

STATEMENT FROM REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN WEST

It is very disappointing that some school districts are spending a shocking amount of time and resources on trying to find a way around SB658. In doing so, what they are saying is that they know better than parents and that they in fact have greater authority over your children than you, the parent.

It has been said that SB658 removes local control. In truth, SB658 does remove local GOVERNMENT control from unresponsive elected officials that hide behind vague and ever-changing directions from unelected bureaucrats to implement a one-size-fits-all approach, with the ultimate goal being total compliance. SB658 restores the control to the rightful hands of the parents, which is the ultimate local control.

The recent announcement by OKCPS is full of misguided thinking. There are no “loopholes” in the law:

- 1) First and foremost, SB658 is current law in the state of Oklahoma.
- 2) School boards are the duly elected governing body over a school district. They hire the superintendent and as such, any action taken by them is done so with their authority.
- 3) Monday August 9th, the school board voted to authorize the superintendent to “make decisions on how to respond to rising COVID cases...”. The board cannot delegate power that is prohibited against them by law.
- 4) The exemptions offered for students to not wear a mask are basically forcing parents to ask permission to follow the law. They don’t need to ask permission.

Make no mistake, this is a blatant violation of state law and is designed to take away the rightful authority that parents have to make such decisions for their children. SB658 has given that authority to the individual citizens, period.