



Philomath School District 17J

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

September 3, 2020

Dear Students and Families of the Philomath School District:

Three days of school are now in the books! Thank you so much for being prepared, present, and engaged in learning for these initial days. Even though learning is virtual, teachers have shared how wonderful it is to see students again.

I want to acknowledge the technical difficulties and related frustration. Some of our younger learners have been in tears over wanting to participate and some of our older learners have been frustrated to lose course content with meeting interruptions or the inability to login. Most specifically, we have experienced issues with Zoom and/or Google Meet sessions, hosted by our teachers.

Our issues with Zoom and Google Meet appear to be stemming from issues above the Philomath School District level. Current issues being investigated involve our regional technology hub, operated from Linn Benton Lincoln Education Service District (LBL), and/or Zoom Video Communications. The PSD Technology staff are working closely with LBL to ensure that a configuration in their firewall is not causing any issues. Both *Zoom* and *Google Meet* have high bandwidth requirements. We have verified that Philomath schools are able to manage the bandwidth requirements. Please know that all efforts are being directed toward solving these issues to arrive at a more seamless presentation for students and staff. If any consolation at all, please know that these issues are happening in other school districts within our region as well as throughout Oregon and other states.

At Philomath Middle School, a decision was made to return to the Google Classroom platform, used last spring, for at least the first nine weeks of school. The following learning platforms are currently being used in our schools:

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|------------|------------------|--------|------------------|
| • Blodgett | Google Classroom | • PMS | Google Classroom |
| • CPS | SeeSaw | • PHS | Canvas |
| • PES | Google Classroom | • KVCS | Canvas |

I also appreciate the patience of our families who do not yet have Chromebooks. We are working as fast as we are able to secure devices as soon as possible. As you might imagine, there is a national shortage of these devices. As soon as additional Chromebooks become available, we will be contacting families to arrange for distribution.

Thanks for continuing to learn together-

Susan Halliday
Superintendent