



Welcome to 2021!

We hope the New Year is finding you all healthy and happy! As many of you know, at the close of 2020 we received the news that the Governor changed the previous mandates on schools and distance learning. The numbers and metrics dictating the closure of schools were now advisory and no longer mandates. That meant that as of the New Year, it is up to each individual school district on how they will or if they will, be bringing students back into the schools. As we have communicated since the beginning, our goal always has been, and continues to be, to have students in our classrooms and learning in person.

Now the real work begins. With the first barrier removed, how do we accomplish this goal while still keeping our students and staff safe and healthy? That is the question that Lowell School District is addressing at meetings, work session and in communications. But you can bet that we are doing it! We are going to have kids back in our buildings.

While the restrictions have become advisory instead of mandatory based on the numbers and metrics, we still have many guidelines and parameters for resuming in person instruction. We are currently addressing issues of transportation, classroom space, sanitization schedules, staffing and other logistics. While we are working to address these issues, we don't have all of the answers yet. Our objective is to make sure that we are not moving too quickly and forgetting steps in the process. We do not want to open back up only to be forced to close back down. We are also very aware that the decisions being made at higher levels often change and that requires us to modify our plans as well. Moving forward, even if it is slowly, is the aim.

We will first bring the remainder of our elementary students back into the classrooms. They are in the lowest risk of contracting and spreading the Covid-19 virus according to Oregon Health Authority. At the same time, we will be making plans and working on the logistics to reopen classrooms for our junior high and high school students. While we are aiming to bring elementary school students back in the coming weeks, we will not be bringing Jr/Sr High students back prior to the second semester. Please note that not every student is best served in our classrooms. Many students and their families have situations or needs that will be best served via distance learning. That option will continue to be available for those that choose this.

Once we have solidified our plans and confirmed the dates in which we will return to classrooms and buildings, we will communicate that with our families and community. We want to make sure we are working hand in hand with our staff to make this transition as seamless as possible.

So here is to beginning a new year in the right direction! We are all counting the minutes until we have giggles and laughter filling our hallways and eager minds filling our classrooms once again!

Stay safe and stay healthy!