

# Sherman County School

*"Home of the Huskies"*



July 24, 2020

Dear Sherman County School Families and Staff,

I hope all of you are healthy, enjoying the summer, and staying safe during the harvest season. First, I want to thank everyone who participated in our recent survey. We had 245 responses that assisted with our preliminary plans to prepare for the 2020-21 school year. These results can be viewed on our District website at <https://shermancountyschooldistrict.weebly.com/>.

As with any decision that we make, our highest priority is the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families. It is our goal to offer as much in-person learning as possible for our K-12 students while maintaining the safety requirements outlined by the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and the North Central Public Health District. We will also be mindful of allowing families to choose what works best for them in regards to on-site learning or distance learning. We also hope that you understand that the information shared in this letter may change or need to be adapted to support state guidelines as they are revised frequently.

Based on the 245 survey responses, 84.5% were very comfortable, somewhat comfortable or neutral with students returning to school this fall. The survey also showed that 15.5% were somewhat uncomfortable or very uncomfortable. Providing a quality education that fits the needs of each family is important to us in an environment that can change at any time. We want to completely support all of our students and also be prepared to meet these ever changing expectations and needs.

## **2020-21 School Calendar**

At the July Board of Directors meeting, the 2020-21 school calendar was slightly altered from the previously adopted version. The first day for students has been changed to September 2. This change will allow our staff to have more time to prepare for students and the particular instructional models that will be implemented. Please know that how the first week, the first month, and the first semester of school will look is dependent on the circumstances related to current information related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The adopted calendar is enclosed in this letter.

## **Instructional Formats**

During the entire planning process, we have remained health focused, student-centered and extremely flexible, given that so much of what we will ultimately include in our reopening plan is out of our control. As of this writing, the following are the two models that are being considered.

- On-Site Learning with stable cohorts: In this model, we would provide in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while still being prepared to provide hybrid learning or short-term distance learning if necessary. Hybrid learning would be a combination of attendance in person and online learning. Short-term distance learning would be implemented in the event that we were directed to temporarily close school in order to mitigate an outbreak or surge within our facility, community or in the state.
- Comprehensive Distance Learning: This model allows a choice for families that do not feel comfortable with their students attending school in person. Students would attend school 100% online and receive their instruction through a comprehensive self-paced distance learning program.

### **Transportation**

We are working closely with Mid-Columbia Transportation on protocols and a plan to safely transport students who choose to attend in-person learning. The state has mandated very specific safety measures to follow. Mid-Columbia Transportation will be sharing a letter with our school community by mid-August.

### **High School OSAA Extra-Curricular Activities**

The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) notified Districts that they decided to delay the first contest for Volleyball until Wednesday, September 23. Football is considered a full contact activity per the Governor's and OHA guidelines and is currently prohibited to hold contests, but no-contact practice is permitted with social distancing. The original first Fall practice date for Volleyball and Football (August 17) remains in place at this time. The OSAA Executive Board will meet again the week of August 3 as they anticipate further school sports and activity guidance from the state. We will be postponing any individual workouts for Football or Volleyball until after the August 3 meeting. As soon as we hear updated information, our coaches will be contacting fall high school student athletes. No decisions have been made regarding elementary/middle school athletics.

### **Safety Precautions**

When Sherman County students return to school, you will see increased protective measures such as Plexiglass, personal protective equipment, numerous sanitization stations, and directional arrows. There will also be increased sanitation of classrooms, restrooms, recess equipment, and common areas. Student entry into school and movement between classes will also look much different. We will not use shared classroom supplies and equipment. Each student will have their own Chromebook. This is for any student who is on-site or in distance learning if they need it. We are continuing to plan for safety on playgrounds, in Physical Education, Music, and other areas that are important to the enjoyment of the day by our students. Additional details regarding safety precautions will be provided as they develop.

### **Personal Phone Contact to Each Sherman County Family July 27-31**

To ensure transparent and thoughtful planning, during the week of July 27-31, each Sherman County School family will receive a personal phone call to determine which learning model is most comfortable to them. We will also listen to your feedback and ask questions about internet/technology access. This information will be extremely helpful for us to refine our plans.

Thank you for your support and patience as we work together to develop plans to keep students, staff and our entire school community safe.

Stay safe,



Wes Owens  
Superintendent