

Good evening,

We certainly hope the rain and clearer skies has come as a relief to you and your family after almost two weeks of smoky skies and poor air quality. What a traumatic event for us all in the midst of everything else already happening. We wanted to provide you a quick update on two significant things this Sunday evening.

First, you will see a handful of school buses driving through neighborhoods around the district beginning tomorrow. One of the expectations for this fall from both the state and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) was to take steps early to serve students who are furthest from educational justice. This phrase means a lot of things but, put simply, we have been asked to connect with students and families who have struggled the most with distance learning or are in need of services and support that cannot be provided remotely. This all begins on Monday and is a dry run to begin bringing students back into our schools, which leads to the second update.

We are carefully watching infection rates in our area and planning for a safe return to schools. Infections dropped under 75 cases per 100,000 residents in Pierce county just over two weeks ago. Cases have gone up the last few days and may signal a spike from Labor Day Weekend. In light of all of this, and in an effort to proceed cautiously, we are targeting the end of October or early November to bring students back into schools.

We are working on a hybrid learning model where students attend school in-person half time and work remotely at home when not in school. We want to ensure that we do things correctly and do them well. This will be a big shift for many students as some schedules will change and some students will get new teachers. We wish this could be avoided, but logistically it is necessary in order to provide school both in-person for some students and online for others. We will ask you to commit to one of these options very soon so we can put plans in place.

Currently, we are excited with how well remote learning is going for our students. The experience we gain is continuously used to better distance learning now and in the future. Many scientists predict another spike this fall and/or winter, in case we find ourselves fully remote again, we want to be fully prepared.

We realize you may have more questions after reading this, but more information is forthcoming. There will be a discussion and sharing at the September 28th Board meeting.

Thank you,