

Dear families of Grants Pass School District students,

This message is going out to all parents/families of students in Grants Pass School District #7 who have an IEP. The purpose of the message is to communicate some updates as we plan to launch the 2020-21 school year, to let you know what you can expect regarding Special Education Services, and to describe ways to engage with us as partners in your child's educational plan.

As you are probably aware by now the Governor, in collaboration with Oregon Health Authority released a new requirement which outlines the state and county data/metrics for COVID-19 cases that must be met in order for school districts to consider bringing students back into our schools in person for the start of the 20-21 school year. Based on these metrics, Grants Pass School District, like almost all public and private school entities in the state will be starting school in Comprehensive Distance Learning, because we currently do not meet the threshold that has been established to bring all students back into our schools. Based on one of the "exceptions" to the requirements, we believe if the cases in Josephine county remain low and we have no school outbreaks, we will be able to bring our students in grades K-3 back to school in early September. Students in Grades 4 – 12 will be in Comprehensive Distance Learning for the first 9 weeks of school. (and maybe longer if the metrics are not met)

As you can imagine, all of this planning is complex, and is especially complex as we make plans to educate our students who experience disability. There are a few things we do **know for sure**, regardless of the instructional model that we are in:

- The requirements for this fall will be much more rigorous than the distance learning model we were in last Spring, so you can expect much more teacher-directed instruction.

- All services written in an IEP must be implemented. Some of the services may look differently than they would in a "normal" year, but they need to be implemented to the best of our ability. This includes: Specially Designed Instruction, Speech services, and all accommodations and modifications on the students IEP.

- All IEP meetings will be held virtually because visitors in our schools will be very restricted. We will do whatever we can to ensure that parents have a chance to participate in the IEP process in a meaningful way.

- If a student needs an assessment for special education eligibility with a school specialist such as a school psychologist or speech pathologist, we will contact you to schedule your student to come in-person at a school site. Safety protocols will be followed.

- We believe that if the COVID -19 cases in Josephine County remain low and we have no school outbreaks, we will be able to considering bringing some other small groups of students in grades 4-12 back to school in-person in small amounts of time, based on need. We anticipate this would be after the first 3 weeks of school.

You can expect to hear from your student's case manager after September 1st to discuss your student's plan, services, and to brainstorm ideas and strategies for the very best ways your child can learn and engage. It is very important that we work together carefully, so we ask that you stay in close communication with your child's case manager and school frequently along the way.

Thank you for your patience as we navigate this unusual time. We know we have a very important role to play as we work to serve and support your student to the very best of our abilities; a role which we take very seriously. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions, suggestions or ideas.

Stay safe and well!

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