

9/12/20

Dear Yoncalla Parents and Students,

With the beginning of a challenging school year we have already hit a bump in the road with air quality issues and wildfires ravaging our beautiful landscape. These issues, along with COVID, are likely to test our resolve throughout the year. The great news is that we were able to bring back our K-3rd grade students this past week, and even though it was just for a day before we had to close because of poor air quality, the excited faces and look of joy in their eyes to be back in the building was priceless. By the way, the students were excited too! 😊

With the reality sinking in that we were required to start the year talking to each other through a computer and completing work at home, I wanted you to know what you can expect from the Yoncalla School District and how this fall will be different from last spring. First, we will continue to meet the needs of our students by delivering meals until our students are brought back into the building. With the news that the OSDA has extended the summer meals program, the YSD crew has been hard at work making sure that students have healthy food available to them. Melissa Peterson, along with many others, has been hard at work making sure this program has been meeting the student's nutritional needs throughout the Yoncalla community.

The YSD administrative team has spent a lot of time over the last few months working to make sure we are ready for this school year. Teachers have taken extra time to ensure they have plans in place to support each student's needs. The usual routine of school may be disrupted, but learning will not.

Now the great news!! As long as conditions in our county and throughout the state continue to stabilize, we will be bringing back students for all grade levels on a staggered rotation. It is my hope that air quality will improve and we will be able to bring back grades K-3 on Monday. If not, as soon as the air quality decreases to 200, we will bring this group back ASAP. We will bring back grades 4-8 on September 21. Finally, we will bring back grades 9-12 on September 22. This will complete our staggered start for all. Just a few reminders. Masks will be required for students K-12. There will be no open campus at the high school for lunch. All students will have their temperatures taken before they enter the building along with a visual wellness check. Please make sure to bring your Chromebook or laptop with you when you return. They will be used each day whether you are in the building or at home. We are doing this because the assumption is that we will be required to close once the cold and flu season arrives. This will make the transition, if we need to, as smooth as possible without missing out on educational opportunities.

Thanks you for your grace and patience during this time. I know this has been difficult for everyone. We have cleaning protocols in place, along with desk dividers, cleaning stations and facial coverings if a student needs one. We also have distance learning in place for those parents who would rather keep their students home.

This year will teach us a lot about the importance of working together towards a common goal. As we move forward towards that goal of having our students safely back in our buildings, we look forward to continuing to serve our incredible community.