

March 12, 2020

Dear Banks School District Families and Staff,

We have received new guidance from the State of Oregon after the press release Governor Brown sent out late yesterday evening. With the number of confirmed COVID-19 coronavirus cases in Oregon increasing, including the first instance in Multnomah County, Governor Brown announced new guidance last night regarding group gatherings and social distancing. We remain committed to keeping our schools open and safe. In accordance with this evening's guidance and in order to minimize potential opportunities for the virus to spread, **we have decided to proactively begin suspending events that bring large groups of students, adults, and community members together.** This action is not related to a presumptive case. At this time, there are no presumptive cases in Banks School District.

Suspension of non-essential school-based activities begins immediately, effective Thursday, March 12, and will remain in effect for 30 days. This includes **the suspension of all school-based assemblies and events, off-campus field trips, and professional development meetings and events.** With regard to athletics, we are following new state guidance denying audience admission at all school-based events, with the exception of essential personnel and credentialed media. The list of affected activities will grow as we work with partners and stakeholders over the coming days. We will update you as we make those decisions.

To be clear, we are taking every step possible so that we can continue to provide high-quality education for all of our students and keep our schools open.

We realize that this decision will impact every school community, and we know that many of the events, student performances, and other gatherings that we are suspending are those that schools, students, and families look forward to all year long. Suspending these events is consistent with guidance from health authorities, and we believe it is a prudent and responsible step to take at this time. We will be working with trip planners, event organizers, and others who are responsible for the affected activities. In cases when we are mandated to offer access to community members (e.g., Board of Education meetings), we hope to offer continued online streaming and are currently exploring other alternatives, including virtual meeting platforms, in order to continue the district's governance and business.

The safety, health, and well-being of our students and staff is our highest priority. We will continue to work in close partnership with public health authorities to minimize both the spread of coronavirus and disruption to schools and students. We will continue emphasizing the importance of handwashing at school. Our custodians will continue to prioritize high-touch surfaces in classrooms and common areas. And we are making sure schools have adequate cleaning supplies.

Students, families, and everyone in our community can best support our efforts by washing hands frequently, covering mouths when coughing or sneezing, and using hand sanitizer. Those experiencing symptoms of the cold or flu should stay at home, only returning to school or work when symptom-free for 24 hours. If you are concerned about symptoms, please consult with a doctor.

Additional information about COVID-19 can be found at healthoregon.org/coronavirus or by calling 211.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding during this difficult time. We will continue to rely on the guidance from Oregon public health authorities, the Department of Education, and the Office of the Governor. Please know that this message and the decisions being made at this time are being done in collaboration with many of the State of Oregon's largest school districts, including the Beaverton School District, Eugene School District, Hillsboro School District, Portland Public Schools, and Salem-Keizer Public Schools as well as Multnomah and Northwest Regional ESDs. We appreciate their partnership at this time. We all collectively share the utmost concern for the health and safety of our students, employees, and communities.

Respectfully,

Jeff Leo
Superintendent