

# Sherman County School



*"Home of the Huskies"*

February 7, 2022

Sherman County School Community,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the entire school community as we have navigated numerous changes to mandates, guidelines, and challenges during the 2021-22 school year. Today, School Districts in Oregon were notified by the Oregon Health Authority that universal masking decisions will be turned over to local control no sooner than March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. This date was strategically chosen by the state as models show cases will fall below pre-Omicron levels at this approximate time period. Sherman County School District will continue to follow the guidance of ODE/OHA through this date. This is welcome news, but during this time prior to MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>, the District in collaboration with the School Board, Employee Groups, and Local Health Authority, will be thoroughly evaluating/processing the myriad of factors influencing current strategies that are in place, not limited to the following mitigation protocols:

- Federal required mandates still stand regarding universal masking on school transportation.
- If the decision of mask wearing returns to families, the Test to Stay will no longer be an option (Test to Stay is only available in settings where universal masking is in place).
- Strict contact tracing and quarantine will return possibly resulting in more days out of school for students/staff not up to date on the vaccine.
- Masking will continue for students/staff on days 6-10 returning from a five (5) day quarantine.
- Staff and volunteers with approved exceptions may need to continue accommodations with the information that we have at this point.
- Breakfast & Lunch Procedures.
- Parent/Guardian & Visitor Policies (It has long been our hope to open the school to all parents/volunteers and we are excited that this is on the horizon).

We have clearly realized, during the past two years, that there are a wide range of views on this matter in Sherman County. For some it is a welcomed State announcement and for others it is disappointing. Please know that Sherman County School District honors and appreciates all opinions.

This announcement comes as we are experiencing a sharp decline in positive cases after the surge we recently experienced with the Omicron variant. The district will continue to follow mitigation strategies such as universal face coverings, free testing, quarantining, cohorting, physical distancing, sanitizing, and hand washing. We again ask that you follow safety protocols and healthcare recommendations in and outside of school through March 31<sup>st</sup>. Please know that your continued efforts in keeping our school community healthy are helping!

Again, I want to share my gratitude to the entire school community as we work together in supporting our students and staff. Please remember that current Federal/State mandates and masking requirements are still in effect on school transportation, inside at school and during extra-curricular activities for everyone until this guidance is implemented by the State. We will communicate back to you any further State mandate changes or District decisions as soon as they are available.

Sincerely,

Wes Owens  
Superintendent