

October 16, 2020

Dear Parents of the Banks School District:

I hope you are all well. We are close to 6 weeks into the school year. Time is going fast and we have met and conquered many challenges this fall. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we started this school year. We are improving each week and we are feeling very confident in the direction we are going with online learning. We still have a lot of learning to do as a staff, but we are improving each day. We appreciate all of the students and their participation throughout the start of the school year and also all of the support families are giving to help our children succeed this year. We will strive to continue to deliver a high-quality education to the students of the Banks School District.

Here are some updates:

Food Distribution and Delivery Update

The delivery of meals at the **Timber Junction** on Hwy 26 is from 10:25 am - 10:45 am on Tuesday and Friday. The **Buxton School** delivery is from 11:00 am - 11:20 am on Tuesday and Friday. Children will be able to pick up 3 meals on Tuesday (for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and 2 meals on Friday (for Friday and Monday). This will cover meals for the entire week. All meals will be at no cost.

Banks Elementary School food pickup will continue to be from 11 am to 1 pm.

Also on Fridays, at all locations, we will now be handing out extra meals for the weekends.

Our USDA waiver has also been extended through June 30, 2021. This means that all meals for children ages 1 to 18 will be free through the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Limited In-Person Instruction

On October 26th, we will begin Limited In-Person instruction with a small number of students. We are focusing this instruction with our students who have significant internet connectivity issues. In the guidance, limited in-person instruction cannot be for more than two hours a day and there are several restrictions on cohorts. Limited In-Person cannot replace Comprehensive Distance Learning and is supplemental, it will not be direct instruction. We are starting very slow and ensuring protocols and procedures are in place and all will be safe. If students are selected to attend, principals will contact parents to arrange times and dates. Please be patient with this process. We are very limited with students coming on-site. We do have limited in-person teams at each school that meet weekly and we will hopefully be able to bring more students on campus in future weeks, but we have to ensure that it is safe.

Comprehensive Distance Learning and Metrics Update

Back in the beginning of September, we announced that we would be in Comprehensive Distance Learning at least until the end of quarter 1, November 13th. We committed to this so we could focus on online learning and at that time the metrics were not in our favor. We continue to see an upward trend in COVID-19 cases in our county and we are further away from the metric requirements set forth by the governor than in September. We are continuing to look at the numbers, but the District is not very optimistic that they will drastically improve anytime soon. The District will make an announcement in the upcoming weeks of the status of quarter 2, which is until January 29th. Please continue to practice safe social distancing and wearing a mask. Whatever we can do to bring these COVID-19 case numbers down will get us closer to getting kids back in school. Please follow the link into our current status and state requirements to reopen. Here is our current status: [Banks Reopening Status](#)

Parent – Teacher Conferences

Just a reminder that next Wednesday and Thursday, the 21st and 22nd, we will be conducting virtual conferences. These are very important as we check in with students and parents at the 6 week mark. On Wednesday and Thursday, because conferences are virtual, teachers will be conducting conferences from 8 am to 8 pm on both days. This is to ensure that the teachers have time for all students and parents. Because of this, students will be learning asynchronously on those two days. Teachers will assign work and projects for students on the conference days. There will be no live instruction. If you have any questions about conferences, please contact your child's principal and / or teacher.

Online Safety

Recently, through a lot of hard work from staff, we were able to distribute Chromebooks and iPads to all of our students. We have also distributed over 150 hotspots to families and we are hopefully to a point where we are just troubleshooting minor issues. I know all of this technology and complete online learning is new and we appreciate your patience as we have solved many problems this fall. I also wanted to assure you that the online safety of our students is very secure. We have filters on both the Chromebooks and iPads and we also have filters on the district hotspots that were distributed to families. We are able to monitor device and hotspot usage just like if the students were at school. This will keep our students safe in an online setting. The technology department has done a great job to ensure the safety of our students.

Wellness Newsletter

Please check out our latest newsletter from our Wellness Committee.

<https://tinyurl.com/Bankswellness>

Be well and be safe. Thank you all again for your patience and perseverance during this time. We will make it through this together!!

Respectfully,

Jeff Leo
Superintendent
Banks School District