

July 1, 2020

Bend-La Pine Schools' Families,

Today, I would like to share with you a first look at what we believe school may look like for our students and staff when we return this fall, given the [state's Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance](#) for reopening.

We understand, from your feedback this spring, that a primary objective in developing our plan should be to maximize the number of students who can engage in face-to-face learning, while also providing flexible learning options for students. We agree wholeheartedly and share your goal to bring as many students to our school campuses each day as possible.

We have applied the current state guidelines, and **while the plan we are about to present is not certain**, we are working on the feasibility of an ABC approach for our students when we reopen our doors this fall, which could look like:

- **A:** Grades K-5 students would be **ALL IN** and return to our school campuses full time for in-person instruction with social distancing.
- **B:** Grades 6-12 would be **BALANCED**, with some time devoted to in-person learning on campus and the other time spent with remote learning with classroom teachers.
- **C:** Students in grades K-12 who are not able to, or would prefer not to, return to campus can stay **CONNECTED** and continue to receive a robust education through [Bend-La Pine Schools Online](#) offerings.

To make ABC work, we will need to be creative. We are considering a variety of options - from staggered school hours to alternating-day schedules to transportation* adjustments – that will allow us to safely educate as many students in our schools as possible each day, per the state rules. We hope that you will join us as we collectively think outside the box and embrace a level of change to our education system that continues to be unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetimes.

**Transportation is a critical component of this planning. If you anticipate that your student will be a bus rider next year, we ask that you log into [ParentVue](#) right away so that we can plan for your student's transportation needs as we develop fall plans.*

We understand that our students, staff and families want certainty and we will do our best to provide as many answers as we can throughout the summer as the result of any changes to the state's [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#) versions, which are anticipated to be released bi-weekly throughout the summer.

We anticipate questions regarding our plans and have started a FAQ to provide answers.

Why would options vary based on the age of students?

We believe that our youngest students learn best in three dimensions, ALL IN, with ongoing adult support as they learn not only academic subjects, but basic social-emotional skills that are best learned in person.

Additionally, requirements from the Oregon Department of Education related to consistent grouping and physical space/social distancing create challenges for bringing back all students concurrently at middle and high school levels.

Will BALANCED learning in the fall be different than what students experienced this spring?

In a word, yes! While we are proud that our schools and educators were able to connect with students during the spring, we know that learning from a distance during this emergency closure was a challenge for many and we learned a great deal from the experience.

While we hope to bring as many students back to learn in person as possible, some learning will continue to take place remotely. We are excited to implement the many lessons learned during the spring, including creating cohesive platforms and standards of practice for teachers and increased teacher training.

We are implementing and training to a more robust, consistent teaching and learning management system for the BALANCED option, which will be ready for students as we begin the new school year.

Furthermore, teachers will be providing ongoing feedback and grading schoolwork completed remotely.

Is there an option for full-time online learning, upon request?

Yes. Bend-La Pine Schools Online is a robust program for K-12 that currently serves hundreds of students in both a full-and part-time status. Through this program, students receive materials such as books to read and materials for science experiments and receive instruction through live and recorded online classes. Local in-person teachers also offer personal connections for all students enrolled in the program. Families can CONNECT, learn more, and register today at [Bend-La Pine Online](#) website. Staff are available to answer questions by phone at 541-355-1052.

Will schools continue to offer school bus transportation and meals?

Absolutely. Our operations teams are hard at work, digging into all of the requirements surrounding meal service and transportation. While we know that some specifics for these services may look different, we will continue to provide school bus services and meals to our students.

Will staff and students be required to wear masks?

We will follow the guidance from ODE and Governor Kate Brown surrounding face coverings at school. Currently, guidelines call for many staff members to wear masks or face shields. Students, particularly those at the secondary level, are encouraged to wear masks, but this is currently not a state requirement.

Share your thoughts.

Our teams have been planning our return to school for months and will continue to work through the summer to develop plans to support learning for our students while also supporting the health of our community. We will be ready to serve every student when our doors open this fall.

We invite our families to share questions and thoughts as we prepare to return to school this fall. [Please take a moment to share your thoughts through our short survey.](#)

As a reminder, we are committed to sending updates on or before August 1 and August 15.

Thank you to our community for your support. Please know that we are excited and ready to serve your students.

Sincerely,

Lora Nordquist, Interim Superintendent