

Sherman County School

"Home of the Huskies"



August 14, 2020

Sherman County School Parents/Guardians, Staff, and Community Members,

I would like to thank you again for your patience and grace as we navigate the continually changing guidance regarding the 2020-21 school year. Sherman County School stands firm with the intent to move to on-site or hybrid learning to the fullest extent possible when conditions improve and as the North Central Public Health District (NCPHD) allows. We received updated school reopening guidance this week from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). At first review, it appeared as if smaller population counties would have an allowance to return to school under prioritized conditions. We immediately partnered with health officials at NCPHD and they alerted us to specific considerations to our community and district that will not allow us to reopen with on-site or hybrid learning to begin the school year. I encourage all of you to read the guidance from the NCPHD included with this communication.

This is obviously not the information that our families and staff wanted to hear, but please understand the decision was made with the utmost safety of the entire Sherman County community and surrounding areas in mind. With this said, I highly respect the difficult work the NCPHD is engaging in on a daily basis to keep our communities safe.

As of this writing, we have been asked by NCPHD to continue with our previous plans to engage in Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) starting on September 2. In collaboration with NCPHD we will reassess the criteria in regards to community spread on September 28.

While we are all disappointed that students will not immediately be returning to school, we trust that this is the best decision for keeping our students, staff and families safe. Starting off the school year with CDL provides an exciting opportunity to strengthen our on-line learning systems and ensure they are robust and engaging for ALL Sherman County students. If we all work together it will serve as a positive stepping stone to the implementation of the hybrid and in-class learning models that we have been preparing.

We know that this school year presents challenges for our students and families, but our entire staff is committed to embracing new ways of learning and to growing stronger alongside you. Let's all make the best of a difficult situation. I truly believe our students, staff, and school community are resilient and we will persevere together.

Thank you for your continued support. As we receive further guidance from ODE and NCPHD, we will provide updates. The health, safety, and wellbeing of students, staff and the community remain at the center of all decision making by Sherman County School, North Central Public Health District, and the Oregon Department of Education.

Sincerely,

Wes Owens