

December 15, 2020

Dear Banks School District Families,

As we head into the Winter Break, I want to update you on a few items. I know this is a school year unlike any other and we are all facing many challenges we thought could never happen. I hope you and your families are safe and well.

Food Distribution Over Winter Break

Banks School District is not offering food distribution over Winter Break. We will resume our regular food service on January 4th when we return.

However, we do have the opportunity for Banks Children age 1-18 to pick up Winter Break Meal Kits at various Forest Grove School District locations. Families will pick up meals from 2 pm to 4 pm at Forest Grove High School, Neil Armstrong Middle School, or Cornelius Elementary. Meals will include 5 days of Breakfast and Lunch and there is no charge. I know this is short notice, but you will need to pre-order by tomorrow, December 16th. If you would like to sign up for this Meal Kit service, please follow this link to register.

[Winter Break Meal Kits in Forest Grove](#)

Status update after Winter Break

As you are aware, case numbers continue to increase in Washington County and our State. Recently, the Governor updated the metric protocol and designates Counties based on case rates and has the rating of extreme, high, moderate, or lower risk. Currently our case numbers over the last two weeks were 515 per 100,000 and with a test positivity rate of around 8%. In order for our county to move out of extreme risk, we would need to drop below 200 per 100,000 on our case rate. Because we are in extreme risk, we are limited in what we can offer for in-person instruction. Here is a link to the [Sector Risk Level Guidance Chart](#).

Also, here is a link to our [General Metrics School Guidance](#).

However, with that being said, when we return on January 4th, here is what we are planning:

- 1) We will resume our limited in-person instruction. Prior to the Governor's freeze back in November, we had a small number of students on campus. We will bring back these students, also our Limited In-Person Teams at each school will use criteria to expand our Limited In-Person Instruction opportunities for additional students. I do understand that we are at a point where a lot of students, if not all students, could benefit from in-person services. However, there are limits and guidelines set by the Oregon Department of Education on what is allowable. The limited in-person instruction will resume as soon as we contact families and get transportation arranged for those students.

- 2) We will resume our Season 1 of high school athletics on January 11th. OSAA recently announced a change in the timeline of the potential sport seasons this school year. Season 1 at this time is limited to outdoors only. Our athletic director, Ben Buchanan, is planning the continuing of our athletic practices and programs. Here is a link to the updated [OSAA Sports Calendar](#). We are hopeful that we will be able to have some activities this school year.

- 3) At our schools in January, along with continuing Limited In-Person Instruction, staff will be preparing schools and classrooms for what is hopefully an increase of students being on campus in the near future. The planning process contains many details and the staff will be working hard in January by training in safety protocols and continuing to help our students get through this very difficult school year. Unfortunately with our county being in an extreme risk category, there are limits to the amount of students we can have on campus. We will do everything we can within the guidance to help your child succeed the second half of the school year.

I know this is a difficult time for students and families. We are experiencing a school year that none of us could of ever imagined. I know there is frustration and I know parents want their children back in person at the schools. As a father of three boys, I share those frustrations with you. Unfortunately, we are seeing a rise in case numbers and we are doing everything we can within the state guidance and to maintain safety. We will continue to prepare for our students to return and continue to support you and your family in this difficult time.

Have a great winter break. Be safe and be well and help slow the spread of the virus so we can get our kids back in school.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leo
Superintendent
Banks School District