



# Sisters School District

“Home of the Outlaws”

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Curtiss Scholl  
Superintendent

July 28, 2020

Dear Sisters Schools Community,

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Oregon Department of Education released another revision of Ready School, Safe Learners guidance for schools. With the statewide increase in COVID-19 cases, there were a few significant changes discussed. As of the July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Deschutes County Public Health report, the Sisters community has had less than 10 confirmed cases since the start of their tracking. Keep wearing your masks, washing your hands, and physical distancing, as it is working.

First, masks or face coverings are now required for all students Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade for any on-site instruction. As I thought about all of the reasons why this would not work, I remembered that in Sisters, we have had to do this before. We have had to wear masks to combat smoke from the forest fires. Although masks may not be by choice, we can do this, we have done it before.

The second significant change is the limiting of cohorts to no more than 100. Previously, there were no specific guidelines on the amount of students and staff that could be in a cohort, just dialogue about physical distancing and cohort tracking for contact tracing. Although this creates some restriction in how we serve our students by grade level, we can create cohorts that serve our students in a hybrid model.

Finally, we have guidance on minimum learning time requirements that are defined K-12, pending approval from the state board of education. The Learning Day overview has minimum daily requirement of 2 hours and 20 minutes of instruction starting at the K - 3 level increasing to 2 hours and 50 minutes daily at the 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

A primary objective in developing our reopen is to maximize the number of students who can engage in face-to-face learning, while also providing flexible learning options for students. We have applied the current state guidelines, looked at the parent and staff feedback, and while the plans are not completed yet, the general outlines are described below.

For students grades K - 6, we are planning for the on-site model and a return to our school campuses full time for in-person instruction with physical distancing. Thanks to our local option, our class sizes are small and we can keep students in small class cohorts throughout the day (lunch, specials, and recess). Students who are medically fragile or whose families are not comfortable with the on-site model, will participate in Comprehensive Distance Learning under the guidance of Sisters teaching staff for a minimum of 2 hours and 20 minutes per day, or more, depending on their grade level.

For students grades 7 - 12, our primary model will be a balanced / hybrid, with some time devoted to in-person learning on campus and the other time spent in remote learning with classroom teachers and cohorts no bigger than 100. Now that a cohort size has been defined, we will be able to more clearly outline what the day looks like in regards to class schedules (core versus elective classes). Again, students who are medically fragile or whose families are not comfortable with the hybrid model will participate in Comprehensive Distance Learning under the guidance of Sisters teaching staff for a minimum of 2 hours and 30 minutes per day, or more, depending on their grade level.

We understand that our families, students and staff want certainty and we will do our best to continue to provide as many answers as we can as changes to the state's [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) guidance and the district reopen plans develop. I welcome you to engage in the planning process via any of the opportunities listed below and you're always welcome to email me, or your student's principal, with your ideas as well.

July 18-31: Parent and Staff survey and feedback

July 22: ODE guidance revision #2

July 29: Superintendent Coffee meeting

August 1 to 11: Continue revising building plans and stakeholder feedback (building Principals)

August 11: ODE guidance #3

August 12: School Board Meeting to present plan

August 15: Submit to ODE

Please understand that there is no on-site or hybrid plan we can make that can guarantee to stop the spread of COVID-19. We will do our part to have schools ready and we are investing in additional custodial staff for cleaning, however, when people come together, there is always risk. Your partnership to continue to help reduce those risks still continue today and into the 2020-21 school year. Hand hygiene, mask wearing, and physical distancing still continue to be a priority.

I will continue to communicate any changes that come from the state that will have an impact on our plans to reopen in the fall.

Stay Safe,

Curt Scholl  
Superintendent  
Sister school District