

Sherman County School

"Home of the Huskies"

April 1, 2020



Sherman County School Community,

All of us have found ourselves in unusual circumstances. This is from Kent to Rufus/Biggs, from the Deschutes to the John Day and everywhere in between. Despite this adversity, our entire community is doing their best to support each other and ensure that everyone remains safe and healthy. On behalf of our entire staff and our Board of Directors, I say...Thank you!

I have so much confidence in and admiration for our entire staff. They have been meeting virtually every single day to plan our course moving forward. They have also reached out to make individual contact with students and families as well as engage our school community in remote learning. As we continue to deliver learning opportunities for our students please remember that, just like all of you, the families of our teachers and district employees are impacted by this unusual situation as well. Please give them grace as they do their very best to support our students.

Many of you have probably already observed through media outlets that the Oregon Department of Education has asked districts to take a completely different direction than previously communicated. Our staff has been resilient and is working collaboratively to pivot from delivering short term supplemental learning, to directing substantive, graded and credit attainment distance learning for students. You will see this process evolve between today and April 13 (the date that ODE has asked all plans to be fully implemented). We have welcomed the opportunity for our staff, students, and families to connect, collaborate, and experiment together.

We are fortunate that we made a commitment in the past to provide access to a Chromebook for all students K-12 in our District on campus. We are currently in the process of gathering information and communicating with families to make sure students who need an instructional learning device at home will have that opportunity soon. We are also committed to ensuring that our seniors have the learning opportunities and supports necessary to graduate. We are still awaiting additional guidance from ODE on this issue and will continue to communicate information to you.

During this time of change, we will continue to focus on the student needs of belonging, care, connection, well-being and mental and social-emotional health as our top priorities. Outside of direct teacher contact, this will also be achieved through two alternative distance options. Information on how to access these services will be distributed by our teachers to each family and is currently posted at <https://shermancountyschooldistrict.weebly.com>.

Our Special Education, Speech, ELL, and TAG staff are working closely with classroom teachers to support students' accommodations, supports, and services. They have also been working diligently to make direct contact with families and creating ways to support goals and IEP service minutes that align with our State's mandated Distance Learning for All Initiative. These supports may include a variety of media formats depending on individual needs. Please feel free to reach out to your student's case manager if you have any questions or concerns.

The free meals will continue to be available at each location at the same times previously communicated. The food bags are available for all students and will continue to be provided each week day until April 28. We also have a phone line set up for parents or students to call if they are having difficulty connecting with teachers or if they have general questions. This hotline is available from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Please call 541-565-3500.

Thank you for your understanding and partnership. Please stay safe, stay healthy, and keep pressing on. We will get through this, and we ALL will come out stronger and wiser on the other side.

Sincerely,

Wes Owens