



Coeur d'Alene Public Schools
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From: Scott Maben, Director of Communications
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Dear families,

We are beginning to plan for the conclusion of this school year in our present Remote Learning framework. With revisions made Monday in the State Board of Education's guidelines for when school buildings can reopen to instruction, we now know our District cannot return to in-person instruction during the remaining four weeks of this school year.

This is not how any of us envisioned the final months of our year, and our hearts go out to all students, family members and teachers missing out on the customary end-of-year milestones and celebrations. At the same time, we are encouraged by the new skills and creative connections families and educators have embraced through this period of Remote Learning.

Through our device checkout program, student access to technology at home has soared, and we have established a foundation for learning that will serve us both in normal times and periods of crisis or disrupted operations. We are grateful to all of you who have stepped into the role of at-home educators committed to supporting your students and the learning resources provided by our teachers.

We want to walk through the reasons we need to keep our school buildings closed through early June, and what the final weeks of school will look like for students. You may be wondering when our last day of instruction will be, when final student work should be turned in, when student belongings may be retrieved from school, or have other questions. We are working on an end-of-year calendar addressing these and other questions and will share that with you in the near future.

Continuing our building closures this spring is necessary under the revised state guidelines. The State Board of Education extended its "soft closure" of school districts on April 6, and approved re-entry criteria for any schools that felt the need to reopen before the end of this school year. On Monday, the state board amended the re-entry criteria for schools to align with the governor's newer [Idaho Rebounds](#) guidance, designed to reopen businesses, services and agencies over four stages culminating in late June.

The state board decision to align school criteria with the governor's plan effectively prevents most school districts from reopening their buildings for the rest of this school year. Some smaller schools and those in rural areas may be able to reopen if they are in areas with no known community spread of coronavirus. In Coeur d'Alene and Kootenai County, however, we have documented community spread, according to Panhandle Health District.

Additionally, the governor's phases for reopening mandate that gatherings of people should be avoided during the current Stage 1 (May 1-15). In Stage 2 (tentatively May 16-29), gatherings of fewer than 10 individuals will be permitted if there is no significant spike in COVID-19 cases and "where appropriate physical distancing and precautionary measures are observed." In Stage 3 (tentatively May 30-June 12), gatherings of 10 to 50 individuals would be permitted.

These restrictions make it impractical, if not impossible, to bring large groups of students and staff back into buildings during this phased-in approach to reopening. Maintaining small groups of students six feet apart at all times in classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms, restrooms, and on playgrounds and school buses, would present significant logistical barriers.

Our goal now is to focus on safely reopening our buildings in September for the 2020-21 school year. This will include a modified plan for teaching and learning, physical distancing and health measures, cleaning and disinfection protocols, and accommodations for students and staff who have a higher risk of infection due to age or medical vulnerability. We also will have a strategy in the event a resurgence in the pandemic forces our District to close all schools again next year, as well as a plan to immediately close and sanitize any building where a student or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19.

The state also will provide school districts additional criteria for the fall start of the school year, based on conditions at the time.

Thank you,

Scott Maben