



December 7th, 2020

RE: Crook County Schools Shifting to Comprehensive Distance Learning Next Week

Greetings Families,

I'm reaching out today to inform you that Crook County School District will be shifting to Comprehensive Distancing Learning (CDL) for all K-12 students starting Monday, December 14th. This was not an easy decision, but we are running into significant challenges with staffing due to the pandemic that is making it difficult to keep schools open. Also, the latest metrics released today show Crook County had 98 new COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks. That's up from 63 cases the two weeks prior. Since Christmas Break is right around the corner, we believe this is the best decision given the circumstances.

As of today, we have yet to experience COVID-19 transmission in any school buildings; however, the impact of quarantines due to potential exposures has severely impacted our staffing levels. This is creating both a logistical and operational issue for us. These are the challenges we are facing:

- Increased number of staff absent for 10-14 days due to quarantine requirements
- Limited substitution pool availability in the region
- Substitutes who are unwilling to work due to concerns about COVID-19

The Crook County Health Department says schools remain a very safe place for students and staff given the safety measures in place - such as wearing masks, social distancing, and keeping students in specific groups that don't intermix. Our goal has always been to remain open as long as possible, but we are reaching a breaking point with staffing levels that's making it difficult to adequately serve students and keep our schools running efficiently.

Here is the timeline for next steps:

- **December 7th - 11th:** Schools will remain open as scheduled
- **Friday, December 11th:** Chromebooks and instructional materials will be sent home with K-5 students by Friday, December 11th. CCMS and CCHS students will need to take their Chromebooks home with them on their last day of being in class
- **December 14th - 18th:** Comprehensive Distancing Learning
- **December 21st:** Christmas Break begins

You might be wondering what the plan is once Christmas Break is over. Our hope is to open for in-person instruction on Monday, January 4th. However, with rising COVID-19 cases in the community, we want parents to be prepared for the possibility that Crook County may not meet the state metrics for opening schools. If that's the case, all students will stay in CDL to begin the New Year. Brothers and Paulina will remain open under the small, rural school exception. The Oregon Health Authority releases new COVID-19 metrics at the beginning of each week. We will review the numbers and communicate our decision about reopening schools by Tuesday, December 29th.

Crook County School District has been blessed to serve local students in-person since the beginning of September. We are one of the few school districts in Oregon that have provided our students with the opportunity to learn in the classroom, engage with their peers, and be involved in modified sports activities. Bringing children back to the buildings will remain a top priority, and we commit to opening schools again as soon as possible.

We will be providing you with more information throughout the week, including updates regarding nutrition services and resources for students on IEPs. There will be a Special Edition of Fireside Chat this Wednesday, December 9th at 3:45pm LIVE on Facebook and Zoom. We will also upload it to YouTube so it's available for families to watch at a later time.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara E. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" and "J".

Sara. E. Johnson, Superintendent