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We are always learning

to make each tomorrow better.

Date: January 8, 2021
To: Crow-Applegate-Lorane Parents and Community
Subject: School Opening Status

Over the Christmas-New Year's holiday break, Oregon Governor Kate Brown issued a letter informing state leaders in education and public health of new directives for 2021.

Foremost among those directives: the transition of decision-making control to local school districts and a goal to increase in-person instruction by the middle of February, especially at the elementary level. The Governor advises that these local decisions "continue to be grounded in sound science, public health and safety."

New state guidance and a revision to the State's advisory reopening metrics are expected on January 19. We will dissect that guidance from Jan. 19-22 to develop a transition plan that meets the Governor's aspiration for safe in-person learning at Applegate and sets timelines for Crow Middle/High School before February 16. We will continue providing distance learning to CAL SD students over the next two weeks, and limited exceptions may be made available.

Crow-Applegate-Lorane has conscientiously protected the health of our staff knowing that beyond the personal toll, the loss of a staff member to COVID-19 through illness or worse will upend an entire grade level of elementary students or the students of an entire subject area at Crow Middle/High School. We simply lack the backup capacity of larger districts to provide more in-person access as we await the revisions to Oregon Dept. of Education guidance.

Lane County COVID-19 case counts remain in the red zone ("extreme risk"). ODE and the Oregon School Boards Association have advised districts to proceed cautiously if expanding in-person learning in high risk counties prior to the release of the new guidance and updated metrics.

We believe our caution is warranted. Yesterday (Jan. 7, 2021) the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), a highly reputable, peer-reviewed research publication, reported that [over half \(59%\) of COVID-19 cases are spread by people without symptoms](#). If you prefer, Becker's Hospital Review has a less technical summary of the JAMA article [here](#).

The staff of the Crow-Applegate-Lorane School District value the youth and families of this community, and our dedication to the safest protocols will be essential for a safe return of students to our classrooms. We cannot overstate our appreciation for your understanding and patience.

Respectfully,

Malcom McRae, Superintendent CAL School District