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**OREGON FAMILIES APPLAUD EFFORTS TO PROTECT K-12 EDUCATION, SPORTS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

*Shift in State Priorities, New Lockdown Orders Put Oregon Youth First*

PORTLAND, Ore. \_ A coalition of parent groups statewide, **ED300**, supports Governor Kate Brown’s prioritization of Oregon’s youth in Friday’s announcements of two- and four-week freezes on many business activities, informal social gatherings, and out-of-state travel.

Under the order, the following activities remain unchanged and can continue operating under previous guidance issued by the Oregon Health Authority: Outdoor recreation and sports; youth programs; childcare; K-12 schools and K-12 sports currently allowed; current Division 1 and professional athletics exemptions, and higher education.

“Access to these facilities are critical lifelines for many young people,” ED300 and Opening PDX Schools spokesman Rene Gonzalez said. “Particularly in these very difficult times when they are otherwise deprived of most in-person school-related contact and activities.”

While the Oregon Health Authority intends to issue specific guidance by sector in coming days, **ED300** is strongly encouraging leadership to emphasize and prioritize the value to youth of continuing in-person education, programs and sports, especially during this lockdown.

“We are grateful our leadership recognizes the value of tailored rather than blunt lockdowns in an effort to balance public health concerns and prioritize our children,” said Jennifer Dale, parent of three school-aged children. “This prioritization of keeping youth facilities available and open sends the message that we are focused on the well-being of our youth.

Julian Cordle, of Let Them Play, added: “For more than eight months, the youth of Oregon have been subjected to the intensity of solitude that breeds the worst kinds of long-term serious impact for their mental, physical, and social health. We now have enough experience with this ‘new norm’ to know that youth activities and sports can happen safely.”

**About Parks and School Grounds Closure.** Following the Governor’s closure of schools on March 12, 2020, many park districts and schools eliminated access to parks and school grounds for sports and other co-curricular activities. On September 14, 2020, the Oregon Health Authority provided clarity that certain sports could recommence, subject to significant health protocols. However, many park districts and school districts have been slow to make their facilities available and libraries in the metro area continue to be closed.

**About [ED 300](#).** ED 300 is a bipartisan advocacy group representing a coalition of groups state-wide consisting of parents, medical professionals, educators, and sports associations, increasingly concerned about the long-term effects of school closures. ED 300 is advocating for an evidence-based approach to reopening schools and co-curricular activities and now has more than 35,000 members, representing well over 100,000 Oregonians. [@ed\\_3009](#) on Twitter.

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