

August 13 Update to Families: Returning to School

Bend-La Pine Schools' Families,

With a month left before the September 14 start of school, I know that families still have many questions about programming, options, schedules, grading, and other important issues. I will continue to provide updates each week until then.

Please keep an eye out on Friday for a communication from your school, which will include a short Return to School survey. This information is being collected by each school and is critical in planning for the coming year. We are asking families to complete a survey for each student in their home by August 21.

Virtual Town Hall, Aug. 19

Next week, along with other district staff, I will be sharing information regarding our plans for returning to school in a live presentation, addressing our most frequent questions. This update will be broadcast live on our [Bend-La Pine Schools Facebook account](#). Tune in:

- English - Wednesday, August 19 at 4 p.m.
- Spanish - Wednesday, August 19 at 6 p.m.

We hope to share recordings of these town halls with families on our district website.

New Oregon Department of Education Guidance and Special Education

On Aug. 11, [Oregon Department of Education released updated guidance](#) that opens up more opportunities for onsite limited in-person instruction. While we still need to review this new guidance, this is great news for our students that experience disability and will be an important complement to Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) for all this fall. During CDL, special education services will be delivered through co-teaching, virtual class/small group instruction, and tele-health (for clinical service such as speech-language, occupational therapy, physical therapy). The addition of onsite limited in-person instruction will assist teachers and specialists in providing specially designed instruction and related services to some students. Further, we will be able to provide in-person special education evaluation/assessment services. We will have more information and specifics in the next few weeks, as we learn more about the requirements for onsite limited in-person instruction.

In the meantime, our special programs leadership team has been planning for fall CDL and share the following updates:

- Special programs teacher leaders are developing standards of practice. This will help ensure that teams are operating under the same set of guidelines and that students will get more predictable levels of service.

- A team of school psychologists and speech pathologists are planning procedures for in-person assessment and evaluations under the state's guidance.
- Speech and language services will continue to be offered via tele-health. We saw great success with the tele-health model last spring.
- We learned much last spring about how best to utilize our inclusion educational assistants (EA) in support of learning and will incorporate that into our fall training. EAs are essential for us to support students during distance learning, just as they are when we are in person.
- Our team of educators now have better knowledge on how to adapt and change methodologies in order to provide specially designed instruction and related services.
- We are able to plan and train special programs staff in conjunction with regular education staff. You can expect to see common learning management systems and platforms and we plan to train parents on how to utilize these tools. Our hope is that students and families will have a more seamless experience.
- You can expect that Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings will be held via WebEx until we are able to restore typical school operations.

Comprehensive Distance Learning and Bend-La Pine Schools Online

In my August 4 email update to families, I shared information about the fall's Comprehensive Distance Learning and Bend-La Pine Schools Online options for student learning. To help address questions more completely, please see [this side-by-side comparison chart for details](#).

OSAA Sports and Activities Update

Athletics and activities are an important part of the school experience for many of our students in Bend-La Pine Schools and are an integral part of our school cultures and identities.

Wednesday, [Aug. 5, the Oregon School Activities Association \(OSAA\) announced a modified athletic calendar for 2020-21.](#)

Below is a brief synopsis/overview of the OSAA athletic calendars for the 2020-21 school year:

- Season 1: Aug. 31 to Dec. 27, details to come at a later date
- Winter Sports (season 2): Dec. 28 to March 7
- Fall Sports (season 3): Feb. 22 to May 2 (football will run slightly longer through 5/9)
- Spring Sports (season 4): April 19 to June 27
- Activities Season: Cheerleading Feb. 22 to March 14; Dance and Drill March 9 to April 18; Speech April 5 to April 25; Solo Music April 12 to May 2; Choir April 19 to May 9; Band and Orchestra April 26 to May 16

With the start of the association year on Aug. 31, we currently remain focused on navigating Season 1. With local control over Season 1, we understand it will not be a "one size fits all"

approach as Bend-La Pine Schools' Season 1 could look very different from that of neighboring school districts.

As we continue to follow guidance from the Governor's office, OSAA, Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Oregon Department of Education (ODE), along with the OSAA sports medicine advisory committee, our goal will be to make the best decisions possible in safely supporting athletics and activities at middle and high schools within our school district.

We are currently working on plans with our schools' athletic departments and administration and will have updates and announcements to our programs in the coming weeks. For updated information, stay connected with your coaches, athletic departments, athletic directors, and school.

For more from OSAA, visit <http://www.osaa.org/coronavirus>

You can find additional information about our plans to return to school, and Frequently Asked Questions on our [Return to School](#) webpage. Thank you, families, for your continued support during this time.

Sincerely,

Lora Nordquist, Interim Superintendent