



1/13/2021

Dear Sweet Home School District Families,

In the Governor's new directives to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Governor set a targeted "hope that more Oregon schools, especially elementary schools, will transition to in-person instruction by **February 15, 2021.**"

The Governor has now given us "limited" local control—that is, we are limited to the stipulations put forth by ODE and OHA in offering **hybrid in-person instruction** that adheres to all mandatory health and safety protocols.

Why the Shift from Mandatory to Advisory?

The Governor's and ODE/OHA Rationale:

- When schools follow the required health and safety protocols, there is a low-risk of transmission and illness when students resume in-person instruction.
- ODE/OHA have reviewed scientific studies and put forth students are less likely to be infected with COVID-19 and they are less likely to spread COVID-19.
- ODE/OHA put forth schools are not the source of the spread of COVID-19; however, schools often help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.
- States with metrics of 350 per 100K COVID-19 tests have been operating using hybrid in-person instruction successfully.
- Today nearly 90% of Oregon students risk not being in school for in-person learning for almost a year. The social, emotional, and academic needs of students out-weigh what the science says are the actual health risks to students and staff **if health and safety protocols are followed in school.**

Our pathway forward: Our students, families, staff, and community need a date for the return of in-person instruction. We cannot continue our pathway forward on "if we come back," we need a "when."

We also have a duty to our students, families, and staff, to help keep us as safe as possible. We have a civic duty to help keep our community safe.

We have a balance to strike to stop the detrimental academic, social, emotional effects of being out of school vs doing everything we can to not contribute to a community pandemic.

Basics of SHSD Return to Hybrid Learning Plan

1. We will exceed the Governor's goal and have **All** our students back to in-person hybrid instruction in February
2. K-3 elementary students will be in school buildings by February 1st
3. Grades 4-6 by Feb. 16
4. Grades 7-12 will begin onboarding the week of Feb. 12



5. All grades (K-12) students will be attending school under a **hybrid learning model** by the last week of February
6. **Any K-12 student may continue distance learning if a family chooses**
7. All student schedules must **follow the hybrid health and safety models as dictated by ODE/OHA**

[*Please see attached master template or your student's grade level hybrid schedule](#)

Hybrid In-person Learning: In order to open up we must follow all health and safety protocols as set by our State and county. This is mandated for the health and safety of our students, staff, families, and community. What does hybrid learning mean? It does not mean business as usual. Going back to school is not going to look anything like it did. For instance, mask-wearing, screening processes, a 6-foot parameter for students and staff, greatly enhanced classroom and bus sanitizing protocols, and more... all must be followed. These requirements greatly effect things like full schedules, the number of students per room and on buses, building entry and exit protocols, hallway passing, lunch protocols, and so forth. Hybrid also means our instructional models will continue to be blended, depending on grade levels and a parents' desire for their student to remain distance learning only. We will continue to have a mixture of in-person and distance learning instruction.

I assure you. No one I have spoken with enjoys this. We are coming together for our students so we can stay open and stay as safe as possible. However, we can anticipate that even with our best efforts:

- we are held to local and state health and safety contact tracing and quarantining protocols, and
- in some cases, staff and students may be sent home, while contact-tracing takes place. This can take place with little notice and is case dependent. Schools may be required to temporarily close.
- **Families will need to remain flexible with child care**, should a school, cohort, or classroom be required to temporarily close and families should have a back-up plan in case their student(s) are unable to attend in-person as planned.

I want the community to know, we have been measured and deliberate with our reopening targeted dates and our operational plans. I fully anticipate that as vaccinations help halt the regional spread of COVID-19, state and local health officials can scale down the health and safety protocols, so we can begin to take additional steps back to normalcy. But, one step at a time.

As we gear up for February 1, you can expect more information and updates via FB, Website, Remind APP, and emails. [A Q and A is linked.](#)

After reviewing the attached plan and Q and A information, the best, most direct answers to your questions will be to contact your student's teacher, counselor, front office, and/or principal. Sweet Home staff is eagerly gearing up!

It is going on my 5th year as Sweet Home Superintendent. I know our community is resilient and when we come together for our youth, we overcome challenges. We are Sweet Home Strong!

Sincerely,

Tom Yahraes Superintendent of Sweet Home School District