



August 14th, 2020

OHA/ODE County Allowance Guidance

New guidance was released on August 11, 2020 regarding smaller population counties in Oregon and the criteria for in-person learning for grades K-12. As per the Ready Schools, Safe Learners Guidance for School Year 2020-2021 Version 3.7.4:

Schools may choose to work with local public health officials in low population density counties to return to in-person instruction if the following conditions are met:

- Total county COVID-19 cases in the last three weeks is ≤ 30 , with less than half of cases (or ≤ 5 cases) reported in the last week of the three-week period.
- The school fully complies with sections 1-3 of the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance and students cannot be part of any single cohort, or part of multiple cohorts that is > 50 people.
- The Local Public Health Authority indicates:
 - There is not community spread in the school catchment area.
 - There is not community spread in the communities that serve as the primary employment and community centers (for shopping and other in-person services) and the school is isolated by a significant distance from communities reporting COVID-19 community spread in the previous three weeks.
 - The school does not serve a significant number of transfer students from outside its catchment area that are from communities reporting COVID-19 community spread in the previous three weeks.

In Sherman County, the above criteria are met, with the exception of the absence of community spread in the communities that serve as the primary employment and community centers. Currently there is ongoing community spread of COVID-19 in Wasco County, which serves as a primary place of employment and shopping for many residents of Sherman County. While this may improve over the next several weeks, it is not possible to predict with accuracy if there will be a decrease in community spread for the three weeks prior to the start of the academic year. For this reason, we require that the Sherman County School District initiate the academic year with comprehensive distance learning with the plan to return to in-person instruction when there is a consistent decrease in COVID-19 cases in the region.

At North Central Public Health District we continue to collaborate with Sherman County School District administration, staff, families and county residents to curtail the spread of COVID-19. We are monitoring the data closely, and working to promote the safest and best educational opportunities for students during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Miriam D. McDonell, MD, FACOG
Health Officer, North Central Public Health District