

Hello Nooksack Valley!

Nooksack Valley will be resuming in person learning for the middle and high school, starting January 12. We will resume with the same model that was used earlier. For the first week back after the break, we will remain doing what we are currently doing until January 12. Your principals will be communicating more specifics. There are several reasons for this decision to expand in person learning;

1. The Governor's office and the health department have come out with a new decision making "tool kit" with revised metrics, guiding schools toward more in person learning. These new metrics came from a growing research base that strongly indicates how safe our schools are.
2. There has been 0.0% COVID transmissions in schools around the county and state. That means that while there is always a possibility of a positive case entering a school, it hasn't readily spread once there. We have had a positive case in each school, brought in by students, but have had 0.0% transmission. Other districts, in counties with much higher infection rates, have also experienced 0.0% transmission.
3. Our protocols and procedures to mitigate transmission have worked. In fact, the county health department has praised our work in this area, including our contact tracing protocols.
4. As hard and as smart as our staffs are working, students are still struggling at much higher levels than when they are with us in person. From the start, we've been committed to getting as many students back to face to face learning, and as safely as possible. There are many nuances to these decisions, which is why the "speed" of us getting students back to in person learning doesn't always align with everyone's opinion.

I would also ask that each of you continues to follow the prevention strategies being promoted. While the metrics have changed, and are not "hard and fast" requirements, keeping our county rates down can allow us to a) keep in a hybrid model, and/or b) allow us to expand in person learning even further in the future. We will be reviewing our plans by the end of the first semester, which is the end of January. Let's keep our numbers down!

I continue to be so very thankful for our great staff (both certificated and classified). We are reminded daily about just how awesome they are. This COVID time has reinforced the fact that our schools matter greatly. How we teach and support learners matters. We cannot be our best for kids in a remote learning environment.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays,

Mark