



Sisters School District

“Home of the Outlaws”

Curtiss Scholl
Superintendent

August 5, 2020

Dear Sisters Schools Community,

We continue to create the best possible plan to meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of our students while ensuring the safety and well-being of the entire community. A flurry of input from the State of Oregon last week has shaped this plan. Additional input is expected, including any budget decisions that come from the August 10th special session called by Governor Brown.

Please keep in mind that we'll submit our final plans to Oregon's Department of Education on August 15th. Many of you have already provided input to these plans, which has been invaluable. Please keep it coming. While still a work in process, please permit me to share some of the thinking:

1. Distance Learning 2.0, with eventual transition back to In-Person Learning - As per the state guidance released last week, we will be forced to begin the year in a “Comprehensive Distance Learning” format. Unlike last year when this was forced upon our schools with no preparation, we are approaching this year with a focused desire to deliver the best learning possible under these constraints. In the evolving plan, you will find:

- Consistent use of on-line tools and platforms
- Regular access (class time and office hours) to our teachers
- Live engagement of students at all levels
- Grades can be given—there is no pass / fail mandate
- Consistent check-ins with a “home room” teacher who will support questions and concerns
- Teachers working from the classroom and sharing best practices with each other daily
- Condensed schedules and timeframes for SMS and SHS for credit achievement—less classes over a shorter period
- The ability to seamlessly transition back to in-person learning as the health concerns are addressed (and possibly back again)
- Masks, distancing, hygiene, cohorts, block classes, and other best practices that have proven successful in safe in-person models
- Working to maintain experiential learning programs that are a signature of the SSD
- Re-engaging in providing food for our students starting 8/31/2020

2. Outlaws Online as a part of Sisters Educational Options - The district can provide any Outlaw with a self-paced on-line curriculum to meet their needs. This option may be attractive to anyone who wants a consistent educational plan for the entire semester or year. We would like to keep our students and families connected as much as possible and look at electives, clubs, and sports when these types of in person activities become safely available. Even before the pandemic, Sisters already had a dedicated staff member to facilitate access to on-line curriculums as part of the Sisters Educational Options. Last year, over 30 kids were enrolled at Sisters while being fully on-line. We can meet the on-line needs of any learner, and can scale this as demand warrants.

There are many educational options outside of Sisters School District and we understand that some are considering these options. Before you choose a different option, we welcome the chance to sit down with you and discuss your situation - please reach out to the building principal or attend one of their "Coffee" sessions. We are a small, nimble district with incredible support from the community - we will try to work something out. If you do choose another option, you're still an Outlaw in your heart and you're always welcome back.

Every challenge creates an opportunity. What an opportunity to show our resilience, our creativity, our adaptability, and perhaps most importantly, our empathy and support for those that are hit hardest by this crisis. I am optimistic that as we work through this together. We will be stronger as a system and community.

I welcome you to engage in the planning process via any of the opportunities listed below:

August 1 to 11 - Revising building plans and stakeholder feedback (building Principals)

SES Principal Coffee on August 6 at 12 noon and August 7th at 8 am

SMS Principal Coffee on August 6 at 5 pm

SHS Principal Coffee on August 10 at 5 pm

August 11 - ODE guidance #3

August 12 - School Board Meeting - Principals to present plans

August 15-17 - Submit to ODE

August 31 - September 4 - Conferencing with students and families

September 8 - CDL starts

As I'm sure you all do, I wish we were starting a "normal" school year with excited students and teachers filling the hallways. Someday we'll get back to that. Until then, we'll continue to work to partner with our families to provide the best options for our students.

Stay Safe,

Curt Scholl
Superintendent
Sisters School District