



Philomath School District 17J

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

Philomath School District 17J

Board of Directors

Superintendent's Report

January 12, 2021

Appreciating Our School Board:

"Even during a pandemic, it's worth taking time to thank our elected school board members for charting the future of our students and communities. The Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) has set aside the month of January to honor the unpaid, elected volunteers who serve Oregon's 197 local school boards, our 19 education service district boards, and our 17 community college boards." (OSBA, January 2021)

On behalf of the Philomath School District, I would like to recognize and thank our local School Board members for their service and dedication to our schools and community. Thank you Greg Gerding, Anton Grube, Jim Kildea, Shelley Niemann, and Karen Skinkis. We appreciate you!

Returning to School:

Superintendent Responsibility:

- Make operational decisions that support the best interest of our student, while keeping both students and staff safe.

Decision-Making Criteria:

1. Oregon guidance will allow students to return safely to school.
2. Benton County Public Health approves return-to-school plans.
3. District capacity supports implementation opportunities.

Plan History:

August 4, 2020:

- K-3 starting school in hybrid learning model.
- 4th-12th grade starting school in comprehensive distance learning (CDL) model.

August 18, 2020:

- Due to incomplete PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) required to start school, change to all grades returning in CDL model.

October 1, 2020:

- State adjustments in metrics allowing students to return to school facilities required all students to remain in CDL model.

December 21, 2020:

- Approval of HB 4402 passed to provide liability support to districts and schools during COVID-19.

December 23, 2020:

- Reopening plan e-mailed to families stating the following plan:
 - K-2 return on Tuesday, January 11, 2021 (Hybrid).
 - 2-3 return on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 (Hybrid).
 - 4-8 return on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 (Hybrid).
 - 9-12 return on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 (Hybrid), if possible.
- Governor Kate Brown announced that return-to-school metrics are 'advisory' rather than 'mandatory'.

January 7, 2021:

- School Districts were alerted that liability for schools returning for hybrid or in-person learning outside of the Oregon metrics would not be covered.
- Reopening plan e-mailed to families stating that K-2 students would return to school on January 19, 2021 (instead of 01/11/2021) and moving grades 9-12 to February 16, 2021, if possible.
- All three decision-making criteria were met.
- Conversations about coordination between Benton and Linn County Health Departments to create roll-out plan for vaccination of educators and early childhood employees.
- Working with local health care providers to quicken the opportunity for staff vaccinations.

January 11, 2021:

- Oregon metrics increased by almost 100 cases per 100K since the prior measure, putting Benton County schools back into the required CDL category.
- Legal counsel advisement to remain in CDL at this time for the following purposes:
 - Being significantly outside of current Oregon metric negates district and school liability.
 - New guidance, including updated metrics, are to be clarified on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.
- Benton County Health Department counsel to remain in CDL at this time due to elevated case counts.

January 12, 2021:

- Statewide meeting related to timeline for guidance update, vaccinations, and other requirements being considered.
- Federal government added two large groups to the 1-A vaccination group—individuals over the age of 65 and individuals with compromising health conditions (age 18 and above).
- Receipt of press release from Governor Brown this evening indicating that, "Vaccination of Oregon seniors—as well as child care providers and early learning and K-12 educators and staff—will start on January 23, when additional vaccine shipments are expected to begin arriving from the federal government."

January 19, 2021:

- Updated guidance within ***Ready Schools, Safe Learners*** will be updated and shared.
- Return-to-School metrics may be adjusted at this time.
- Additional requirements may be included and/or some requirements may be removed.

Updated Recommendation:

- All K-12 students will remain in CDL at least until Tuesday, January 26, 2021.
- Families who have already made choices to move learning environments for students may continue with this planning.
- Limited In-Person Instruction (small groups) will continue to take place.
- Individual schools will be in touch with updates specific to each environment.

Student Success Act:

- Updated plan for 2020-2021 has been approved.

Division 22 Standards Compliance:

- Report for 2020-2021 has been approved by the Oregon Department of Education.

Association Connections:

- OSEA Philomath Chapter 64 has ratified their two-year contract as well as an MOA (Memorandum of Understanding) for unique considerations during COVID-19.
- PEA, our licensed association, has ratified their MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for CDL (Comprehensive Distance Learning).
- Continue work with PEA on finalizing our hybrid/ in-person MOU (Memorandum of Understanding).