

October 30, 2020

Bend-La Pine Schools' Families,

This afternoon, Governor Kate Brown and Oregon Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Colt Gill announced a large shift in the COVID-19 case metrics established to reopen our schools. These changes ease return-to-classroom restrictions and will make opening our schools, starting with elementary schools, much easier to accomplish. Based on the announcement, we could possibly begin our transition to balanced/hybrid education for grades K-3 and 4-5 in November.

One significant caveat, however, is that Deschutes County has seen a recent spike in COVID-19 cases, which means that even with the loosening of guidelines, we may not meet the metrics that would enable us to reopen for in-person learning if cases exceed the [new state guidelines](#).

The next weekly case count/metrics update for Deschutes County will take place on Monday, Nov. 2. (These are typically released in the evening). We will be monitoring this update closely and will provide you with an update after reviewing case counts.

We know the decision to return to in-person learning will mean changes for our staff, students and families. We are committed to making the announcement as soon as we can regarding our return to school plans for elementary students to give staff and families as much time as possible to plan for the transition.

### **Why are the metrics changing?**

Gov. Brown outlined a number of reasons for changing the guidelines, which will allow more schools to reopen for in-person learning on an accelerated timeline.

These reasons include:

- A growing recognition of the negative health and safety outcomes, not just educational outcomes, occurring when students are NOT in school
- Studies of other countries and states showing that schools being in session for in-person instruction do not seem to contribute to community spread of Covid-19
- Understanding of the importance of in-person learning for ALL elementary grades.

For more information about our balanced/hybrid learning and our return to school preparations, visit our [Return to School webpage](#).

Thank you for your partnership now and in the future.

Lora Nordquist  
Interim Superintendent