

## **Dear Salem-Keizer Students, Families and Community,**

As the school year approaches, we continue to see the number and severity of COVID cases grow in our community. Earlier today, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) released additional guidance that included metrics on safely reopening schools for the “in-school portion” of Blended Learning. Following their direction, all students will begin the school year with Comprehensive Distance Learning, meaning students will not attend in person until, at the earliest, the week of November 16 for grades K-10 and February 2 for grades 11 and 12, which is the beginning of the second semester. We know this is heartbreaking for those students and families who were counting on in-person learning in September, but this direction from the state prioritizes the safety of our educators, children and families, and community. Make no mistake, Comprehensive Distance Learning this fall will not look like distance learning from last year.

### **WHAT FAMILIES CAN EXPECT THIS FALL**

We will start the school year in Comprehensive Distance learning. Comprehensive Distance Learning means that students will learn at home through the support of our SKPS educators. When it is safe to do so, SKPS will move students from Comprehensive Distance Learning into a blended learning model. A blended learning model includes both at-home and in-school learning. At any point during the school year, a class, a school, or the entire district may transition from blended learning to Comprehensive Distance Learning at the direction of our local public health authority, the Oregon Health Authority, or the Oregon Department of Education.

Families enrolled in EDGE will not participate in blended learning as EDGE is a complete, online program.

### **WHEN WILL BLENDED LEARNING START?**

In mid-October, SKPS will review the metrics and determine if we move to more in-person instruction after November 13. Families enrolled in EDGE are not impacted by this decision.

### **WHAT ABOUT ATHLETICS AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?**

We are following the current guidance from Oregon School Activities Associations, which allows some practice and a tentative date for first competitions for some sports on September 23. The latest information from OSAA can be found

at: <http://www.osaa.org/today/article/1780/view?title=OSAA+Executive+Board+%2F+COVID-19+Update>

### **WHY THIS NEW BLENDED LEARNING MODEL IS DIFFERENT**

Comprehensive Distance Learning is not the same as the distance learning you experienced this spring. Instruction during Comprehensive Distance Learning will include significantly more teacher-facilitated instruction, more independent and family-supported applied learning, and regular feedback on student progress as we remain committed to student learning and paths to graduation for all students. Daily and period attendance will be taken, and all students will earn grades. High school students will earn credits.

### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED ADDITIONAL HELP**

Our hope is that in addition to Comprehensive Distance Learning, we can bring in targeted groups of students for additional support. We know that this is critical for students who struggle the most in an online learning environment and for our youngest learners who are learning to read and write. We will work carefully with the guidance from Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education to ensure safety of students and staff if there is any in-person instruction.

### **IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

- September 8 – 11: Connection with families and students
- September 14: Comprehensive Distance Learning begins with neighborhood school EDGE begins
- Mid October: District reviews metrics for timeline for moving to Blended Learning and will notify students and families.
- November 13: End of first 9 weeks and grades will be issued **for students in grades 6-12**

### **WE STAND WITH EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, AND FAMILIES**

Salem-Keizer community – We struggle with this news as you do. We want what you want: to go back to the way we were pre-COVID. We miss our students in the schools and value in-person learning, which is where we want to be sooner than later. Know we are committed to our educators, students, and families and stand with you during this time. We will continue providing weekly updates in our newsletter, along with more frequent updates on our social media and website.

Christy Perry  
Superintendent