



KELSO SCHOOL DISTRICT

December 21, 2020

Dear Kelso School District Families,

I want to start by wishing all of you a very Happy Holidays! This week has provided me with renewed hope and optimism for 2021. The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is already in distribution to our local heroic healthcare workers. Additionally, on Wednesday, Governor Inslee, State Superintendent Chris Reykdal, and other state health officials and workers provided new guidance for schools to return to in-person instruction.

Local COVID-19 activity rates remain high and have for much of the past two months. Fortunately, the weekly increase in our local rate may be plateauing. As you already know, since September 8 we've phased in our kindergarten students through 5th grade, special education, and internet café, to attend in hybrid and small groups. That's sixty-nine (69) days of students in our schools. During this time, due to the extraordinary vigilance of our staff, we have had only one school-based transmission of COVID (a student-to-student transmission).

In 2021, in collaboration with administrators and labor leadership, Kelso School District will increase additional time for our grades 3-5 and prepare for middle and high school. Start dates for each grade level are below. We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing belief and confidence you've shown throughout the past several months. Thank you!

- January 4: Status quo from December (K-2: 2 days a week, 3-5: 1 day a week, Internet Café; Special Education)
- **January 11: Grades 3-5 increase to 2 days a week**
- Late January/Early Feb: Grades 6-12, in phases, start 2 days a week

Kelso School District will continue to monitor the following key metrics:

- Transmission rate in our schools: One school-based student transmission case in Kelso (September 28 – December 18)
- Cases per 100,000 population over 14 days: Currently at 415
- Positive test rate: Not fully updated since the November 18 report
- Cowlitz County residents hospitalized: Not updated since the November 23 report

We have much to celebrate within our school district as we bring closure to 2020:

- ✓ **New Wallace Elementary completed** and open to our K-5 students on January 4
- ✓ **Kelso's Graduation Rate climbs again** in 2020 to 90.4% (statewide 82.9%)

Stay well! Happy Holidays.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Tack, Superintendent
marybeth.tack@kelsosd.org