

Date: July 28, 2020

Dear Banks School District Families,

We continue to monitor the ongoing spread of COVID-19 in our community, county, and state while planning for the 2020-21 school year. A lot has changed since we first closed our school buildings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. New research from around the world has helped us understand COVID-19 a lot more, and health experts in our local community and from across the state have now developed guidance for how to safely reopen school buildings.

Importantly, countries that have managed to safely reopen school buildings have done so with declining infection rates and on-demand testing. Unfortunately, presently Oregon has neither. The escalating infection rates of the past few weeks make it clear the pandemic is not yet under control.

County-specific metrics further warn of the risk in reopening our school buildings too soon. **The Governor released metric guidance from Oregon Healthy Authority today.** According to this guidance, our county data shows that it is unsafe to open schools to students at this time. This decision is aligned with the guidance that was released regarding new health metrics and standards for reopening schools. Here is the link to view the county metric requirements: [Ready Schools, Safe Learners: Community COVID-19 Metrics](#)

Given these factors, Banks School District will begin the 2020-21 school year in a “Comprehensive Distance Learning” model for all students on September 8, 2020.

This will be very structured, attendance taken and grades earned by students. We have prepared ourselves for this situation and will have the proper technology and trainings for our students and teachers to be successful. I know there has been confusion around the Banks Online Academy and who is teaching this. Banks teachers and staff will be conducting all of the on-line instruction. You do not need to register for any online option moving forward. All students will be registered into **Banks Online School**. We will drop the Banks Online Academy name and I will be creating a Banks Online School FAQ in the next couple of days and will be sending the link out to parents.

I know for many that this is a disheartening message to receive. There's nothing we all want more than to be together again in our schools. Our district leaders will continue to work with staff, students, and families as we reshape our fall plans for this current, very unfortunate reality. We will continue to reach out to you with updates and opportunities to provide input.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leo
Superintendent