



PRESS RELEASE: September 24th, 2020

Media contact:

Jason Carr, Communications Director

Cell: 541-233-9692 | Direct: 541-416-4209

Email: jason.carr@crookcounty.k12.or.us

State Suspends Test Positivity Rates for September; Crook County Schools Plan for Potential Hybrid Opening October 5th

Oregon Department of Education announces changes to Covid-19 metrics due to recent wildfires

An unexpected move by the Oregon Department of Education could mean Crook County students in grades 4-12 could soon return to class. ODE announced in a letter to Oregon school districts today that it will suspend county and state test positivity rates through September due to the recent wildfires. Total case counts and cases per 100,000 will remain as the leading metrics for reopening schools.

“I’m surprised by ODE’s announcement today, and I’m more optimistic than ever that we are going to have students back in person soon,” explained Superintendent Dr. Sara Johnson. “We now have two potential pathways to reopening: meeting local metrics or ODE approving our pilot designation.”

Crook County has met all local metrics the first two weeks of September. Two cases have been reported so far this week, and that number must be maintained through Saturday. If the metrics are in the district’s favor on Monday – or three weeks in a row – then the school district will submit plans to ODE to transition from distance learning to hybrid.

Here are the steps for a potential reopening:

- Declare hybrid model to ODE on Monday, September 28th (if metrics are met)
- Utilize the week of September 28th to plan and communicate with parents
- Grades 4-12 begin returning for in-person instruction starting Monday, October 5th

Principals are working with teachers to finalize plans for each building, and the school district will release full details to families early next week once the Covid-19 metrics are updated. Students and teachers will continue with Comprehensive Distance Learning next week regardless of the metrics.

“If we can return, next week will be used to get bus routes finalized, instruction planned, and get buildings ready for students. We promised families early on that we’d give them at least one week of notice. We want students back, but it’s important to be thoughtful in our approach,” said Dr. Johnson.

The school district sent a letter to ODE yesterday asking for an update on its pilot designation request. The request was initially submitted on Wednesday, September 14th. ODE acknowledged the follow up, but still hasn’t responded with a final decision.

About Crook County School District

Crook County School District is a thriving, rural, growing district in Central Oregon, serving more than 3,000 students from all across Crook County. It is an organization with integrity, a model for educational success, and a recognized leader for excellence in helping students dream, learn, and succeed.

###