



Back to School Plan 2021-2022

Dear Valued Families,

I'm excited to begin my fourth year as Superintendent of Crook County School District, and despite the challenges of COVID-19, I'm optimistic about the upcoming school year. Students remained on track academically, because our innovative and dedicated staff prioritized in-person learning last fall. We built a new and popular program, Grizzly Mountain HomeLink, which provides an opportunity for children to learn at home with greater parental involvement. We made sure our athletes participated in their sports seasons, and we organized the largest Summer School in CCSD history by serving over 1,000 students throughout the month of July. We accomplished all of this, and much more, while also keeping students and staff safe during the midst of a pandemic. I believe we can be successful again this year.

There are three important principles that drive our decision-making:

- Everything we do is in service to the children of Crook County
- Communicate early and often
- Get our children back in the classroom and keep them there

June brought good news from Governor Kate Brown that local decision-making and control would return to schools and counties. Unfortunately, that has shifted due to a rise in COVID-19 cases because of the Delta variant. The Governor's Office, The Justice Department, the Oregon Department of Education, and the Oregon Health Authority have made it clear that masks will be required for students and staff this school year.

I realize this isn't the news that many families want to hear. I have spent hours advocating for local control, talking with Colt Gill from ODE, and working with the School Board to find alternative solutions. Unfortunately, the state has pulled out all the stops to enforce masks, through increased penalties, fines, and threats of criminal liability. Here is what districts face if they ignore the mask mandate:

- Up to \$126,749 fine per violation for "willful negligence"
- Daily penalty of up to \$2,600 for continued noncompliance
- Each separate school that violates the policy could be fined up to \$500 per day
- Licensed educators who fail to obey this rule could face additional penalties, including revocation of professional licensing
- School board members and district leadership staff can face criminal liability
- OSHA will be making unannounced visits to monitor compliance

These are serious consequences that could jeopardize our ability to open schools, play sports, and serve our community. I cannot, in good conscience, risk the education of 3,000 students or ask our teachers and staff to put their livelihoods in harms way. I also have a responsibility to ensure all students are safe while in our care. The Crook County Health Department reports that the Delta variant of COVID-19 is impacting more people than at any point during the pandemic, including children. This means that safety must remain a top priority as we head back to school.

We do care about children and families' health as well as their political views. To keep kids safe, we've added ventilation, will social distance to the greatest extent possible and, yes, wear masks. We know that children are at lower risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19, and we know that vaccines are available for older children. We also know that children go home to mingle with more vulnerable adults, and we know that our medical systems cannot handle more pressure. CCSD will do its part to help reverse the rapidly climbing rate of COVID-19 infection so that we can get back to normal as soon as possible.

Many of you have strong convictions about masks and we acknowledge that. With just two weeks before school starts, we felt it was important to inform you of our plans and expectations so you can make a decision that's in the best interest of your family.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara E. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Sara E. Johnson, Superintendent

MASK REQUIREMENT IN SCHOOL

- Masks are required at all times during regular school hours and on school buses, except for the following:
 - Eating or drinking
 - When an individual is alone in a private room or workspace
 - When practicing or playing sports
 - Performing while playing music or when delivering a speech or engaged in theater
- Mask Exceptions:
 - Accommodations, such as a face shield are available, but limited to legitimate medical reasons or because of a known and documented disability
 - IMPORTANT NOTE:
 - There is not a Religious Exemption available for masks at this time
 - 504 or IEP Plans are meant for students with documented disabilities. They may not be used by parents to avoid the mask mandate.
- Enforcement
 - Our entire staff will continually extend patience and grace when reminding students about the mask requirement. We will not be punitive in our responses; however, schools are unable to make exceptions. Students who refuse to wear a mask while in school will be provided with an online option.

VACCINE MANDATE

On August 18th, Governor Kate Brown announced that all employees working in the Oregon public school system are required to be vaccinated by October 18th, or when the current vaccines are fully-approved by the FDA, whichever is later. ***This mandate does NOT extend to students. At this time, the COVID-19 vaccine is not required for students to attend school or engage in any extracurricular activity or sport.***

COVID-19 SAFETY & RESPONSE PLAN

Reducing the spread of COVID-19 and avoiding outbreaks is essential to remaining open and keeping students in the classroom. Many of the safety protocols that were in place last year will continue, such as quarantines due to positive cases or exposures.

- Daily sanitization in classrooms and throughout the buildings
- Handwashing stations and hand sanitizer will remain readily available
- Masks will be available for students who show up to school without one
- Temperature checks will NO LONGER occur when entering schools. If a student appears to have a fever, they will be sent to see the school nurse
- All students and staff with COVID-19 symptoms, or who test positive, will be required to quarantine regardless of vaccination status
- Vaccinated students and staff will not have to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19

- School nurses will make individualized calls to families if a child has symptoms or is exposed to COVID-19 while at school. Nurses will explain the situation to parents and make recommendations about potential quarantines.
- CCSD is implementing a robust testing program in our schools for both students and staff who wish to be tested onsite.
- Crook County School District will NEVER:
 - Test students for COVID-19 without permission
 - Administer a COVID-19 vaccine

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION OPTIONS

Some families may choose to have their children learn at home out of concern for the virus or because they don't want their children wearing masks. CCSD has two online options available for families to choose from:

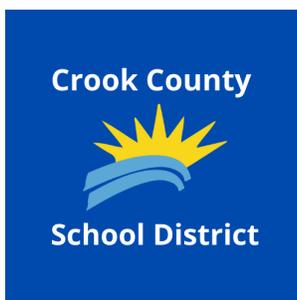
[Grizzly Mountain HomeLink](#)

Grades K-9

[Crook County Online Option](#)

Grades 9-12

For additional information about the new school year, please visit our [Back to School Page](#) on the main school district website. We look forward to seeing you and your children when the first day of school begins on September 7th!



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