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OREGON FAMILY GROUPS FORM STATEWIDE COALITION, SEEK PROMPT IN-PERSON REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Family groups call for prioritizing in-person K-12 options by January 6, 2021

A coalition of parent groups across Oregon have united under a single umbrella organization, **ED300**. We are calling on appointed and elected leaders to remove statewide barriers to in-person learning by January 6th.

The announcement on Monday by the leaders of multiple grassroots organizations represents the first joint effort by tens of thousands of parents from Portland to southern and eastern Oregon. January 6th marks the 300th day since the vast majority of Oregon's approximately 600,000 students set foot in a classroom.

Parents began organizing in September to advocate on behalf of students as we witnessed learning losses, technology failures, repercussions of no school-based activities, accessibility issues for students with disabilities, and significant mental and emotional health challenges for too many students.

"We call on Governor Brown to remove the state's barriers, and ask superintendents, school boards and lawmakers to engage parent groups such as ED300 to implement a safe and prompt return to in-person learning and co-curricular activities for those who choose," said Rene Gonzalez, a parent of three school-aged children and spokesperson for [ED 300](http://www.ed300.org) and Opening PDX Schools.

"The learning losses attributable to remote education are not recoverable for many students with learning challenges," said Jennifer Dale, spokesperson for Clack to School and parent of three school-aged children, including a daughter receiving special education services.

We are asking the Governor and the Oregon Department of Education to:

- **Immediately prioritize reopening Oregon schools so that all students have an option for in person-learning by January 6th, 2021.**
 - Data from numerous states and countries show schools are not significant sources of spread.
 - OR's recent uptick in cases is not due to schools and data do not support that open schools worsen existing spikes driven by other sources (workplaces and in the community).
 - The mental, social, and educational impacts on children and reduced ability of parents to work is now a crisis that must be addressed.
 - Renowned public health expert Dr. Ashish K. Jha: "Schools need to be bolder about returning to the classroom...There are other things that are far more high risk that we're leaving open while being remote in schools, and that doesn't make any sense.... [T]he idea that schools should be the first casualty, before casinos, bars, and restaurants, in my mind defies logic." <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/11/03/schools-need-to-be-bolder-about-reopening.html>
- **Remove statewide mandates and county-level metrics and replace them with guidelines that will allow for tailored community-level approaches.**
 - We are out of alignment with 42 other states that have guidelines rather than mandates. Oregon's overly blunt mandates are prolonging closures and harming every age student, from early learners to high school students who need support in their journeys to higher education.
- **Collaborate with parents to track and share outcome data related to distance learning.**
 - School districts must be transparent about reporting enrollment data, student engagement information, grading outcomes and attendance in order to allow parents to make informed decisions about in-person versus remote options.
- **Discuss the impact of the looming expiration of the FFCRA (employer paid leave) on December 31st.**
 - Schools will likely reopen in hybrid models. Families must understand how state lawmakers will support Oregon's families and parents.

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