



March 4, 2021

The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor of the State of Oregon  
Office of the Governor  
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

The Klamath County School District Board of Directors requests that you consider the attached resolution on behalf of our students. This resolution, approved March 4, 2021, **urges you to reevaluate the metrics for reopening schools to allow all students in grades K-12 the option to return to in-person instruction fulltime on April 5, 2021, by adjusting the Ready Schools Safe Learners (RSSL) requirements for cohort and social distancing for schools in counties where:**

- school employees had the opportunity to complete the vaccination protocols;
- safeguards of sanitizing, facemasks, and social distancing of 9 square feet are strictly enforced;
- there is no confirmed spread within the school;
- local public health authority has approved the school's blueprint.

All other RSSL specifications shall remain in place including masks, sanitizing, and quarantining cohorts as needed. All students will still have the option to participate in the KCSD Online (CDL) and homeschool programs.

We realize you are probably already working on this issue, and we want you to know you have our support.

Our district currently has small schools doing all students in-person 4 day/week. All other schools are delivering instruction in the hybrid model. Despite the efforts of our teachers, who are doing a phenomenal job, many of our students are struggling and their education and mental health is suffering.

We appreciate your work for the students of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Steve Lowell, chair Klamath County School District Board of Directors  
John Rademacher, vice-chair  
Jill O'Donnell  
Denise Kandra  
Robert Moore

Bonanza Schools/Brixner Junior High/Chiloquin Elementary/Chiloquin Jr.-Sr. High/Falcon Heights/Ferguson Elementary/Gearhart Elementary/Gilchrist Schools/Great Basin Homeschool Center/Henley Elementary/Henley Middle/Henley High/Keno Elementary/Klamath County Transition Program/Lost River Jr.-Sr. High/Malin Elementary/Mazama High/Merrill Elementary/Peterson Elementary/Shasta Elementary/Stearns Elementary



**Resolution No: 21-06: Resolution of the Klamath County School District Board of Directors  
Regarding State Guidance Metrics for Reopening Schools**

WHEREAS, the vision of the Klamath County School District (KCS D) is "Inspiring today's students to meet tomorrow's challenges," and;

WHEREAS, our core values are:

Safety -- All students and employees are provided safe and secure buildings and areas to learn and work.

Quality Education that is Meaningful and Valuable -- All students shall have access to quality teachers and dynamic and innovative programs that prepare them for a higher education, technical program, or the workplace.

Emotional Well-being -- All students and employees shall work and learn in a supportive, engaging, encouraging, and inspiring environment with access to mental health resources.

Equitable Opportunities -- All students shall have equal access to quality staff, courses, activities, services, and resources based on their individual needs.

Organizational and Individual Responsibility -- The district and its employees shall maintain accountability to students and the public, promoting financial and academic integrity and sustainability.

Building Strong Relationships and Involved Communities -- The district believes collaboration with community partners and teamwork between our schools and their communities benefits students and their overall success.

WHEREAS, educating students well, including focusing on their mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being, while continuing to safeguard the health of students, staff, and community is our highest priority, and many students are experiencing educational and mental health setbacks due to a lack of adequate in-person instruction;

WHEREAS, elementary students should be mastering foundational learning skills that will be required for secondary grades and beyond, and the impact of prolonged distance learning may impede their ability to do so:

If you have a disability and need this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Klamath County School District Superintendent's office at 541-883-5000.

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WHEREAS, teachers are the No. 1 reporters of abuse, and abuse reports are down significantly in our county and state due to comprehensive distance learning;

WHEREAS, connections with caring adults have been proven to play a significant role in healthy cognitive development of children and youth;

WHEREAS, our district is committed to creating a safe learning environment with appropriate safety measures for all;

WHEREAS, KCSO has created an online school option for all ages for families wishing to keep students at home;

WHEREAS, all KCSO employees had an opportunity to get COVID-19 Moderna vaccinations at district-sponsored clinics on Jan. 23 and Feb. 20;

WHEREAS, KCSO successfully brought students back to in-person instruction and there have been only seven cohorts quarantined since Sept. 8 when we brought back K-3 and small school students;

WHEREAS, KCSO schools that are reopened are demonstrating that they are not creating spreader events, but in fact serve as guardians against transmission because mask wearing, sanitizing, and contact tracing is performed;

WHEREAS, KCSO has proven our commitment to work with Klamath County Public Health (KCPH) to ensure we are following all safety protocols and are able to quickly identify staff, students, and cohorts who have been exposed to or are confirmed to have COVID-19, connect them with medical professionals, and remove them and any "close contacts" from the school community, thereby helping slow the spread in the community;

WHEREAS, Klamath County's test positive rate has dramatically dropped while students are in school.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Klamath County School Board urges Governor Brown to reevaluate the metrics for reopening schools to allow all students in grades K-12 the option to return to in-person instruction full time on April 5, 2021, by adjusting the Ready Schools Safe Learners (RSSL) requirements for cohort and social distancing for schools in counties where:**

- school employees had the opportunity to complete the vaccination protocols;
- safeguards of sanitizing, facemasks, and social distancing of 9 square feet are strictly enforced;
- there is no confirmed spread within the school;
- local public health authority has approved the school's blueprint.

ADOPTED this 4th Day of March, 2021



Board Chair

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March 3, 2021

RE: Support for students to return to full-time, in-person learning

This letter serves to support the efforts of the Klamath County School District in having students return to full-time, in-person learning by April 5, 2021. Klamath County Public Health's COVID-19 response team has worked closely with the District, continuing a long history of partnership in addressing communicable disease.

Educational staff members were given the opportunity to be vaccinated with two doses of Moderna vaccine in the most recent effort to create safe and healthy environments for student success. Other protocols, such as mask use, physical distancing and creation of learning cohorts have also been implemented for the entire school year.

Internationally there have been efforts to see students returned to campuses with proper mitigation of contagion risks. One of the notable differences between those efforts and Oregon's current requirements is the use of a one-meter perimeter for physical distancing. This reduction of required space will allow more students to attend class, while also observing other prevention protocols.

The mental and behavioral health implications for local youth are concerning. Schools are where communities turn for consistent, nurturing environments for children. This is especially true in an area such as Klamath County, where child abuse rates are greater than Oregon and the United States (21.9 per 1,000 in Klamath County; 14.4 per 1,000 in Oregon; 9.2 per 1,000 in the U.S.).

Mental health issues and abuse are adverse childhood effects, which often become lifelong chronic disease problems and can lead to increasing public costs for social services. International research is finding:

- COVID-19 has an impact on youth mental health and is particularly associated with depression and anxiety in adolescent cohorts.
- Uncertainty about the health risks and an increasing financial loss will contribute to widespread emotional distress and an increased risk of psychiatric disorders.
- Posttraumatic, anxiety, and depression disorders are expected during and in the aftermath of the pandemic.

A proactive return to campus will resonate throughout the lifetimes of students and the history of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Little".

Jennifer Little  
Director