

Back to School! Here's What You Need to Know!

- 1. School is resuming 5 days a week as advertised on the schedule!** When we conducted the survey at the end of the school year, over 90% of you indicated the desire to be in school on a normal schedule in the fall as a strong preference. This guided much of our discussion over the summer as we prepared to return. Precautions are in place to stop the spread as Covid-19, but we will teach as much as we are able and resume our educational process as nearly normal a format as possible. We ask parents to keep students home when they are ill or symptomatic until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. Please refer to the document Guidance for Parents and Students on the District's Webpage for further direction. Please do everything you can to help us keep our schools healthy places. All assignments will be posted to Google Classroom or Canvas for the elementary (K-6) grades, and Canvas for all secondary (7-12) grades to assist students and parents in keeping up with classwork. We also encourage parents to continue the good habits that were established in the Spring of participating in their children's education and assisting them with work at home, whether or not they have been absent. Teachers have been asked to continue posting video presentations on selected classroom instruction. The videos posted by teachers will give you assistance in knowing what is expected on critical assignments each day. Whether students have been in school or home sick on a given day, the videos will offer assistance on some of their work, and we encourage parents and students to refer to them before contacting teachers directly for assistance.
- 2. Masks are required for at-school attendance!** We have options for students who are opposed to compliance with this order from the governor and Public Health Department. Utilizing these options will allow students continued access to additional educational resources, as well as, school lunch. We have encouraged students and parents who wish to explore these options to contact their schools for information. Let us be clear, we want your students here. We need your students here. We will do what we can to accommodate their needs; however, because of the difficulty in regulating class sizes and workloads for teachers, those selecting these options will be asked to remain with their choice through the first semester, ending January 13, 2021. For those who are unsure of their choice, we will offer a ten-day window at the beginning of the year, until September 1st, for people to reconsider their decisions. After September 1st, students will need to continue online instruction for the remainder of the semester. Of course, a student may be removed from school by a parent at any time and enrolled in the online alternatives, but they too may only return at the beginning of the new semester. A cloth mask will be provided to every student. We will have a supply of emergency masks on hand at the schools for students who either forget their mask or have something happen to it over the course of the day. Students who for health reasons may be exempted from this requirement will need to fill out the district waiver which includes a medical verification. The critical issue to us in this discussion is not whether masks are effective or whether the mandate is constitutional...those are not our decisions to make. Our critical point is that according to those who make the decisions of whether we can operate our schools, this is an absolute requirement. We will do what we need to do to allow face-to-face instruction with a highly qualified teacher because we know this is the most effective way to move our students forward.

3. **Beginning on Wednesday, August 26th, Wednesday morning will have a slightly later start time at most schools.** Last year we created time for educators to collaborate on Friday afternoons. This removed the majority of our PLC days from the school schedule. In our Covid world, more than ever, our teachers at grade levels or in related subjects need to collaborate on best practices to meet instructional needs of students. We determined last year, before Covid, that this needed to be conducted at a time with less disruption and distraction. Wednesday morning was the time that was designated by the board and we have placed that on all school schedules and calendars. This means that in Fillmore all schools will start 30 minutes later, with all schools starting at 8:40 on Wednesdays. In Delta, the bus drop-off schedule was altered in such a way that elementary schools will still start at the same time as other days. The Middle School and High School, including the Technical Center, will convene at 8:40 on Wednesday only. Fillmore areas bus students should plan to board the bus approximately 30 minutes later than normal on Wednesday, and Delta students should plan on boarding buses approximately 10 minutes later on Wednesday. We ask parents who drive their students to drop students appropriately later on these days. If this cannot happen because of work-schedules, etc., we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

4. **School Safety and Security measures are now in place.** Through the winter and spring we were busy installing school security systems on our buildings. These were designed to safeguard our students by limiting access to our buildings. For parents, it is important to understand that all school visitors will need to be identified and buzzed into the building by school officials. Your access to the building will be limited to the office area unless you are there for a pre-authorized purpose or program. Please take time to acquaint yourself with the locations and procedures for entering your student's building. ALL visitors to the buildings will be required to wear masks as per the order of the public health department and the governor.

5. **We are EXCITED to be back!** There are those in the world who are skeptical of our ability to provide a safe environment for students to learn in this Covid world. We believe that with your help we can do it. Whether people believe Covid is a serious threat to their students and staff, or whether people believe it poses no threat to students and staff... (and we have some of both)... we don't want anyone to get ill and we will do what is necessary to safeguard everyone. All of this while conducting school in a setting as nearly normal as possible. Our health department has determined that fifteen students or ten percent of the population, whichever is lower, will be the threshold at which the closure of an individual school will be considered. Please help us avoid this by following these simple rules:
 - If you are sick, STAY HOME!
 - Wash your hands frequently!
 - Socially Distance!
 - Wear a mask!

Thank you for your support and assistance as we open our schools in a safe and responsible manner!

Superintendent David Styler