

Crook County School District

where students dream, learn, & succeed



January 14th, 2021

Dear Valued Parents,

We are excited to announce that students attending Crook County Middle and Crook County High School will return to school full time starting Tuesday, January 26th. This decision was made in consultation with the School Board, and the Crook County Health Department. Based on our experience of having students in-person since September, and the latest science that schools aren't superspreaders and are safe when safety measures are followed, we believe it's in the best interest of our students and families to provide a full-time option.

Students in grades K-5, and those attending school in Paulina and Brothers, have been full time since September, and their schedules and daily routines will remain unchanged. The Hybrid Learning Campus at Pioneer, which serves high school students, will continue with its hybrid model where students attend morning or afternoon sessions in-person and then learn online the rest of the day.

During Winter Break, Governor Kate Brown's Office, the Oregon Health Authority, and the Oregon Department of Education announced that the state's COVID-19 health metrics are advisory, instead of mandatory. This provides local school districts the opportunity to make decisions about reopening schools with their school boards, teacher's associations, and local health departments.

This letter contains some important information for families about reopening full time, and reminders about our building procedures and safety practices that will remain in place.

Building Modifications

Students at CCMS and CCHS will continue to follow their existing schedules with the same teachers they currently have in the Blue-Gold hybrid model. Start and release times are unchanged. In preparation for more students in the building, a number of modifications have been developed to maintain safety standards, and limit exposure to the virus. You can find details on our website for each school by clicking on the following links:

- [CCHS Building Modifications](#)
- [CCMS Building Modifications](#)

COVID-19 Response & Communication

The school district will continue its daily collaboration with the Crook County Health Department. Their team of health experts are supportive of the move to full time, and believe our safety protocols and COVID-19 response plan are robust and working well. In fact, the health department believes schools

remain one of the safest places for students and staff because of our safety practices. The health department developed a system for responding to the virus in our schools called [COVID-19 Scenarios in Crook County Schools](#). We will continue to follow this plan through the rest of the school year.

The school district believes transparency is essential, and we are updating how we communicate the impacts of COVID-19 in our schools. Here is the process:

1. If there's a positive COVID-19 case in any school, or if a student or staff member is exposed to the virus, the families of the students impacted will receive a personalized call from a school nurse with information and directions about the need to quarantine. This will ensure parents are well-informed, and have the opportunity to ask questions. If you don't receive a call from a school nurse, your child is unaffected and was not exposed to the virus.
2. Every Wednesday, the school district will post a COVID-19 Activity Report to social media and the district website. It will include information about the impact of the virus in each school, such as positive cases and number of quarantines. There will also be a chart showing the latest case counts and trends in Crook County.
3. If there's an outbreak in a school, or a large number of staff or students are required to quarantine at once, the district will send out a letter to families explaining the situation, and if any further actions are required. Parents may also receive a phone call or text message to ensure timely delivery of important information.

We will remain extra cautious in our approach to exposures and quickly quarantine students and staff based on recommendations from school nurses. This practice will keep our buildings safe and ensure we can stay open and continue providing in-person instruction without moving all students to Comprehensive Distance Learning. We will evaluate COVID-19 on a building-by-building basis, and make decisions in consultation with public health experts.

Alternative Education Options

The school board and district leaders recognize that not every parent is comfortable with schools reopening full time. Some families may want to take a wait and see approach. As a reminder, there are two online options available – Grizzly Mountain HomeLink and Crook County Online Option – that allow students to stay enrolled in the district and still access building resources, tutoring, and technology support. If you'd like more information about each program, please click on the links provided:

- [Grizzly Mountain HomeLink](#)
- [Crook County Online Option](#)

From School Board Chair Scott Cooper: "The board's philosophy is that we work with parents to find what's best for students and families on an individual basis. District and building leadership are happy to meet with any parent who has a concern or who needs help crafting a reasonable alternative learning plan that will lead to quality education while offering peace of mind. COVID-19 is a Brave New World for all of us, and we hope parents and community will work collaboratively with us to find the best way forward, even if it takes a few tries."

Substitute Teachers

Thanks to a tremendous amount of response by our community, the school district will have plenty of substitute teachers to avoid another closure of schools due to a staffing shortage. We are so appreciative of the parents, community members, and business owners who stepped up to the plate to help us out. Here is where things stand:

- 59 members of our community expressed interest in substitute teaching.
- 22 substitute teachers will be ready to work by no later than January 15, 2021
- We are still processing additional applications, so we expect the substitute pool to grow

Teacher Vaccinations

The decision to move to full time was made easier when the Crook County Health Department announced a plan to provide vaccines to any school district staff member who wants one. A vaccine drive is scheduled for Monday, January 25th at Crook County High School, which is the day before middle and high school students return full time. The second round of the vaccine will occur 28 days later, according to the health department. *Students are NOT required to have the vaccination in order to attend school. Crook County currently has access to the Moderna vaccine, and it's only recommended for adults 18 and older.*

Masks & Social Distancing Guidelines

Even as more teachers and community members are vaccinated, the school district will continue following all safety guidelines. Teachers and students are still required to wear masks at all times while at school, and we'll maintain our social distancing and cleaning practices. These requirements will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we continue to navigate the realities of operating schools during a pandemic. We are now mid-way through the 2020-21 school year, and our teachers and staff stand ready to serve our students and families. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call your child's principal or contact us here at the District Office.

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