

LINKING LOOP: New Plans for Learning Hybrid / Survey Results on Distance Lessons / Connectivity in District Families

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By Anne Scheck

DISTRICT LAYS PLANS FOR LEARNING HYBRID

As Central District 13J prepares for a different kind of school this fall – one that merges in-person and distance-learning – the soon-to-be summer session is likely to be the “beta test” for the next academic year.

“This could be a good opportunity for us to be building some really good protocols,” observed Jennifer Kubista EdD, superintendent of the district. At the school board meeting earlier this month, she predicted the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was close to announcing the plan for re-opening schools; Several days later, ODE released guidelines for a “hybrid” approach that allows a return to school buildings that will include social-distancing and doubling down on hygienic measures.

The summer session will provide an effective guide, Dr. Kubista suggested. It will be five-to-six weeks in length, four days a week. Graduating seniors who may be short on credits are a priority group for the summer term, as are students who may have been hampered by lack of internet access or who are emerging bilingual learners, she said.

Academics, such as reading and math, will be offered along with social and emotional skill-building and learning, Dr. Kubista noted.

Students will spend no more than one or two days a week in classrooms – and groups there will be limited to 10 or fewer. “We want to be able to bring students back into school safely,” Dr. Kubista explained.

The district will be following guidance from ODE, but the main “contact point” for coronavirus-preventing measures in the schools is the Polk County Health Department, according to Kristty Polanco, health administrator for the county. [*a district-wide news release can be found below, following the news briefs*]

SURVEY RESULTS:

A family survey with about 150 respondents shows a majority of families felt “welcomed” and supported during the change this past spring, but there was nearly an even split between those that adapted well to distance-learning and those that didn’t, according to the early results tallied in late May.

More than half of the families indicated the students weren’t enjoying the new learning environment. “This didn’t surprise me at all,” said Dr. Kubista. “It’s clear that a lot of our families and students do prefer to have them in our buildings – and we do, as well,” she said.

However, student reactions – mostly collected from grades 4-12 – showed more than half felt connected to their teachers. A majority indicated they were engaged and comfortable in the new learning platform. And about 60% characterized their instruction as “differentiated,” meaning teaching was tailored at least some of the time to their specific needs.

District personnel are hoping to collect more data. Additional responses can be submitted at this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSemF6kNW84oRZurXAEQgdtH9UwbewQ5OC-SZm0vHAIRD2_eg/viewform

UPDATE:

Most of the families who need internet service were connected to it by the end of the school year, but about seven percent remained without it. Now the aim is to put the mobile hotspot devices – which have been providing students with wireless connection to the internet at schools and around town -- at locations that will reach even more families. Thanks to survey results, the district determined earlier this month that most of the families who need help with connectivity are within city limits – just a few reside in an outlying area. More than 80% of households confirmed they were receiving internet service; Internet need hasn’t been established for about 10% of them yet.

Dear Central School District 13J families,

The guidance for the 2020-21 school year has arrived!

We are reviewing the guidance from the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority now for [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#).

We will build teams and include community partners to create a system of teaching and learning at Central School District that will merge in-person and distance-learning approaches, while optimizing safety for students, staff, and the community as a whole.

As we move forward, here are the eight key points to keep our schools safe for learners and educators, including:

- Public Health Protocols -- updating our communicable disease management plan to specifically address the prevention of the spread of Covid-19
- Facilities and School Operations -- cleaning, disinfecting and ventilating buildings, classrooms and learning spaces
- Response to Outbreak -- prevention and planning
- Equity -- decision making that centers in equity
- Instruction -- including instructional model options (on-site, hybrid or Comprehensive Distance Learning), and recommendations on curriculum and instruction, assessment, as well as instructional activities with a higher risk for disease spread such as Labs, CTE, Performing Arts, Physical Education

- Family and Community Engagement -- partnership in planning and maintaining clear communication
- Mental, Social and Emotional Health -- resources and strategies
- Staffing and Personnel -- public health training, supports and professional learning

Throughout the summer, the district will keep families and the community informed, so please watch for consistent voice messages and emails. We are required by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to have our plan reviewed by the Central School District Board of Directors and submitted to ODE no later than August 15th. We will continue to post all updates on the district website that can be located at www.central.k12.or.us.

The Oregon Department of Education has made it clear to school districts that this is a “living” document. Changes to the guidelines could take place over the summer months, and we will continue to modify and adjust as we receive new guidance. Continue to give grace and patience with yourselves, with us and each other, and continue to stay safe and healthy over the summer.