

Dear ASD Parents & Guardians:

I am writing to provide an important update on the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. The District has utilized numerous resources and sources of information to help guide our decisions as we prepare for this unique and unprecedented school year.

This planning has included guidance from the following groups and organizations:

- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Department of Education
- Clatsop County Public Health Department
- School Nurses of Clatsop County
- Astoria School District Health and Safety Committee
- Astoria School District 2020-2021 Reopening Task Force
- ASD Parents and Families--Parent Surveys (June 2020, and July 2020)
- ASD Teachers and Staff – Staff Survey July 2020

One of the guiding principles that the District has developed for the reopening of schools is that “All decision-making and plan development will be made with the prioritization of the health and safety of our students, staff, and families. There is nothing I want more than for our students to be back in our schools interacting and learning with one another, led by our amazing teachers and support staff. I also take my responsibility for the health and safety in our schools and our community very seriously. Therefore, returning to school buildings can only be achieved if we can ensure it can be executed in a way that provides the safest environment for our students, staff, and families. Using the Ready School, Safe Learners guidance, and the recommendations from the District’s Health and Safety Committee has worked to provide our District with guidance and suggestions that they believe will provide the safest school reentry possible.

Tonight I made a recommendation to the Astoria School District Board of Directors that we begin the 2020-2021 school year in remote learning, and phase in the safe reentry of students and staff to school and work. I also recommended that school begin on September 14, 2020. The school board approved my recommendations.

District staff understand that we must build on what we learned during the spring to provide a more robust and dynamic remote learning experience for students. Our remote learning model in this fall will align to the rigorous standards and curriculum of our current on-site instructional program at each grade level, and all instruction offered remotely would be supported and guided by our teachers and support staff. Our District staff will be provided additional professional development to enhance their instructional abilities in a remote model, in preparation for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year.

As we move forward to the opening of the 2020-2021 school year, District staff is dedicated to exploring creative ways to support students receiving special services and families with significant challenges in accessing curriculum.

The District is working to put systems in place to ensure all students have access to digital devices and access to the internet. The District is in the final stages of attaining a digital platform to make it easier

for students, staff, and families to engage in teaching and learning. In short, remote learning will be a different experience beginning the 2020-2021 school year than it was in the spring.

The District will continue to provide student meals during remote learning, similar to the delivery method that was used during the spring.

I also know this decision to start the 2020-2021 school year in remote learning will significantly impact the work schedules of many parents in our community. The District will be looking to work collaboratively with families and community entities to help solve child care issues that will arise from starting the school year in remote learning.

In addition to my recommendation to begin the school year on September 14, 2020, with remote learning, I have also recommended that the District begin immediately in the development of a plan that allows us to slowly and strategically phase students and staff back into the schools. It is my hope that, absent a spike in the spread of coronavirus in our local area, we can begin phasing small amounts of students and staff to onsite learning by October 1st, and that we can create a guide that will allow us to increase on-site learning over time.

I have spent numerous hours taking necessary input from community members, parents, and staff to come to this decision. As we move forward I urge you to reach out to me via phone at (503) 325-6441 or email me at choppes@astoria.k12.or.us if you have questions or would discuss the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, the District has created a weekly virtual meeting for parents to discuss with me the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. The virtual meeting will be held each week on Tuesday at 6:30 P.M., beginning July 28, 2020, and notice will be sent out prior to the meeting.

The Astoria School District students are the heart of what we do and why we exist. We all want what's best for students. This decision is incredibly difficult as we know how much students need school for their academic success and social-emotional well-being. I take the immense responsibility of ensuring staff and student safety, educating our students, and creating opportunities for all seriously. Thank you for your continued support and collaboration as we work together to meet the needs of our students, staff, and families.

Sincerely,
Craig Hoppes
Superintendent
Astoria School District