



Philomath School District 17J

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

November 17, 2020

To: Families of Students in the Philomath School District
From: Susan Halliday, Superintendent

Re: Update to School Re-Opening Plans

During most years, school schedules and activities follow a relatively predictable pattern. Suffice to say that 2020-2021 is making up for all the prior years with an unprecedented level of change. I continue to appreciate your flexibility, patience, and understanding.

Since the beginning of the school year, the Philomath School District has made a commitment to making decisions to support our students. Most recently, that included a plan to return our youngest students to school. Health authorities in Oregon continue to see minimal transmission of COVID-19 in schools when safety protocols are followed.

Last Friday, November 13th, Governor Brown announced a statewide two-week freeze, designed to help stem the acceleration of COVID-19 cases. In addition, the updated K-12 metrics, released yesterday, have pushed back our district decisions for inviting students to return in hybrid or in-person learning. Coupled with the upcoming winter holidays, we will not return to hybrid or in-person learning until after the first of the calendar year.

Benton County Metrics:

Time Period	Case Count	Cases per 100,000	Test Positivity
11/01/2020 – 11/14/2020	152	161.1	9.2%
10/25/2020 – 11/07/2020	74	78.4	3.7%
10/18/2020 – 10/31/2020	52	55.1	2.0%
10/11/2020 – 10/24/2020	59	62.5	2.1%

The updated data has moved the Philomath School District into the 'transition' category, asking us to remain in CDL at this time while COVID cases are rising. As a result, **all K-12 students will remain in Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) through Winter Break.**

For some, this news will be welcomed. For others, this news will be very disappointing. Please know that we want to get students back into our schools as soon as it is safely possible to do so. With cases declining near the end of October, we prepared for—and were excited about—the best scenario. The very rapid increases in COVID-19, asked us to change our plans for now.

The school district will continue to follow both county and community metrics to make adjustments as might be needed. Please note the following:

- November 23-24, 2020 will be usual school days for all K-12 students.
- November 25-27, 2020 are non-school days for all K-12 students.
- All K-12 students will remain in CDL from January 5-8 & 11, 2021. This will provide a quarantine week following the Winter Break.
- If Oregon metrics and essential protocols allow, we will consider returning students to school on the following dates:
 - Kindergarten – 3rd Grade: January 12, 2021
 - 4th – 8th Grade: January 26, 2021
 - 9th – 12th Grade: February 2, 2021