

December 23, 2020

Bend-La Pine Schools' Families,

Governor Kate Brown made an unexpected announcement this afternoon, sharing new rules for school re-openings in Oregon, which make previous metrics optional and direct districts to find a safe path forward toward resumption of in-person instruction "to the greatest extent possible" by February 15, 2021.

We have been planning for in-person instruction for months and look forward to returning our students back to the classroom, starting with elementary grades, as soon as we can safely do so. I started connecting with district and association leaders this afternoon and will continue to expand the conversation to others over the break, as we determine specific dates for our phased-in return, based on this new information.

You can read the Governor's Office news release [here](#). In the meantime, I want to share two highlights:

*"Oregon's school metrics, the measures of local community spread of COVID-19 that guide when it is appropriate to open schools for in person instruction, **will be advisory rather than mandatory, effective January 1**. Moving forward, decisions to resume in-person instruction must be made locally, district by district, school by school. In addition to schools continuing to adhere to required health and safety protocols and working in close consultation with their local public health authority in understanding and considering the metrics, teachers, school staff, parents and students should be engaged in this decision-making process to allow schools to make the best choice for their community and their students."*

*And, "The Governor directed the state agencies to continue to partner with school districts, educators, and communities in decision-making processes grounded in sound science and public health and safety, with **the goal of preparing more Oregon schools, especially elementary schools, to return to in-person instruction by February 15, 2021.**"*

Please enjoy the final days of 2020 in happy, safe, and socially-distanced ways.

Sincerely,

Lora Nordquist, superintendent
Bend-La Pine Schools