

Hi Bethel Families,

This is an update on the current COVID-19 situation as it relates to our ability to reopen Bethel schools to in-person instruction.

After the release in August of new statewide COVID-19 metrics required by the Oregon Health Authority and Governor Kate Brown to safely reopen schools, Bethel School District made the decision to move fully into Comprehensive Distance Learning for all grades at least until October 23. We also promised to closely monitor state and county metrics to determine whether, and when, the District might be able to reopen to hybrid learning.

As you are likely aware of from various media reports, since early September Lane County has been on an increasing and oftentimes record-breaking trajectory of positive COVID cases. This past Friday [Lane County was placed on the Governor's Watchlist](#). This means Lane County will receive additional resources to assist our County. And, the state just released [new mandates about wearing masks](#).

Here is a review of the [state and local metrics](#) that must be met in order to open:

Grades K-3 under the "exception" rule

- At or below (\leq) 30 positive cases per 100,000 people in Lane County
 - ***Lane County currently has 78 cases per 100,000 people***
- **County** test positivity rate at or below (\leq) 5%
 - ***Lane County test positivity rate is 8.2%***
- All the metrics must be met for the preceding 7 days for the prior three weeks
- No confirmed cases among school staff or students in the past 14 days

Grades 4-12

- At or below (\leq) 10 positive cases per 100,000 people in Lane County.
 - ***Lane County currently has 78 cases per 100,000 people***
- **County** test positivity rate at or below (\leq) 5%
 - ***Lane County test positivity rate is 8.2%***
- **State** test positivity rate at or below (\leq) 5%
 - ***Oregon's state positivity rate is 5.8%***
- All the metrics must be met for the preceding 7 days for the prior three weeks
- No confirmed cases among school staff or students in the past 14 days

As a result of these metrics, we have no choice but to remain in Comprehensive Distance Learning. Unfortunately, Lane County has some distance to go in reducing the number of COVID-19 positive cases in order for school districts to transition to hybrid instruction, and at the current rate it doesn't appear that we will meet these metrics soon.

Changes may be coming. The Governor's office - with the Oregon Health Authority - has recently indicated that a closer review of the current metrics guidance issued to counties/districts is forthcoming

with the possibility of some changes to better measure the unique COVID impact on separate communities. Until we receive additional guidance Bethel will continue to monitor the county and state metrics by week, and will keep you informed of any notable developments.

Finally, we are doing everything we can to prepare for the moment when students are permitted back into our classrooms. The lower COVID-19 rates that we are required to reach is a community-wide goal that together we can achieve by being diligent in our own health and safety.

Stay healthy and safe,

Chris Parra
Superintendent