Back to School

with Distance Learning

Presented by The Chronicle & The Chief

Back To School: Challenges Ahead

Students, parents, teachers, staff and school administrators are entering the new school year faced with uncertainties and learning challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each of our local school districts have worked hard over the past several weeks closely following the Oregon Department of Education's guidelines as they prepared special learning plans designed to move forward with effective teaching.

To begin the new school year, Distance Learning will be the key element in the local school districts' approach. It won't be easy. Parents and guardians will be key in helping students in their daily learning. For most families, that will mean schedule changes and flexibility. The school districts are ready to help make the process as smooth as possible.

The Chronicle and The Chief offer this Back To School Guide to help students, parents and families navigate through the new learning systems. The guide includes materials provided by the St. Helens, Scappoose, Clatskanie and Rainier School Districts, the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon School Activities Association.

Follow updates at thechronicleonline.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Chronicle and at thechiefnews.com and in the Friday print editions of The Chief.

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Resource Guide

Clatskanie School District
503-728-0587

Rainier School District
503-556-3777

Scappoose School District
971-200-8000

St. Helens School District
503-397-3085

Vernonia School District
503-429-5891

Oregon Department of Education
503-947-5600

NW Regional Education Service District
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Ready Schools, Safe Learners

A new message for a new moment in time

Six weeks have passed since we first released Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance for school leaders across Oregon. When we wrote our first letter describing the initial release of the guidance, we said that we couldn't yet have all the answers for school in the fall, but we would commit to tracking Oregon's COVID-19 impacts, learning from a variety of inputs, and iterating the guidance through the summer. We're confident that this update shows our continued evolution to support public health and safety, mitigate risks from the spread of COVID-19, and create learning opportunities for students that are both responsive and relevant to the moment.

Updates in this guidance include expanded face covering requirements for students in Kindergarten and above, as well as all staff (face covering guidance may continue to change as we align across sectors and respond to COVID-19 spread in Oregon). Importantly, we also more clearly explain cohorting as a risk mitigation strategy with a firm limit on cohort size. We have clarified the roles of local public health authorities, school districts, and state leaders in determining when school facilities need to close due to an outbreak of COVID-19. And we have improved the definitions and designs of the instructional models by significantly clarifying and distinguishing between expectations of engagement, reporting of attendance, and meeting instructional time requirements. The application of an equity lens and the digestion of real-time equity impacts continue to inform every aspect of our efforts.

The Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance places tremendous responsibility at the hands of local school and health officials with state oversight to protect the health of all Oregonians. Each version of guidance has been written specifically for those who are actively planning and will implement how learning will be supported in the coming school year—school leaders, superintendents, principals, business managers, with specific attention to teacher leaders and support staff. As a highly detailed, technical document, it may be complex as the general public, families, and students try to make sense of the information it contains to anticipate how their particular schools will decide to proceed.

School and learning don't happen out of the context of community. Finding shared understanding and shared direction can best happen at the local and immediate level of communities across the state. This guidance informs and creates the parameters for those conversations that should happen between local public health officials, school leaders, board members, educators, staff, students, families, and community-based culturally-specific organizations, as well as other sectors from faith to philanthropy. Everyone's voice matters and must be balanced with statewide considerations to protect the public's health. We have provided a set of decision-making tools that can assist in deepening local engagement in order to arrive at the most viable decisions for each place.

For the 2020-21 school year, each public school will work under the direction of the school district to develop an Operational Blueprint for Reentry that is tailored to this local context and informed by local needs. Each public charter school will work under the direction of its sponsor to develop its own Operational Blueprint for Reentry that is tailored to the community it serves. And, each private school will develop its own Operational Blueprint for Reentry that is tailored to the community it serves.

Each Operational Blueprint for Reentry must address essential elements including Public Health Protocols; Equity; Instruction; and Family and Community Engagement. By August 17 or prior to the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, the Operational Blueprint for Reentry must be submitted to the local school board (or private school operator), the local public health authority, and Oregon Department of Education (ODE); the blueprint must also be made available to the community online.

Every school, under the direction of the district, determines whether they teach all students on-site, teach all students through comprehensive distance learning or utilize a hybrid model. A communicable disease management plan is also required and should be developed through close coordination between the schools, school districts, and the local public health authorities.

Though not included in this version of Ready Schools, Safe Learners Guidance; in the coming weeks we will release a set of guideposts, protocols, and public health indicators that will help determine the best instructional model for a given zip code or county. Data about readiness of local healthcare systems and the state of local COVID-19 rates will help inform school decisions about when to move to On-Site or Hybrid models of instruction.

We know COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous, and students of color, as well as people navigating poverty and the elderly. There's no easy solution to resolve existing inequities, and ODE and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) continue to work closely together to develop solutions with an understanding of the research evidence and implementation challenges needed to support the school year ahead for everyone in schools. We continue to learn on a daily basis about COVID-19 and how school systems are responding across the US and in nations across the world. Our teams continue to scour that information for ways to improve what we've put forward while keeping in mind the values and guiding principles we've used to guide decision making.

As ODE and OHA continue to work hand-in-hand, we express deep gratitude to the school leaders and everyone collaborating with them to support learning in the year ahead. As they work tirelessly over the summer, they have hundreds of consequential decisions to make with lives and learning in the balance. This moment calls for the best of our collaborative and inclusive leadership and governance. Safety and wellness, connectivity and relationship, equity, and innovation continue to be a focus guiding our collective efforts to resolve challenges and find solutions for physical and mental health, learning, digital infrastructure, nutrition, and transportation.

With gratitude for all of this hard work, as well as each difficult decision and collaborative solution ahead of us.

#ReadySchools #SafeLearners

Sincerely,
Colt Gill
Director of the Oregon Department of Education
Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
Patrick Allen
Director of the Oregon Health Authority

St. Helens District takes your questions

JEREMY C. RUARK
jruark@countrymedia.net

There are still many questions as students and parents prepare for Distance Learning in the new school year ahead.

The St. Helens School District has released a series of questions and answers designed to help guide families as they get ready for the new school year.

The following is information sent to parents by the St. Helens School District.

As we navigate the changes to the upcoming school year, this has led to many questions about what school will look like for our students. Please know that we have been working diligently to address parent questions and will continue to provide information as it becomes available.

We have put together a "Top 10" list of Q&A's to help answer questions and address concerns received from SHSD parents.

In addition, we have set up a Q&A page on our website to help address questions/concerns about the upcoming school year.

Are we returning to school like any other year? If we are what day?

We are not returning to school like normal. Unless families enroll in our virtual program, St. Helens Virtual Academy (SHVA), students will be in what is called a Hybrid Model. When schools are allowed to open up to in-person instruction, classes will be held two days a week with remote instruction on the other days. Until a school is approved to open to in-person instruction students will be learning remotely.

The District has invested in multiple tools and will be doing intensive training with teachers to support a more rigorous learning experience than in the spring. If a family chooses to enroll their child in SHVA it will be a completely virtual program without in-person instruction, yet supported by St. Helens Teachers. Students choosing this option may work at their own pace very similar to any other virtual program such as Connections Academy.

Teachers will set up "parent-teacher conferences" beginning September 8 to help families become acquainted with the new digital tools their children will use to access learning. Instruction begins September 16.

Can students switch between the two models? Hybrid to SHVA or SHVA to Hybrid easily?

Students may switch to St. Helens Virtual Academy (SHVA) at any time, but there likely will be a delay in starting while they are enrolled into the system. Switching from SHVA to the Hybrid Model depends on the grade level and number credits earned whether it would be at the quarter or semester.

Will there be parent-teacher conferences? When will academy classes start?

We plan to have Parent-Teacher Conferences between September 8 – September 15 for both the Hybrid Model and St. Helens Virtual Academy. Each school will contact parents and arrange specific times for individual families to meet with teachers. The time is mainly for parents to learn about the digital tools and ask questions about expectations. All classes are expected to begin on September 16.

Is there a time expectation in terms of how long kids are expected to "attend school" with both the hybrid and virtual model?

According to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), regular daily attendance is expected in either the Hybrid or with St. Helens Virtual Academy (SHVA). Attendance is evidenced by the following:

- Participating in a video class
- Communication from the student to the teacher via chat, text message or email
- A phone call with the student, or, for younger students, with the parent
- Posting completed coursework to a learning management system or web-based platform or via email
- Turning in completed coursework on a given day

When there is no evidence of student interaction during a 24-hour period surrounding a scheduled school day as described, students are reported as absent. A day present for attendance may not be claimed for weekends or holidays, per ORS 336.010 and 187.010.

How will I, as a parent, be able to track if my child is keeping up with his schoolwork?

Parent/StudentVue in the past is not updated on a regular schedule; Google classroom was inaccessible by parents.

All teachers will be using the same Learning Management System (LMS) kindergarten through twelfth grade. The system is called Canvas and is used across the country to help consolidate educational programs, classes, lessons, and assignments.

In the system, parents can monitor and create settings that notifies them of assignments. With instruction going digital to start the year, it is critical for teachers to keep grades as up to date as possible. If you have a student that is not having their grades updated regularly, please contact their teacher or building principal.

If your child receives special education in order to improve or enhance a subject limitation, how will that be handled during this upcoming school year?

The St. Helens School District will first and foremost follow the State metrics for onsite/ comprehensive distance learning and ODE guidelines. Due to the individualized nature of each student's IEP, it will be best to reach out to your student's case manager to discuss the provisions of a free and appropriate education.

Will Chromebooks be provided for students doing the hybrid/distance learning and the virtual academy?

Chromebooks will be provided to any student that needs them similar to last spring. At this time, we are planning to hand them out between September 8th – 16th.

How will school lunches work for those doing SHVA and hybrid? Will lunches still be handed out each day like in spring and even now in summer?

Students in the hybrid model attending school in buildings, lunches will be provided on-site during a lunch break. At the end of the day students will pick up food in the cafeteria upon dismissal to take with them for the following days meal. Students attending the SHVA will need to make arrangements with the school to pick up meals.

Lunches provided during the spring, similar to our summer meals program, was made possible by a legislative action providing additional funding for school to serve free meals to all students. The additional funding is no longer available, but we are hopeful another such legislative action will be made so we are able to provide free meals to all students once again.

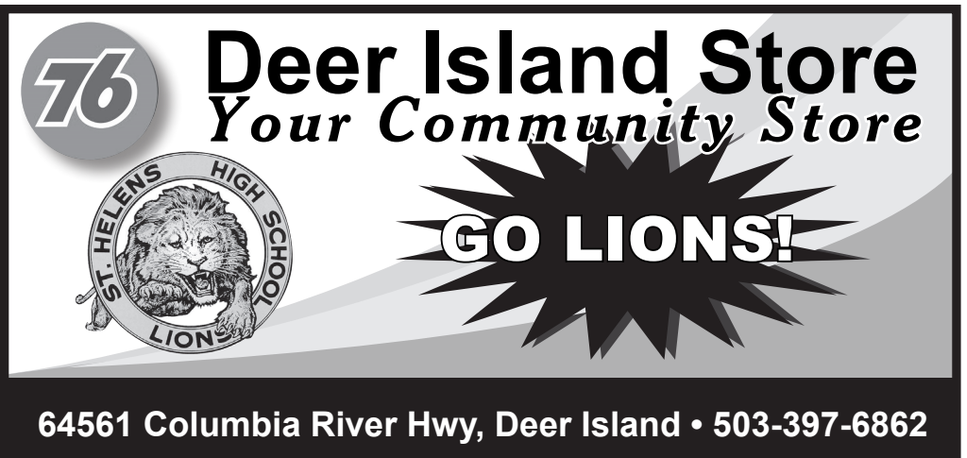
Do we need to fill something out or register if choosing the hybrid model?

No, you register for school just like any other school year. Consider the Hybrid Model our regular public school. It is called hybrid because it will be both in-person and remote learning based on the restrictions and mandates placed on the district for opening schools.

Will I need to purchase any school supplies for the online virtual academy? If yes, when will a list of supplies be provided?

Students will need supplies for SHVA. The St. Helens School District is in the process of developing a list for families that should be out the last week of August.

For more information visit https://www.sthelens.k12.or.us/



St. Helens School District

The St. Helens School District will begin the new school year on September 8.

The first day will include parent-teacher conferences for families to meet teachers and explain the instructional model and digital tools.

A letter sent to St. Helens School District parents in late July announced the start date and detailed information about the school district's Distance Learning plans.

"Our goal is for families to have control and choice about the best 'school' option for their child," the letter states. "Families may choose between a Hybrid Model and a distance learning option called the St. Helens Virtual Academy."

The letter tells parents that the district is anticipating the Hybrid option will start in the Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) mode due to the Oregon Health Authority re-opening infection rate guidelines.

In his letter, Superintendent Scot Stockwell said the district continues to monitor the ongoing spread of COVID-19 in the community while planning for the 2020-21 school year.

"A lot has changed since we first closed our school buildings to prevent the spread of COVID-19," Stockwell said. "New research from around the world has helped us understand COVID-19 a lot more, and health experts in our local community and from across the state have now developed guidance for how to safely reopen school buildings."

Stockwell said it is important to note that countries that have managed to safely reopen school buildings have done so with declining infection rates and on-demand testing.

"Presently, Oregon has neither," Stockwell said. "The escalating infection rates of the past few weeks make it clear the pandemic is not yet under control. County-specific metrics released by the governor, Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education further warn of the risk in reopening our school buildings too soon."

Stockwell said, given these factors, St. Helens School District will begin the 2020-21 school year in a "Comprehensive Distance Learning" model on September 8, 2020.

"I know for many that this is a disheartening message to receive," Stockwell said. "There's nothing we want more than to be together again in our schools. Our district leaders will continue to work with staff, students, and families as we reshape our fall plans for this current, unfortunate reality. We will continue to reach out to you with updates and opportunities to provide input."

Returning to School in St. Helens

Return to School Options
2020-2021

St. Helens school year begins September 8 with parent-teacher conferences for families to meet teachers and explain the instructional model and digital tools.

Our goal is for families to have control and choice about the best "school" option for their child. Families may choose between a Hybrid Model and a distance learning option called the St. Helens Virtual Academy.

School starts on September 16.

Options for students & families for 2020-2021

Hybrid Model

The Hybrid Model is designed to be flexible allowing periodic school building closures due to high infection rates while continuing to provide rigorous instruction at home.

St. Helens Hybrid Instructional Model is based on an A/B schedule with smaller cohorts meeting in person with St. Helens Teachers, alternating in home instruction days. In person sessions will resemble traditional instruction with smaller groups of students. At home instruction will consist of live and/or recorded instructional lessons, projects, assignments and digital lessons. Fridays will be reserved for family outreach and student intervention support.

Each school will begin the year with Parent-Teacher Conferences to allow Teachers an opportunity to explain the instructional model and digital tools being used as well as provide an opportunity for families to ask questions.

At this time, the district is anticipating the Hybrid option will start in the Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) mode due to the Oregon Health Authority re-opening infection rate guidelines.

Virtual Model
St. Helens Virtual Academy (SHVA)

St. Helens Virtual Academy (SHVA) is powered by a nationally recognized interactive software supported by highly qualified and motivated St. Helens Teachers to work in an innovative environment. Teachers work to ensure that students achieve mastery of learning objectives while providing guidance, instruction and support to manage the learning process and focus on students' individual needs. St. Helens Teachers monitor student progress through lessons, daily assessments and work actively with students and parents to advance each child's learning. SHVA is a fully digital program supported and managed by St. Helens Teachers that know our students and our community.

THESE PLANS ARE DEPENDENT UPON GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FROM THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND COULD CHANGE. SHORT-TERM DISTANCE LEARNING MAY BE REQUIRED DUE TO AN OUTBREAK.

Grade level specifics - Hybrid Model

High School

- Students will be grouped in cohorts with half coming every other day
- Students will enroll in four 85 minute classes per semester with more options for elective courses, including dual enrollment courses
- Mirrors College: Focusing on 4 classes per semester is similar to a college schedule and the pace of work
- Opportunity to earn one more credit toward graduation than years past
- Intervention/Enrichment period will provide access for College/Career supports, Special Ed support, and Credit-Earning Assurance Plans

Middle School

- Students will be grouped in cohorts of 15-17 students remain in 1 classroom for all core instruction
- Students will have 3 core teachers rotating classrooms
- Students will have +1 enrichment teachers travel to cohorts & transition cohorts to enrichment classrooms
- Students will have the opportunity for +1 enrichment courses = STEAM, Art, PE, Health

Elementary School

- Students will be in cohorts of 10 – 15 student per teacher to increase personal attention
- Developing options for child care/academic support provided by a district employee for off-site days
- PE will be taught in the gym/outside, physical distancing will be maintained
- Use of digital tools to allow for seamless integration between home and school days and allow for instructional support

Meeting Requirements for In-person Instruction

On July 28, the State of Oregon released a series of county-level COVID infection rate requirements that school district must meet in order to open for in-person instruction. We have 40% of our teachers commuting from the metro area which, based on the guidance, requires us to monitor those counties as well. The requirements are as follows:

County Metrics - metrics to be met three weeks in a row:

- Case rate: ≤10 cases per 100,000 population in the preceding 7 days
- Test positivity: ≤5% in the preceding 7 days

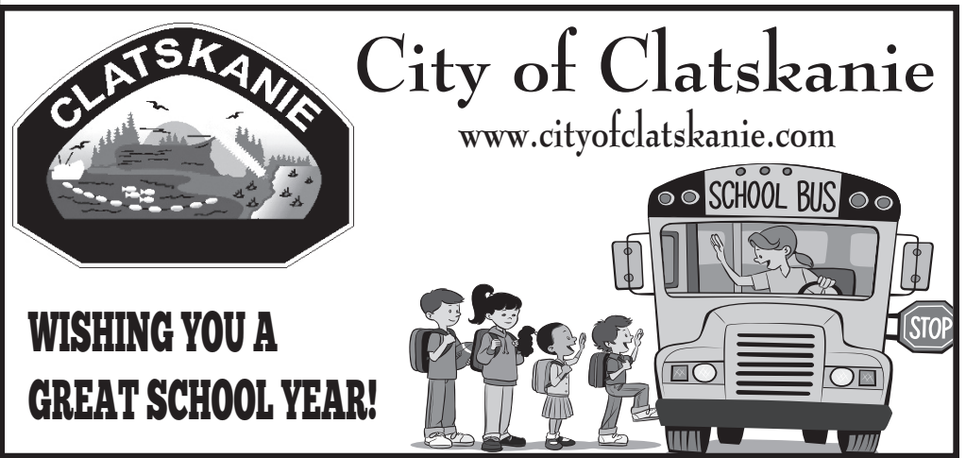
Safe Schools, Safe Learners

All St. Helens schools will adhere to the Oregon Department of Education guidance to limit exposure for staff and students and provide the safest possible learning environments. These requirements include:

- Physical distancing (35 square feet per student)
- Regular handwashing, regular sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces
- Facial coverings for students and employees
- Restricting visitors
- Maintaining cohort groups

In addition to state requirements St. Helens School District will:

- Utilize ionizing sanitation devices (typically used in medical facilities) to sanitize every school, every day
- Maximize use of outdoor facilities



Scappoose School District Distance Learning

"We're Going the Distance"

Welcome Back to School:

In Comprehensive Distance Learning, academic activities must be available across all instructional areas, so each student participates in a well-rounded educational experience. Students need ample instructional time, predictable routines and schedules, meaningful relationships that promote a sense of belonging, and feedback as they strive to meet learning goals.

We recognize that online collaboration is essential for Distance Learning and that families are in favor of increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home. SSD will help to provide access to a variety of online tools, which will assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and students.

During this time of school closures, we are working on ways to maintain the link between school and home. We miss our students and we hope to continue to communicate with them through various means. We recognize that online safety is of huge importance and we hope that this document helps to protect both school staff and pupils, while online.

Parents and Students

You can expect that we will provide the following supports :

- Access to Chromebooks to support learning.
- Begin the year with family conferences, such as Virtual Open House or Virtual Home Visits, as a proactive way to re-engage families and learn about student funds of knowledge. At these events building teams will identify family/student strengths and needs relative to engaging with Comprehensive Distance Learning.
- A virtual orientation to ensure all students and parents know and understand virtual tools and procedures.
- At least four times a year, our buildings will conduct virtual family conference/home visits, honoring home language and translation needs.
- Instruction based on grade-level (or above grade-level) state content standards.
- Teachers will provide at least one synchronous opportunity for every student daily (though not necessarily for every course/content area).
- Administrators will be consistently "visible" to parents & students in a virtual setting (e.g., weekly "Principal Talk" session or "mail box" video or weekly newsletter to respond to questions or concerns).
- Access to a well-rounded education and opportunities to fill learning gaps in the service of grade-level and integrated learning experiences.
- Consistent and timely student feedback and documented assessment of learning toward state content standards.
- Formative assessment-practices to grow student's ability for independent learning.
- Time for check-ins and peer interactions; develop a classroom culture, even when the "classroom" is remote. Educator office hours will be posted publicly, for students and families to access.

From Spring 2019 to Fall 2020: Key Shifts Instruction

- Increased daily learning time
- Focus on Teacher-Facilitated learning time
- English language support and SPED provided through real-time opportunities

Relationship and Connection

- Daily real-time check-ins between staff/student
- Daily peer interaction
- Daily attendance

Family Engagement and Commitment

- Family/parent virtual connections at least 4 per year
- Family and student feedback at least 3 per year in addition to daily classroom connections

Digital Learning Needs

(Infrastructure, Devices, Software System, Digital Content, Professional Development)

Software Systems for Comprehensive Distance Learning:

In order to support our students instructionally while they are at home, we are offering a paper solution for families that do not have access to the Internet. This system will involve distributing paperwork packets to families for the students to complete while at home, along with frequent phone calls- either to the students directly or to their parents. If the family is able to access the Internet, effectively all activities can be done online, which will eliminate any public health risk associated with providing instructional support. This document outlines some procedures by Scappoose School District (SSD) staff for mitigating the risk that COVID-19 is spread while still ensuring instructional support for our students.

Continued on **PAGE 7**

Grades K-3 Platforms

- **SeeSaw**
- **Zoom is our online component to help deliver weekly live instruction from the classroom teacher.**
- **Acellus**

Grades 4-12

- **Acellus with Canvas**
- **Google Classroom**
- **Google Meets is our online component to help deliver weekly live instruction from the classroom teacher.**

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Accessibility

The district will provide a map that indicates hotspot locations for students to access wifi. Please use this tool if you have limited or no internet access. If you have further barriers to instruction, please contact the school building office for assistance.

Special Education, Special Programs, 504's, ELL's and Title Services

The majority of each student's services under ESSA, ADA, or IDEA must be provided synchronously (i.e., with the teacher/service provider and student working together through direct, simultaneous communication). The amount of instruction that is synchronous vs. asynchronous is determined locally by each school and district and the child's individual plan, but should overwhelmingly lean towards a synchronous nature. This is best when included in inclusive virtual settings using synchronous instruction.

• Teams should work to plan cohesive, inclusive, holistic plans for instruction that enable children to both receive needed services and meaningfully engage with their classroom learning community.

• We will collaborate with families to design mutually acceptable means to provide special education and related services. Specific modalities of instruction continue to be at the discretion of the school/district/teacher.

• Updated Oregon Department of Education information was presented 8/11/20 that provides more information on how to best serve students experiencing disability. That information will be shared at the Parent Night and will be posted on school and the district websites.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Changes in the Learning Day

Distance Learning For All	Comprehensive Distance Learning
Waived Division 22 Instructional Time Requirement	Maintained Division 22 Instructional Time Requirements (HS 990/K-8 900) **Increased allowable time for teacher professional development and family conferences/contact pending SBE approval.*
Recommended times for teacher-led learning • K-3: 45-60 minutes maximum • 4-5: 90 minutes maximum • MS/HS: 3 hours maximum	Required minimums for teacher-facilitated learning • K-3: 140 minutes • 4-8: 150 minutes • 9-11: 2 hours 50 minutes
No synchronous contact required	At least one daily synchronous opportunity required
Pass/Incomplete in lieu of letter grades	Equitable grading policy determined by district (letter grades allowed)
Daily attendance encouraged	Required daily attendance

"We are investing in our students' distance learning and committed to maintaining the link between school and home."

Clatskanie School District Letter

Clatskanie Elementary School.

Dear Clatskanie School District Families,

Since closing our schools in March, it has been our greatest hope to bring students and staff back together in our buildings.

As you are aware, COVID 19 cases are rising across the State and in Columbia County. Yesterday, Governor Brown, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Department of Education released metrics to clarify when schools and districts are safe to return to face-to-face instruction. This information has significant implications for our district. Currently, Columbia County and the State of Oregon case rates exceed the limits set forth by the Governor for in-person instruction.

Because we value our community's safety we are going to begin our school year via Comprehensive Distance Learning beginning September 8th. Per the guidance from the Governor and the OHA, we will monitor our metrics every three weeks in the hopes of bringing our students back to the buildings on or before November 16th. The health and safety of our students and staff is our priority and we will carefully adhere to State guidance every step of the way.

We know from our community feedback that families have concerns about the effectiveness of distance learning based on their experiences this past spring. Keep in mind that our staff had little time and relatively no training, yet built a system to feed and educate students. We now have the systems, tools, and experience to provide your students with a high quality education.

We have partnered with our Education Service District (ESD) and have invested in both a comprehensive K-12 curriculum and a new learning management system to provide the platform that will allow students and families to stay in touch with teachers and the school.

For students and families the system will provide:

- Predictable schedules and routines for daily learning activities
- High quality instruction and ongoing support for students by teacher(s)
- Daily synchronous learning for students (e.g., Zoom meetings, Google Hangouts, or phone calls)
- Increased teacher instructional time and meaningful student assignments
- Progress monitoring and assessment
- Clear and consistent grading practices
- Clarity around attendance and participation
- Counseling and mental health services
- Family engagement and partnerships

We will be able to provide Chromebooks for every student in the district as well as support families who need internet service to their home. We are also working on providing hot spots if internet access is unavailable due to location.

Just like this spring, we will provide meals for students.

Additionally, all families will have the option to remain completely online if they are not comfortable with their children returning to school once it is safe to reopen.

It is critical that you respond to our district survey so that we may understand your needs to better serve your family.

I know this is very disappointing to many of you but we must put the health and safety of our staff, students, and their families first.

I'm asking for your patience and a bit of grace as we move forward together. None of us asked for this and we are all in uncharted territory. This pandemic is an ongoing and fluid situation and things seem to change weekly/daily/hourly.

As always, if you have any comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your support.

Cathy Hurowitz
Superintendent

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Rainier School District Letter

The following is a letter sent Monday, Aug. 3, to all Rainier School District parents from interim Superintendent Dr. Joseph Hattrick concerning the new school year ahead.

Dear Rainier School District Families and Community,

Let me begin by thanking the staff, parents, and community for such a warm welcome as I step into my new role as Interim Superintendent at Rainier School District #13. While this is a very challenging time, it has been incredibly reassuring to have everyone's support while we navigate these uncharted waters.

You may have seen that during our July 28 board meeting, a proposal to reopen both in-person instruction and virtual learning was presented. This was on the same day that Governor Brown presented the "Ready Schools, Safe Learners: Community COVID-19 Metrics."

The Oregon Department of Education has studied those countries who have managed to reopen school buildings once infection rates had declined and there was on-demand testing. Because we continue to see escalating infection rates, this pandemic is not yet under control to the extent that it is safe to reopen schools.

Following the directive provided by Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority, I am very sorry to announce that Rainier School District will begin the 2020-21 school year in Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL).

I know this comes as unwelcome news to many but please know that I have taken all of the feedback I have received in our last parent survey to heart. I will be leading the Rainier staff in developing an improved and redesigned learning platform that will strive to meet the needs of ALL students while understanding the challenges of limited technology and internet.

When redesigning our Comprehensive Distance learning (CDL), I will use the expertise I gained from serving as a principal at a large online school. I am conducting parent, student, staff, and leadership team focus groups to incorporate the positive components of Rainier's virtual learning platform, while improving on those areas that may not have met your child's needs.

Additionally, our team will continue planning for reopening with a program that will provide parents a choice of virtual or in-person learning. Unfortunately, providing options will not be available until we meet state and county metrics.

It is by belief that our students need consistency, therefore, unless there is a change prior to the first day of school, students will begin Comprehensive Distance Learning on September 14 and we will review county and state data for a possible in-person reopening on November 9. We will constantly analyze the data and make shifts cautiously and thoughtfully.

To ensure the best possible learning platform, our teachers will undergo professional development focused on virtual instruction beginning September 2, which will delay the start of school one week. For clarification purposes, the following timeline has been provided:

- September 2, 2020 Teachers return to work for professional development
- September 14, 2020 First day of school for students (CDL)
- October 19, 2020 Review state and county cases/positivity rates
- November 9, 2020 First day of hybrid (virtual and/or in-person) ONLY IF we meet state and county metrics for three weeks

Let me assure you the decision to begin the 2020-21 school year is not one we have taken lightly. As educators, we prefer to see your children's faces in person and know that is your preference. Please know that we take the safety of you, your child(ren), and our staff very seriously and look forward to a safe and healthy reopening. As we conclude the last month of summer break, I invite you to watch for information on a parent and student focus group. Those groups will be virtual and will provide me an opportunity to get to know you, hear about how we can meet your student's needs in CDL, and begin a process of hearing your voice as we initiate a strategic plan.

Thank you for your patience as we know plans are subject to change. Additionally, thank you for understanding and doing your part to keep Rainier safe and healthy! It is my hope that we will be able to meet in-person very soon!

Your partner in education,
Dr. Hattrick
Interim Superintendent

RAINIER SCHOOL DISTRICT #13

COMPREHENSIVE DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

The 2020-21 school year is upon us and we are excited to reopen with a redesigned learning platform. The purpose of this document is to provide a summary as you navigate the Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) Plan. Although we are beginning the school year in CDL please know we hope to reopen phase 2 (which includes a hybrid of in-person and virtual) sooner than later. Please review this as well as the detailed plan and as always, please feel free to email or call me with any questions.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE DURING PHASE 1 OF REOPENING

Online Learning Platform

Who: All students in PreK-12
What: Live instruction with teacher support and tutoring.
When: M, T, Th, F. Live sessions are scheduled. Students encouraged but not required to attend.
Where: Google Classroom supported by Engage NY and SeeSaw.
How: Program is available in virtual or paper-based.

Rainier Virtual Academy

Who: Students in 3-12th grade
What: Independent study with teacher monitoring.
When: Self-paced and 100% flexible.
Where: Odysseyware
How: 100% online program (year-long)
Apply online
Limited seats available

Highlights

⇒ Flexible—Students can participate in live sessions OR watch recorded videos and complete work independently.

⇒ Supportive—Students have access to a teacher throughout the day. Administrators will host live sessions daily from 4-6PM. Our special ed and other students will receive targeted and specific support.

⇒ Consistent—Every class will have the same look and feel in the redesigned Google Classroom. Weekly student plan provides clear expectations.

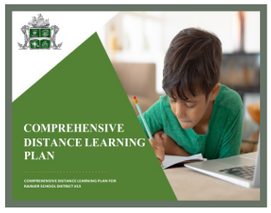
⇒ Educational—Along with a rigorous curriculum for students, parents will also have access to training, video tutorials, and live support.

Still have questions?
Check out the CDL plan by clicking the link on this page or visiting www.rainier.k12.or.us/remotelearning

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

9/3	Comprehensive Distance Survey due
9/10	**Virtual Back to School Night** PreK-6 5:00-6:00 p.m.
9/10	Tech pack pick-up @ airlock (Enter campus through bus entrance)
9/11	First day of school meal program (Details to follow)
9/14	First day of school for all students (Comprehensive Distance Learning)
9/14	Paper-based learning materials pick-up
9/14	**Virtual Back to School Night** JR/SR High & NCA 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Superintendent Dr. Hattrick



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ODE Releases Ready Schools, Safe Learners Guidance

Oregon school districts to develop plans for a safe return to school

The initial 2020-21 school year guidance, entitled Ready Schools, Safe Learners, provides schools flexibility to develop a local blueprint for safely starting school next year. This guidance is designed to be responsive to ongoing educator and community input and will be updated in the months ahead.

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) today shared Ready Schools, Safe Learners, the initial guidance for how public and private schools will develop an operational blueprint for the 2020-21 school year. The blueprint will evolve throughout the year based on school district, public health, and community feedback, as well as incorporate new health and safety guidance to adapt to the COVID-19 situation as it changes.

Recognizing that COVID-19 will likely continue to pose a public health risk throughout the school year, and that the prevalence of COVID-19 varies community by community, the blueprint instructs districts to develop a back-to-school plan that utilizes a mix of on-site and distance learning options to protect the safety of students, staff, and families. Districts are also to develop communicable disease management plans and contingency plans in the event of COVID-19 outbreaks—including returns to fully distance learning and modified school year calendars as necessary.

Ready Schools, Safe Learners, developed under the direction of Governor Brown and in collaboration with Oregon Health Authority (OHA), provides a framework for schools for the 2020-21 school year that ensures the health and safety of all students and staff and the families they go home to each day.

"The unfortunate truth is that students from historically-underserved communities, particularly Oregon's Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other students of color, have been disproportionately impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every student, regardless of the zip code they live in, deserves access to a high-quality education and the school-based services that will prepare them for lifelong success," said Governor Kate Brown. "At the same time, we must ensure that Oregon's students, our educators and support professionals, and our parents and caregivers remain safe. Returning to school in the fall will not look the same as it did before COVID-19. What the Oregon Department of Education has established is a process for school districts to listen to the community and develop health and safety plans that make sense for each district, each school, and each student. Together, we will proceed cautiously, testing each step as we move forward, and taking a step back if necessary to protect the health and safety of our students, families, and education community."

"I'm thankful for the feedback from superintendents, teachers, families, community-based organizations, leaders from Oregon Health Authority and others who helped create this guidance and I'm excited to welcome kids back to their schools," said ODE Director Colt Gill. "This model, developed under Governor Brown's leadership, provides statewide guidance that each school district will use independently to plan for the education and safety of students during the 2020-21 school year. We understand and honor the importance of local voice, leadership and control. These individual plans will reflect the distinct strengths and needs of each district and community."

What Schools Must Do

For the 2020-21 school year, each school will work under the direction of the district to develop an Operational Blueprint for Reentry that is tailored to the local context and informed by local needs.

Each Operational Blueprint for Reentry must address eight essential elements including Public Health Protocols, Equity, Instruction, and Family and Community Engagement.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, the Operational Blueprint for Reentry must be reviewed by the local school board and made available to the community on the district website. The blueprints will require that every school, under direction of the district, determine whether they teach all students on-site, teach all students through distance learning or utilize a hybrid model.

"I appreciate the extensive planning given to the return to school for our children and school staff," said Oregon Parent Teacher Association President Kristi Dille. "We know the new school year will look different but using the best information from educators, health care leaders and science brings hope for a safe and healthy return to school. The ODE/OHA guidance recognizes local health and education needs and guide a healthy and positive way for us to return to the classroom."

This Moment In History

This guidance is being released during a somber moment in a history we can have difficulty reconciling, including healing from the ongoing suffering caused by white supremacy.

"There is no way to ignore the reality of what young people and families are experiencing across Oregon and the world. And while it might be seen as a technical or administrative task, the guidance we are releasing is fundamentally about how leaders and communities in Oregon will respond to create thriving conditions for each and every student amidst the challenges we face," Gill said. "Young people are already guiding us into the future."

The following statement comes from a 7th grade submission from Linus Pauling Middle School in Corvallis in response to ODE's "Elevating Voices Project." These words inspire the kind of leadership and decisions we need to make together at this time.

We must ask ourselves, what do we want to get out of this? We have the choice to choose whether to go through this uncertain time with an open heart, receiving others with compassion and grace, or we can isolate ourselves in fear. Our world can be changed for better or for worse because people are suffering. The economy is uncertain and appears shattered. People are losing loved ones to a virus that is affecting the entire world. This is hard for every single one of us. But this isn't all bad. It's an opportunity for change in our schools, our family lives, and our planet. We have a chance to try something different, and we should take advantage of that. We must remember that we are all in this together. Times are hard, but throughout history humans have powered through all kinds of challenges, all the while learning and discovering along the way. If we all play a part, and we all join hands, we can reach success. Because this coronavirus is pushing us to rely on the things that matter most; the things that a virus will never take away. We have to ask ourselves, if this experience will help us grow, or if the fear will suffocate our joy and take away the empathy we have for others. Yes this is painful, but we can come out of this fire stronger. It is the mindset we possess and the heart for those that are struggling that will carry us out of this.

For the full ODE document, log onto this story at thechronicleonline.com and thechiefnews.com.

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OSSA moves Fall sports to Spring

The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) shifted its traditional Fall sports season contests to begin in March under a new 2020-21 school activities calendar approved by the association's Executive Board.

The Board also voted on Aug. 5 to waive current out-of-season coaching policies to allow for student participation during the Fall (Season 1). Participation will be at the discretion of the local school district in those activities allowed per directives from the Governor's Office, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

"Today's decisions by the Executive Board provide a framework to maximize the potential opportunity for students in Oregon to participate in three seasons during the 2020-21 school year," OSAA Executive Director Peter Weber said. "The Board recognized that a one size fits all approach isn't what's best for students across the state. By waiving policy to allow regional participation this Fall, local school districts will have the discretion for participation in those areas that are able to do so safely per state directives."

The OSAA Executive Board took the action following last week's release of school reopening health metrics by the Governor's Office and OHA. These metrics will result in nearly all OSAA member high schools starting in a Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) format this Fall which presents challenges for the resumption of school activities.

Shifting the season calendar later in the school year provides additional time for more schools to return to a hybrid or on-site learning format while providing flexibility for local school districts to make decisions this Fall that are best for their school communities as health metrics and state guidance in this area continue to develop.

The OSAA's new calendar provides for three distinct seasons from late December to late June with limited overlap between seasons. Traditional Winter activities will take place in January and February (Season 2), followed by Fall activities in March and April (Season 3), with Spring activities occurring in May and June (Season 4). Each season will feature an equitable 7-week regular season, with adjusted contest limitations, followed by an OSAA Culminating Week. Specific plans for culminating week events will be developed in conjunction with member schools in the coming months in alignment with large group gathering guidelines issued by the state.

The OSAA Association Year will officially begin on August 31 in Season 1 where policies restricting out-of-season coaching have been removed. This allows member school students and coaches, at the discretion of the local school district, to participate in any OSAA-sanctioned activity permitted by directives from the Governor's Office, OHA and ODE. This participation may include conditioning, practices and interscholastic competitions in those permitted activities provided schools adhere to OSAA policies.

The OSAA will continue to work with the Governor's Office, OHA, and ODE, along with our Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) to provide information to member schools. Guidance from these entities continues to evolve, along with the pandemic itself, and will impact future OSAA decisions regarding the 2020-21 school year.

Photo courtesy of Rob Hilson

This photo shows fall football action between Clatskanie and Seaside during the 2019 season.

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