

August 4, 2020

Dear Students and Families,

As you are likely aware, all Oregon schools are required to create plans for reopening this fall. While it has been the intent of all schools in South Umpqua School District to reopen with in-person learning, the recently released requirements and metrics for reopening require us to shift gears and change plans.

Kindergarten – Grade 3

The metrics for reopening schools with in-person instruction for grades K-3 require the following conditions to be met:

- COVID-19 is not actively spreading among the school community
- The case rate in the county is less than 30 cases per 100,000 population in the preceding 7 days for three weeks in a row
- The test positivity in the county is less than or equal to 5% in the preceding 7 days (three weeks in a row)
- Schools fully comply with the Oregon Department of Education Health and Safety requirements

At this point in time, we have successfully met the metrics to allow in-person instruction for grades K-3.

Therefore, based on these requirements all SUSD elementary schools will be reopening this fall with in person learning in grades K-3. We understand that in-person learning does not meet the needs of all families, especially those with family members in a high-risk category. Schools will work closely with all K-3 families to provide distance learning options for students who are unable to attend in-person.

Exceptions:

The state guidelines provide exceptions for limited in-person instruction (small groups or one-on-one within limited timeframes) in certain courses that require “hands-on” instruction, such as Career and Technical Education courses, as well as some special education courses. Your child’s school will be sending out specific information regarding these course and class exceptions.

Pre-K Programs: We are awaiting guidance from the state on whether or not our pre-K programs are eligible for in-person instruction. Pre-K families will be notified by their child’s school as soon as possible.

Grades 4-12

The metrics for reopening schools with in-person instruction for grades 4-12 require the following conditions to be met at both the county and state levels:

County Metrics – metrics to be met three weeks in a row:

- Case rate: less than or equal to 10 cases per 100,000 population in the preceding 7 days (3 weeks in a row)
- Test positivity: less than or equal to 5% in the preceding 7 days (three weeks in a row)

State Metric – metric to be met three weeks in a row:

- Test positivity: less than or equal to 5% in the preceding 7 days (three weeks in a row)

At this point in time, neither the county nor state metrics have been met. **Therefore, based on these requirements all SUSD schools will be reopening this fall with a comprehensive distance learning model in grades 4-12.** We recognize that a distance learning model is not the preferred option for many students and families in our community. Like all schools and districts in our region, we will be closely monitoring the metrics and have plans in place for transitioning back into in-person instruction, as soon as allowable and with all appropriate safety measures in place. We are anxious to have students back at school

and remain committed to seeking allowable options to meet student and family needs during this challenging time.

Your child's school will be sending out specific information to students and families during the next two weeks, including calendars, start dates for instruction, and registration information. If you have questions or need help accessing resources, please contact your child's school office for assistance:

Myrtle Creek Elementary: (541) 863-3168
Tri City Elementary: (541)863-6887
Canyonville School: (541) 839-4396
Coffenberry Middle School: (541) 863-3104
South Umpqua High School: (541) 863-3118

Sincerely,

Kate McLaughlin

Superintendent

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Will Comprehensive Distance Learning look the same as it did last Spring?

A: No. While staff did the best they could with the resources available when schools closed in the Spring, we have had more time to plan and prepare for fall reopening. The district has invested in technology hardware and software, including technology-based learning management systems that will provide teachers greater flexibility and more options to provide teacher-facilitated learning for students. The goal is to provide a more robust learning experience for students – less worksheets/packets, more teacher led instruction.

Q: What if my student needs a computer to participate in comprehensive distance learning?

A: Whether in-person or comprehensive distance learning, all students in grades 6-12 will be issued a Chromebook, pre-loaded with the necessary software to access course instruction. Students in grades K-5 will be issued a device, as needed. We are currently working on an additional technology purchase to also provide 1:1 devices for elementary students.

Q: Will my student receive grades this year, or will it be Pass/Incomplete?

A: Attendance and grading practices were mandated by the state last Spring, but will return to local school district control this fall. Therefore, teachers will provide graded courses this fall.

Q: Do private schools and charter schools have to adhere to the same health and safety requirements as public schools?

A: Yes, the statewide mandates for health and safety (facial coverings, social distancing, screening, etc.) apply to all schools – private, charter, and public.

Q: Will my child be required to wear a face mask when we return to in-person instruction?

A: Yes, as part of the Governor's order, all students K-12 are required to wear a face mask at school. The district will provide face masks for students, or they may bring their own. Students with a documented disability or health condition (IEP, 504, etc.) that are not able to safely wear a mask will receive accommodations.

Q: What are the schools doing to keep schools clean and disinfected when my child returns to school in-person?

A: Multiple measures aligned to the CDC and health authority guidelines, including:

- Hospital grade (virus killing) ozone machines to be used in classrooms and office areas on a rotating basis throughout each week. Two machines have already been purchased and received for each school site.
- Hiring additional custodial services to support cleaning/disinfecting
- Additional cleaning of high touch surfaces (doorknobs, counter tops, desk tops, bathrooms, etc.)
- Hand sanitizing stations located at entrances and high traffic areas in each building
- Protocols for cleaning/sanitation between groups of students

Q: What if we return to in-person learning, but it is not safe for our family because we have a member in the high-risk category?

A: Options to participate in distance learning will be provided to students/families.