



Philomath School District 17J

Benton County School District No. 17J, 1620 Applegate Street Philomath OR 97370 (541) 929-3169

August 18, 2020

Dear Students and Families of the Philomath School District:

On August 4, 2020, the Philomath School District announced plans to open schools this fall. In that plan, students in grades K-3 in all Philomath schools, except Kings Valley Charter School, were slated to return to school facilities in a hybrid learning model. Based on information obtained late yesterday afternoon, original plans have changed.

At this time, all grade levels at all schools in the district will begin the first four weeks in comprehensive distance learning. The primary reason for this decision is based on safety protocols. Some key safety equipment—misting machines designed to assist with sanitizing protocols—will not arrive in time for the start of the school year. While there are back-up methods for sanitizing, these take additional time and do not address the particulates in the air. To maximize safety for everyone in our schools, it was deemed best to make this adjustment to the opening of the school year.

If you would like to adjust enrollment choices for your child (ren), you may do so prior to the start of school, scheduled for Tuesday, September 1st. Please contact your individual school office to notify of any desired changes. During the week of September 21st, families will be notified of any changes to the learning model(s) provided at each school (i.e., hybrid learning and/or comprehensive distance learning). Pending decisions at that time, families may alter enrollment choices between the notification date through Friday, October 2nd.

This decision, supported by the Philomath School Board at their meeting last evening, was made with a great degree of struggle and disappointment. We were looking forward to having some of our students back in our classrooms again. As the infection rate metrics for Benton County and the State of Oregon continue to allow, we anticipate the ability to open classrooms for at least some of our students at the end of September.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

As we continue learning together-

Susan Halliday,
Superintendent