

A four-color chart regarding COVID-19 cases put forth by the Oklahoma State Department of Health will now be followed by Coweta Public Schools to determine what school activities can take place during the ongoing pandemic. The decision made at the Aug. 10 school board meeting was a reversal from following the State Department of Education's chart which included an Orange 2 phase. That phase would eliminate extracurricular activities should classes need to be held virtually. A capacity crowd of students and parents attended the meeting to see if the Orange 2 phase would be dropped. A handful of those attending signed up to speak, however only Lacy Weber addressed the board. She acknowledged while 95 percent of parents were there to support their student athletes, she was advocating for Coweta's agriculture students and the district's agriculture education program. She has youngsters in both programs. "As a parent of a child who underwent surgery, I fully understand the need to be cautious. But he underwent surgery to have the opportunity to play football," Weber said. "Our ag chapter competes in everything from speech contests to livestock judging. These activities are as important to them as the animals they walk into the show ring. For an ag kid, ag is a way of life. If you take away their chance to do what they love, you are taking away their entire reason for attending school. Most of the kids that attend do so to get the grades that allow them to do the extracurriculars they love." Weber's words were met with applause. "We did research and you did too," Superintendent Jeff Holmes told the audience. "With that being said, let's make sure we are not the only school not competing whether it is in football, volleyball, softball, cross country or with ag students. I recommend we go with the four color chart by the OSDH "go out and compete and let our students be students," he continued. "The messages I have heard from parents are absolutely true and I know you gentlemen (board members) understand the importance of extracurricular activities. If our students are there ready to compete, they should be given every

chance possible when itâ€™s safe to do so. When itâ€™s not safe, weâ€™ll have to make that call. Thatâ€™s what weâ€™re trying to accomplish. â€œThe last thing we want to do is forfeit, and with the former chart, there would be some scenarios where we would have to forfeit. We donâ€™t want that to happen.â€• Holmes said COVID numbers have gone down some in the county, giving an early indication the trend may continue. If Wagoner County should move to a Red level, the scenario will be different with no activities. Board member Marty Kilgore commented, â€œEven though we donâ€™t hit a Red level, it does not mean that a particular event, game or activities canâ€™t be cancelled if multiple kids in that organization test positive.â€• Holmes agreed. â€œWe could still have to have the discretion to say we will not participate in an activity,â€• the superintendent said, referencing supervision issues if there are not enough teachers or substitutes to supervise students.â€• Be the first to know Get local news delivered to your inbox! Sign up! \* I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.