

300TH DAY OF SCHOOL CLOSURES IN OREGON PASSES WITH INSUFFICIENT PROGRESS

PORTLAND, Ore. – Students across Oregon watched yesterday from home as the 300th day away from their classrooms, teachers and peers came and went, with only a few districts announcing plans to return. The majority of school districts sent the message that returning is neither imminent nor urgent.

ED 300 Co-Organizer Rene Gonzalez shared: “In these 300 days of school closures we have seen:

1. Massive learning loss, the magnitude of which school districts will not be able to ascertain for some time.
2. Declining social and emotional well-being of children, suffering in isolation, devoid of consistent contact with peers, and for those who lack access to private sports clubs, devoid of consistent physical activity.
3. Substantial number of working parents forced to leave the workforce, particularly mothers.

While our children have been locked-down, we’ve seen the hypocrisy of adults who tacitly approve school closures while carrying on other activities, and outright obstruction of school re-openings.”

On January 1st, 2021, the state’s COVID-19 metrics that have prohibited the reopening of schools became advisory. While the move delivered decision-making back to local school districts, it failed to revise the metrics to be better aligned with neighboring states.

“There are some success stories in Oregon, including Bend, Klamath Falls, and Lake Oswego. These communities have put children first, but they are too few and too far in between,” said Jennifer Dale, a co-organizer of the parent coalition ED300 and Clack to School.

“Oregon leadership must realize that our students are being treated unfairly. Students have been forced into a one-size fits all platform while their peers in other states return to evidence-based, successful and safe in-person learning.”

Essential workers, such as healthcare workers, have been required to work in-person during this 300-day period, but their children have not been allowed in-person school; truly unfair.

As we move forward in coming weeks, ED300 organizers urge leaders to do the following:

1. Revise the metrics to be more aligned with other states and current scientific understanding.
2. Focus funding on returning students to in-person classrooms.
3. Promptly reopen districts for all grade levels.

“We call on our Governor and leaders of our School Districts and Teacher Unions to do better for our children than they have done in 2020,” said Gonzalez.

ED300 is co-organizing a rally for 1pm, January 10 at Sunset High School in Beaverton.

About ED 300. ED 300 is a bipartisan advocacy group representing a coalition of groups statewide 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 nearly 40,000 members, representing well over 100,000 Oregonians. ###