

Dear Cashmere Families,

I hope you are all staying safe and healthy. First and foremost, I want to say thank you!

Thank you for your grace and cooperation as we adjust to the ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic. It's been quite the roller-coaster of emotions and planning as we sort through changing guidance and recommendations from multiple agencies on how to bring students and staff back for in-person instruction as quickly and safely as possible.

As a district, we started the new school year fully remote for all students and have since safely brought in our students most in need of support for specialized services, one-on-one support and even some small group instruction.

Chelan-Douglas County COVID-19 case numbers have been dropping drastically, which is good news. Results from the community-wide relevance COVID testing in Cashmere last week gave a positive rate of approximately 1% of all tests, which is also very encouraging.

Given this recent data, we have been granted approval from Dr. Butler and the Chelan-Douglas Health District to move into our next phase of in-person services, bringing our Pre-K through 2nd grade students back to the classroom, with appropriate safety precautions.

Our Pre-K through 2nd grade hybrid plan is as follows, with a start date of October 12th:

- Half day in-person, Monday through Friday, on either an AM or PM schedule.
- Every student will be in-person approximately 3 hours and remain with the same cohort of students and staff each day.
- There will be a 2-hour break between the AM and PM cohorts to allow for transportation to and from school, as well as cleaning on site between cohorts.
- Classes will be split alphabetically, A-L and M-Z, keeping sibling groups on the same schedule.
- Any parents/families that do not feel comfortable returning to in-person instruction will be offered the option to continue with remote learning.
- All students and staff are required to complete a health screening prior to arrival each day.
- Additional health screening protocols will be completed upon arrival at school.
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks and maintain 6 feet physical distancing while at school and wash or sanitize their hands frequently throughout their time on-site.

Why are we starting with Pre-K through 2nd grade? Health department guidelines recommend returning kids in "phases" starting with students with special needs, most at-risk and our youngest learners, which is exactly what we are doing. We also know that our younger students find remote learning more challenging because of their age and development, and in-person instruction is key to setting them up for success.

After this first phase, additional phases will be implemented (as approved by Dr. Butler) until we have all students, Pre-K through 12th grade, back in the classroom. Health officials suggest a three week window between phases which the school district will use as a guide for finalizing a timeline for full return.

Please know that this is still uncharted territory and there will be some elements of the plan that will need to be worked out or refined along the way. Specifics for each building will be determined by each school principal and their teams, then communicated directly to each school community.

Again, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your patience, flexibility and understanding as we continue to navigate this challenging and unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

Glenn Johnson