

October 22, 2021

As Chairman of the Board of Skamania School District No. 2, it's important that I share all that Skamania School is doing to keep children attending school in-person, while maintaining safety for both students and staff, as we have very high rates of COVID activity in Skamania County.

Skamania School must follow state Department of Health (DOH), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and governor mandates, in addition to local health official recommendations or requirements.

- One of the state requirements is that all students, staff and visitors must wear a mask in school settings.
- Another state requirement is that all school staff must be vaccinated against COVID-19 or have an allowable religious or medical exemption.

All Skamania School staff are required to:

- Wear a mask when inside the school (this is a state requirement). Supplies are available in the school office for all staff.
- Complete a daily health attestation and temperature check.
- Have two weeks of substitute plans ready at all times with internal staff options, and submit them to Dr. Pruitt, should a staff member need to quarantine or be out for illness.
- Ensure the class seating chart is updated, accurate and available, if needed, to assist with contact tracing.
- Be ready to provide online instruction, if needed, due to high quarantine numbers.

Skamania School is in full compliance with the governor's vaccination mandate, meaning all staff are either fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption and mandatory accommodations. Our Superintendent, Dr. Pruitt is required by law to make sure these standards are followed.

Our superintendent is also in frequent consultation with Dr. Steven Krager, the deputy health officer of Skamania County Community Health Department, regarding additional health and safety measures recommended due to local COVID case activity. The state of Washington Department of Health gives local health departments the authority to recommend and implement more strict health and safety measures if there is high COVID activity in a particular community.

Skamania County continues to have very high rates of COVID activity. As of October 21, there have been 799 confirmed COVID cases in the county. This, combined with low vaccination rates and an average of four new positive COVID cases per day over seven days, keeps our local COVID activity very high. Because of the amount of community transmission, Dr. Krager has strongly recommended additional local prevention measures, such as having all community members wear a mask when in public to reduce COVID spread.

Further, Dr. Krager strongly recommends that individuals who are not vaccinated and have significant in-person interactions with others adhere to the following guidelines, which Skamania School agreed to.

- At least twice weekly COVID-19 testing. Skamania School requires at least once weekly testing, depending on the type of test administered (once a week PCR or twice weekly antigen testing), and now also has the ability to provide discrete testing onsite at school.
- Consistently wear a KN95 mask while in school district buildings (supplies are available in the school office for all staff to utilize, not just those who are unvaccinated).

- Maintain 6 feet of distance with staff and students, taking extra care when taking their mask off at school (such as when eating) to ensure they maintain at least 6 feet of distance from anyone or eat alone.

We are committed to doing everything possible to keep our school open to educate the children in-person and in their classrooms and to create a safe environment for both students and staff. Sometimes adults must make concessions in order to protect our children. To me, there is no more important sacrifice than one that keeps our children safely learning in school.

Angus Anderson, Skamania School Board Chair