



District Office | 485 S. Fifth Street, Lebanon, Oregon 97355 | Phone (541) 451-8511  
www.lebanon.k12.or.us  
*Pursuing Excellence for Every Student, Every Day*

August 5, 2021

Dear Students and Families,

We are thrilled to welcome students and staff back to school! Here is some updated information for this fall:

### **Full-Time, In-Person and Online Learning Options**

Lebanon Community School District will operate five days a week, serving all students full time and in-person this fall. As before, we will provide online learning for families who make that choice for their educational option. Santiam Academy (formerly Lebanon Online) is an excellent option for parents preferring to continue to use distance learning as it uses our district curriculum and pacing in order to allow continuity of instruction for students transitioning to or from distance learning.

If you have not already done so, please register your student for this school year as soon as possible. It is vital that we have accurate information about all incoming students as we make plans within so many safety parameters. Find our registration page online by visiting [lebanon.k12.or.us](http://lebanon.k12.or.us), or use the QR code at right.



### **Planning for a Smooth Return**

Many habits we developed last school year--ones to prevent the spread of illness and to keep our community safe--will continue. Those include handwashing, enhanced cleaning, improved ventilation, and physical distancing (maintaining at least three feet between people to the extent possible). When multiple levels of protection are used simultaneously, school and classroom outbreaks will be significantly reduced.

Recently, in light of the spike in Covid-19 cases due to the Delta variant, Oregon tightened its rules for how we will operate this fall. While we were given local control on June 25, that was given with the caveat that if conditions change, so too would our parameters. Last week, we were directed to ensure everyone in K-12 indoor facilities wears masks effective immediately and into the fall.

We know that our students, parents, community, and staff have varying, sometimes emotional, reactions to this news. Here at LCSD, we are also part of this community, and many of us are parents as well; we are experiencing those reactions along with you. It is important to note that, while none of us are pleased to see the virus and/or the associated protocols increased as school restarts, **the situation we face in terms of what schools will look like operationally is far better than what we experienced last spring.**

We have learned a lot about schools and virus prevention--primarily that we *can* prevent Covid-19 from spreading when we practice layered precautions. Thankfully, this has changed the guidance for this fall in positive ways:

- Masks are required indoors at school and on school busses. For indoor, extra-curricular sports or activities, which are optional, masks for students and spectators are also optional.
- Students and staff distancing requirements are down to three (3) feet, allowing for greater flexibility.
- Exposure to the virus is now defined differently. In general,\* if students and the school are properly following prevention strategies, quarantining by students in addition to the person who tested positive is unlikely. (We do not anticipate seeing entire classrooms quarantined as we did last spring.)



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In a recent meeting among Oregon's superintendents, the question was raised about non-compliance with masking rules. It is important to note that the state is prepared to enact financial penalties on schools and districts, as well as to rescind educator licenses or seek disciplinary action should the mandates be intentionally disregarded. To protect LCSD and our students' need for consistency and continuity, we have no choice but to follow state laws, rules, and mandates. This, of course, impacts expectations for students; those who refuse to follow guidelines will be provided a distance-learning option.

The changing nature of the virus has made us accustomed to sudden shifts in our practices, and this school year may offer some similar challenges. As before, when we are presented with updated federal, state, or local guidance that impacts our operations, we will notify our staff and community as soon as possible.

While this "welcome back" letter is not the one we had hoped to send this year, we do have many reasons to be optimistic. Soon, our students will return--in person for most and online for many--and we will get back to the business of learning and connecting with one another. We are hopeful that those within our schools and our wider community continue to take the necessary steps to keep each other safe so we may get back to seeing everyone's smiles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bo Yates", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Bo Yates  
Superintendent

*\*We will handle potential exposures on a case-by-case basis in coordination with Linn County Health and using the definitions and guidance presented in ODE's Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework.*