



**SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

Preparing children for an ever changing world

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www.nknsd.org

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Dear Neah-Kah-Nie School District Community,

On August 10, I sent a letter welcoming everyone back to the school year with a start date for most students as September 7. The letter also indicated the school district's goal was for all students to attend school in-person, every school day, for the entire school year. Unfortunately, the Delta virus had a different plan. Since August 10, Tillamook County's COVID-19 case count has increased dramatically. The most recent weekend case count was 81 cases. The seven-day case count was 178. The fourteen-day case count was 356. **Reminder, in the previous risk and protection Framework, 60 cases and greater in a two-week period, was considered Extreme Risk. Current data indicates Tillamook County is six times over the Extreme metric!** Since August there were eight deaths in nine days, which doubled the total COVID-19 death count in just a nine-day period. The current test positivity rate is 23.9%. Here is the link to the Tillamook County COVID19 Case Report & Community Update:

<https://tillamookchc.org/coronavirus/covid19-case-tracking/>

After reviewing the current data with Tillamook County Health Department officials, school administrators, and others, I decided the safest way to begin the school year for students and staff was to change our initial plan of in-person instruction to Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL). Teachers will plan for CDL September 7-10. Students first day of CDL will be Monday, September 13.

When will the district transition from CDL to in-person instruction? Data suggests a downward trend beginning in mid-September or mid-October. The school district's goal is to transition from CDL to in-person instruction as rapidly as possible once the data indicates in-person instruction is safe. The school district will also review case positivity data from local school districts who will begin in-person instruction in early September. School staff will communicate with parents concerning special education needs, food service, transportation, laptop delivery, etc.

Are extra-curricular activities at the middle and high school temporarily suspended?

Yes, until further notice. After meeting with health officials and school district leaders, it was determined the positivity rates are currently too high to have students involved in extra-curricular activities.

What about licensed (teachers/administrators) and classified (custodians, secretaries, cooks, instructional assistants, etc.) staff vaccination rates? Last spring, over 95% of licensed staff were vaccinated and 65+% of classified staff were vaccinated. Since Governor Brown ordered all public and private school teachers, educators, support staff, substitutes and volunteers to be vaccinated by Oct. 18, many community members have asked what this means for NKN students and staff? This week, all staff will provide proof of COVID vaccination or intent to request a medical or religious exception. This data will provide the school district with exact numbers of staff who are vaccinated, unvaccinated, and staff who will request exceptions. Staff with approved exceptions will be required to meet additional safety protocol requirements.

Will there be additional changes? Yes, there will be changes. The school district will make every effort to anticipate changes and to communicate with the community when changes occur. Please access the school district's website at nknsd.org for additional information.

Who can I ask if I have additional questions? You can ask me during the Wednesday, September 1, Let's chat with Paul from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Here is the Zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6641321961?pwd=dFU4NTU1cDZEd1dXQnRhalFkTnMyZz09>

Meeting ID: 664 132 1961

Passcode: 219856

Newly elected school board member Mike Wantland will attend Wednesday's meeting to answer questions and to communicate your questions, comments, concerns, or celebrations, to the board. You may call or email me anytime at 503-355-3501 or paule@nknsd.org You may also communicate with school administrators or school board members.

What can I do to help students return to in-person instruction? Our community will be living with the virus until there is widespread immunity. The best tools to protect ourselves and others is vaccination, physical distancing, face coverings, improved ventilation and air-flow, hand hygiene, and staying home if ill or exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Very few of us want to begin the 2021-22 school year in CDL. We all want a "normal" school year. The school district's top priority is the safety of students and staff. Once it is safe to return to in-person instruction, our professional staff will be ready. Thank you for your understanding as we all navigate safely through a pandemic.

Sincerely,



Paul Erlebach, Superintendent
Neah-Kah-Nie School District