

April 27, 2021

Dear Knappa Community:

Welcome to the last week of April. We finally have all of the students back to school in-person, five days per week. As I walked down the hall of Knappa High School yesterday, the building finally felt abuzz with learning. It has been a long time coming, and we are pleased to have been able to safely navigate a path toward this shift.

Operational Status. First, the COVID case rate this period is back up a bit when compared with the last two-week rolling period. The County Case Rate is 137.3 per 100,000. The case positivity rate is 6.1% (also an increase). According to the state system of metrics for schools and their opening status (<https://tinyurl.com/h8t9pzkr>), we remain in the “on-site” category denoted by the color **green**.

Our longer school day and return to school for high schoolers began yesterday. We are pleased to return to a more normal school model, and we want to remind students and parents that safety protocols must continue to ensure continuation of movement toward a typical school schedule. This includes proper mask wearing and distancing. Also, please make sure that students avoid coming to school sick.

A family informed the administration at Hilda Lahti Elementary last night that their student tested positive for COVID after the end of the school day. The student had no symptoms while at school on Monday. At this time, we are unaware of any other cases tied to this one. We do have three students and one substitute teacher quarantining as a precaution while we await further guidance from the health department.

Athletics. Softball, baseball, and track & field events continue. Due to health reasons and a shift of the County metrics to “high risk”, our games have limited fans, and safety protocols are required. Beyond athlete invited fans, we allow a limited number of community member at competitions. “Wrist bands” that allow admission to competitions are distributed to athletes and also are available at the respective school offices (for at-large community members) two days before each event. Please respect distancing and mask requirements while on campus. We are now gearing up for basketball and wrestling, in accordance with OSAA approval which was received late last week.

State Assessments. The Oregon Department of Education has received a Federal Waiver that allows for some adjustments for state testing this year, primarily due to COVID-19 and more limited time for school over the last year. Here is the list of which tests are to be administered at which grade levels:

Grade Level	Required Tests	Optional Tests
3	English Language Arts (ELA)	Mathematics
4	Mathematics	ELA
5	Science	ELA & Mathematics
6	ELA	Mathematics
7	ELA & Mathematics	None
8	Mathematics & Science	ELA
11	ELA & Mathematics	Science

The default test for students is the required test. Parents may choose to “opt in” to the optional tests. The district will communicate shortly how to exercise this option as well as dates for the exams.

The results will guide our efforts on next year’s instruction for students, individually and collectively. The duration of the tests is short (typically a bit more than an hour). In past years, some students were slated for up to seven hours of testing each year.

Students in KVA, in their report card envelopes, have been invited to identify times when they prefer to come to the school for the exams. Families will get to choose their time/date. They also may choose whether they test in a small group or just with their own family members (i.e. siblings) at the school. If KVA students do not wish to come to the school to take the exam, they must file an opt out form. Remember, safety protocols must be followed, including general health questions upon arrival, clean work spaces, social distancing, and wearing of masks.

Potential Capital Bond. Over the last few years, and more intensely over the last few months, the School District has been planning related to capital work. The School Board, on May 17th will be asked to act on a proposal that addresses maintenance issues, improves safety, and updates middle school classrooms. In doing such work, the school facilities will be brought to current educational standards for our students. The proposed project will: create new middle school classrooms to replace the portables, add athletic facilities to serve students and the community, renovate space for preschool, replace/update heating, ventilation and filtration systems, add windows to the building for exterior ventilation, replace

roofs, seal walls to prevent leaking, and update building safety features. As a public entity, we understand our obligation to the taxpayers to be efficient and effective with their dollars. A citizen's committee has been meeting for several months to advise the district on this project; we are thankful for those who have donated their time and insight to inform the district. Please be on the lookout for communications from the District between now and November 2 regarding this project

Please Stay Safe. Thank you for remembering to be safe. Only by practicing appropriate safety measures can we keep schools open to in-person instruction. Please wear masks, maintain social distancing, and limit gatherings to your immediate family unless ALL members of the group are vaccinated. *Also, if students or family members are ill, please keep students home, and call to let us know what is going on.*

With most of our students here, we are better able to support students academically and with their goals. We are working hard to prepare students for their future.

Sincerely,

Bill Fritz, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Knappa School District #4