I write this column from home as our routines were altered more than any of us could have imagined only three weeks ago when my last column was published. Our lives have been turned upside down by a pandemic that we feared might come but nobody could have predicted the abrupt changes to our lives. Many of our staff (including myself) have learned through trial and error how to organize a virtual meeting and also learned how to make those meetings productive. We also have a new term that everyone is now familiar with…social distancing. Sadly, the face to face interaction of our staff and students has ended almost overnight and we are working on what distance learning looks like for students in Guthrie. Thankfully, we are now feeding over 500 meals per day to children of this community at no cost through the federal school lunch program.

In all of this chaos, a very important item with long reaching implications could be easily ignored…the United State Census. Shawnda Price from the City of Guthrie has been working hard to keep this on the minds of our citizens. Each decade the U. S. takes a head count in this country to determine many items. Obviously, the most important item is the number of seats our state occupies in the U. S. House of Representatives. Many other items of great importance to the citizens of our school district and Logan County are also a part of this equation including federal funding for roads, bridges and many medical necessities that residents of Logan County rely on for their own personal health. From a school perspective, the program that currently allows us to provide meals in this crisis as well as the free and reduced lunch program for our students relies on census figures as part of the formula. Inaction by citizens of Logan County could reduce federal funding for the next ten years! I would ask you while many of us are at home, please go online and complete the 2020 U. S. Census Response.

I was pondering the fact that we are living during an event that will certainly be in future history books. Our teachers are missing their students and we are all going through stages of grief. One of my favorite duties as superintendent is the opportunity to shake the hand of every GHS graduate. The uncertainty of graduation has weighed heavily on my mind and heart. Despite all of that, I’ve previewed many of the assignments for our students to download until May 8th. I was once again impressed with the work our staff has accomplished in an incredibly short timeline. It isn’t the option we would choose to end the school year but it is what Bluejays do, we make the best of the situation we have been given.

In the coming days, we will be producing a list of Frequently Asked Questions generated from emails and interactions on social media. That list will be placed on the district website and links on our social media pages. Hopefully, we can provide some answers but as you are well aware, many things are not in our control at the moment. Until then, please stay safe!!!