get! Our teachers and staff will remind you to sanitize as you come in the door or move around from room to room. Does checking temperatures help avoid someone sick entering your building? I would say this is DUE DILIGENCE at its best. We have even gone as far as separating other school’s fans from our fans at all athletic events because we don’t necessarily know that they follow the same DUE DILIGENCE we follow and we don’t always know how the pandemic has affected their community verses what is happening here in Medina.

What I have learned is most of the students we have had that contracted COVID-19 have had very few or mild symptoms and I believe the immune system on our children as a whole is tougher than COVID-19. We have worked extremely hard to follow the guidelines of those we deal with in the school community everyday including but not limited to the TEA, ESC 20, UIL, CDC, TDA and the Texas Health Department. Those organizations have had a few disagreements, but as a group they are mostly all in line on what they advise is considered safe for our kids and our staff.

Now for the conclusion of this article I want to stress the rewards of being DUE DILIGENT as opposed to not adjusting our lifestyle to the presence of this pandemic. The winners are our students who have not missed out on their education or this school year

even though there are a few bumps and skips along the way. Our students are not missing out on their lives, their friendships, their extra-curricular activities or the lifelong skills acquired every day from being with their peers in this game of life. They are not left behind some computer all alone at home. And yes, many will be all alone because mom and dad will have to continue to work so they can pay the bills and put food on the table. I will never understand those who wish to just send them home without some type of answer on how to address this in a society where mostly both parents have to work to make ends meet. There is nothing any more valuable to the growth of a student than a one on one teacher interaction that instills confidence and the belief that you can do this! There is also no safer place for a student than in a school house where safety always comes at the top of the list and there are those individuals in charge who work hard to keep that environment safe.

I'm extremely proud of our administration team and staff and how hard they have worked during the pandemic to educate our kids while keeping them safe. As for Medina ISD we have no choice but to be DUE DILIGENT as we always have. We owe it to our kids.

Kevin W. Newsom – Medina ISD Superintendent