

October 12, 2020

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS of MOSIER COMMUNITY SCHOOL,

I wanted to provide you with an update as to how we are moving forward as a school. Before the beginning of the school year, we indicated that we would **start the year using a Comprehensive Distance Learning Model** with a focus on online learning tools to provide our instruction. We made this difficult decision based on careful monitoring of the health and safety metrics, primarily those in Wasco County. We communicated to you that we would reevaluate our plans in the middle of October and determine how we would be moving forward.

We continue to watch these **Health and Safety Metrics** and are closely monitoring the trending data in Wasco County, as well as in Oregon and across the nation. The MCS staff is very actively involved in monitoring this process as well.

We **recently surveyed MCS families**, gathering your feedback as to the success of our current online experience. We also sought out your perspective about the possibility of moving back to an in-school model. We thank you for your feedback. We had a great response from many MCS families.

The **survey data indicated the following:**

- **Current Online Schooling**
 - A significant majority of **families are pleased with the efforts that are being made with the online learning experience**. What we are offering this fall is a significant improvement upon what was in place this past spring. Parents made a very clear statement in support of the great efforts our teachers have made to provide a high-quality online experience.
 - There is some concern expressed regarding the challenges of students, **navigating all of the demands of online learning** and the need to make the overall program more clearly defined. This was especially at the middle school level, where students are working with at least three teachers each day.
- **Reopening for In-School Learning**
 - This survey **data are very mixed** regarding reopening, with more families selecting some type of back to school (hybrid 43%, full-time in-school 20%) while the remainder selected full-time online (38%).
 - While a majority of families are eager for in-school to start up again, most families expressed significant **concerns regarding the overall safety and health** of their children, especially with the idea of everyday schooling and all grade levels back together.

In light of all of this information that we have been gathering, including county health metrics and survey data, **we have determined that we will continue to follow Comprehensive Distance Learning for the foreseeable future and hold off on proceeding with any general reopening of in-person schooling for all grades.**

This overall decision not to reopen and to continue Comprehensive Distance Learning is in line with our colleagues in District 21. They are **holding off until the end of the trimester (early December), at which time they will once again reevaluate their situation and the related health and safety metrics** in the county. **We will be following similar guidelines.** The MCS Board and I assure you that if and when we determine that we will proceed with a general reopening, we will provide you with significant notice (2 weeks or greater) before we embark on such a plan.

While we are not considering a general reopening of all grades in the near future, **we are exploring the possibility of offering in-school learning to MCS kindergarteners only.** We all recognize the challenges that the online format has for students in general, but most especially our very youngest ones. We believe that while the online lessons are worthwhile, we could **provide a much richer experience at the school** for them. That is true for all grade levels, but it is especially impactful with our kindergarteners.

We have developed a **draft plan** for providing our kindergarteners with a daily experience that would **prioritize their safety and good health every day within the school setting.** We will be reaching out to our families with kindergarteners to gather their feedback.

Bringing our kindergarteners will serve as a first step of an overall plan to bring back all grade levels in the future. Long-term, we do strive to have all MCS students back in school; however, **we do not have a specific timetable for any next steps.** As noted above, future decisions will depend on a careful assessment of the health and safety data as well as your perspective.

We will **continue to keep you well informed as to what is happening.** We deeply appreciate your feedback and perspective on what is best for the students of Mosier Community School. As always, I welcome you to reach out to me via cell phone (708-751-2275) or email at bestr@nwasco.k12.or.us.

May you and your family be well.

Dr. Richard Best