



Sisters School District

“Home of the Outlaws”

Curtiss Scholl
Superintendent

March 19, 2021

Dear Sisters Schools Community,

I want to start by acknowledging that at this time last year Governor Brown had ordered all schools closed and we were out the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. It has been a full year and we understand that many have “COVID fatigue” and “Zoom fatigue.” In some cases, it is just fatigue from the unknown and the ever-changing landscape of the pandemic.

We are excited to share that our county metrics continue to drop and this opens up more options for both our students and our local business community. As the metrics continue to improve and we learn more about the spread of the virus, we are seeing changes to the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance for schools and county guidance from the OHA. In a March 9th letter to Governor Brown, Oregon Health Authority, and the Oregon Department of Education, the seven Superintendents of the Central Oregon school districts advocated for the following adjustments to the Ready School, Safe Learner guidance, which you may have read about in *The Bulletin*:

1. Reduce the physical distancing requirement from 6 feet to 3 feet, or 1 meter, to align with the World Health Organization’s recommendation in its December, 2020, checklist for reopening schools (*the capacity to maintain a distance of at least 1 meter: a) outside classrooms for both students [all age groups] and staff; and b) inside classrooms, based on age considerations and local COVID-19 transmission intensity*).
2. Aligned with the first proposed change, eliminate the 35 square feet per person requirement for determining room capacity. Instead, use the 3 feet of physical distancing requirement to maintain appropriate spacing.
3. Expand the 100-person limit for individual student contact to 200. Our districts have found that with safety protocols such as masking, cleaning, handwashing, and distancing in place for our middle and high school students, we have not needed to quarantine large groups of students based on school exposures.

Collectively, we feel that these changes would still keep our communities safe and provide our students more access to live instruction in the classroom and allow us to better meet the needs of our students and families. The March 16th update of the RSSL, removed the 100-person cohort limit, but kept the physical distancing requirements. This morning the CDC announced a shift to 3 feet of physical distancing, but that change is currently not reflected in the RSSL.

As we prepare to head into Spring Break, I want to take a moment to celebrate our staff and their efforts to support our students return. From the bus drivers, food service, teachers, custodians, office and instructional support staff, it is their work that has allowed us to be one of the first districts engaging our K-12 students in live instruction. And, even though we all want a full return, we need to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts that have seen us safely re-engage our students.

Have a safe and happy spring break!

Curt Scholl
Superintendent
Sisters School District