

Press Release

Important Letter from PCPS Superintendent Regarding Teacher Walkout

Ponca City Public School Superintendent Shelley Arrott has sent an important letter to all employees and parents regarding the teacher walkout and school closure.

To Our Ponca City Parents, Staff, and Community,

Early this week we witnessed the historic signing of several revenue bills. This was the first increase in taxes passed by the legislature in almost thirty years. These bills will provide approximately 475 million dollars to support raises for teachers, support staff and a moderate amount of funding for textbooks and school resources. This increase in funding can be directly attributed to the tenacious efforts of our educators and our community rallying in support of public education. Thursday, prior to the bills being signed into law, we also witnessed the removal of a portion of the revenue bills passed the day before. The sudden reversal of the revenue package has left a huge feeling of uncertainty among educators regarding the commitment to continue efforts to appropriately fund public education.

*Without a doubt, the political climate at the Capitol changes as quickly as the Oklahoma weather. In light of these changes, we had a meeting this morning with administrators, a BOE Member, teachers, and support staff members to devise a plan. **Ponca City Public Schools will be closed on Monday, April 2, for educators to rally behind the cause of adding the previously promised revenue back into the package.** We, as educators, are truly appreciative of the initial efforts of the state legislature, but view this as only a first step toward what truly needs to be accomplished.*

Beyond Monday, April 2, a call on whether school will be in session will be made day-to-day based on the majority of responses from a survey that will be sent to our employees between 3:00-5:00 PM on the prior day.

There will be (2) questions on the survey:

- I will be at work on (the date of the next day).*
- I will be advocating at the Capitol on (the date of the next day).*

Once the survey results are analyzed, I will send notification through the PCPS Mobile App and our Facebook and website as early as I can the evening before.

I advise each of you to stay connected to your devices throughout the weekend. The district will be sending daily updates to all local media outlets and through the PCPS Mobile App, district website (www.pcps.us) and Facebook page.

I know we ALL are conflicted on this decision, but I urge you to stay informed, do your research in regard to what is happening at the Capitol, and do not consider everything you read on social media as fact. I will use Survey Monkey as the platform for the daily survey, and if the majority of employees choose to be in school, school will be in session the next day. If the majority want to advocate at the Capitol, school will be closed the next day. Please understand that during desperate times, we take desperate measures, so not everything flows as it normally would. We desperately need education in Oklahoma to be top priority.

Thank you for your understanding and valued support as we continue in our efforts to provide the best for Ponca City Public School students. We will stand together as Team Ponca.

*Mary Ladd
Public Information Coordinator
Ponca City Public Schools
580-352-4188
laddm@pcps.us*