

# MODERATE RISK LEVEL

**The following statement is provided by the Board of Trustees for Coeur d'Alene Public Schools:**

You may be wondering if the Coeur d'Alene School District still plans to start the school year in the Orange (moderate risk) category, with a blended learning schedule for all students. That is still our plan, and we would expect to remain on that schedule for at least the first two weeks, through September 25.

When the Board of Trustees voted August 17 to open with blended learning, we committed to this plan for the first few weeks of the school year. We reaffirmed that commitment at our August 24 board meeting. Even as Panhandle Health District has moved its risk assessment for Kootenai County from orange to yellow, we believe it's prudent for the school district to ease back into school routines with blended learning before we consider whether the time is right to allow all students to return to in-person instruction five days a week.

With all of the new expectations and protocols we have put in place over the summer, we feel it's important for you and your students, as well as all District employees, to learn to walk before we try to run. We have a district-wide implementation of a new learning management system, called Schoology, that will allow teachers to more effectively and efficiently keep students and teachers engaged in learning activities, whether in-person or online. We are also in the process of preparing our staff and school environments to create a safe learning community, along with the routines and procedures necessary to keep everyone safe. Additionally, please bear in mind that this is the first time since mid-March that we will have thousands of people back in our buildings. Even with all the precautions we plan to take, from wearing masks and social distancing to hand washing and cleaning, we are bringing large numbers of students and adults into enclosed spaces at a time we still have community spread of this virus.

We are seeing an encouraging downward trend in COVID-19 cases. The key to sustaining this trend depends in large part on how well we follow the safety protocols our schools will have in place this fall. Everyone wants to successfully return to face-to-face instruction five days a week. We want our classrooms and schools to stay open this fall, and not be forced to shut down suddenly because of avoidable outbreaks of COVID-19. We also know it is critical to want to provide our students as much consistency and stability as is feasibly possible. This means doing what is reasonable to avoid repeatedly shifting back and forth between risk levels this year.

The District is monitoring three key measures of the coronavirus pandemic in our community: new cases reported in Kootenai County; COVID-19 testing positivity rates; and

hospitalizations/critical care admissions at Kootenai Health. Each week we are reviewing the trends in these metrics, and discussing the trends and projection with Panhandle Health District.

As you know, school will start on September 14 with two days of in-person instruction and three days of distance learning. As school starts back up, District Administration and the Board of Trustees together will look at data trends over a few weeks before considering any switch in our operating plan. We have been directly monitoring these data for several weeks now and are seeing positive trends. **The Board will meet September 21 to discuss the trends in the data and consider a category change.** We all hope that if the current data trends for new cases, testing and hospitalizations hold, we will be able to move from Orange to Yellow. In the meantime, we'd love your help in keeping our community healthy and safe by following the Panhandle Health District guidelines. Having the cooperation and support of our families and community will contribute greatly to our ability to do this.

Casey Morrisroe, Board Chair  
Jennifer Brumley, Board Vice Chair  
Tambra Pickford, Trustee  
Lisa May, Trustee  
Rebecca Smith, Trustee

