



# Lind-Ritzville Cooperative Schools

*"Achieving success together"*



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August 6, 2020

RE: Reopening Schools

Dear Parents and Students,

We have been advised of the Adams County health directives/guidelines along with the newly released WA DOH guidelines for On-Campus learning:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/FallGuidanceK-12.pdf>. These narrowly defined directives include standards or "metrics" for a number of conditions and circumstances. Under these non-negotiable metrics, we are likely to see many instances where students and staff will have to be "excluded" from attending On-Campus learning, AND we will see classrooms/cohorts and even entire school buildings dismissed for, at least, 14 days. The dismissal metrics are calculated using both the numbers of COVID-confirmed cases and those with COVID-Like-Illnesses (CLI) in classrooms/cohorts over a 14-day time period. For example:

- An entire classroom/cohort will be dismissed, for a 14-day quarantine, if there are 2 or more confirmed cases within a classroom/cohort within 14 days OR (current guidelines for Adams County) 1 lab-confirmed case and 1 confirmed COVID-Like-Illness in the same cohort during those same 14 days.
- An ENTIRE SCHOOL BUILDING will be dismissed if 2 or more cohorts/classrooms are dismissed due to outbreaks OR if another confirmed COVID or CLI related case occurs in a second classroom within the same 14 days

In middle and high school, where it is more difficult to separate classrooms/cohorts, we are likely to see increased numbers of school-wide dismissals. And, when classrooms/cohorts are dismissed, extra-curricular activities are canceled.

The guidelines address a variety of topics including County Health authorization for: the use of face shields, determining when a person can return to school/work, and determining when a certain number of CLI cases force a school closure. In summary, On-Campus learning will not look anything like it used to. It will be more restrictive, and much more challenging than anticipated.

We have been wrestling with the questions, "Should we try for On-Campus learning, August 31<sup>st</sup> knowing full well we will be dismissing students on a regular basis and may, soon and often, be shutting down classrooms and/or schools?" OR, "Should we start with Distance Learning and try for On-Campus learning later, allowing more time to prepare for the challenges or perhaps for the COVID situation to improve?" Based on the strong recommendations from the governor, state and county health departments, we are announcing that **our schools will start Aug 31 with all students engaged in a new and much improved Distance Learning mode.** Our primary goal is still to open our campuses for student learning as soon as possible. Even so, we may have to operate schools under these restrictions for the entire school year, OR at least until things dramatically improve and the guidelines are modified.

Not only because we will be starting the year with Distance Learning, but also because of the potential for multiple student, staff, classroom, and building dismissals once we are back on campuses, we will be utilizing online curriculums/programs that include pre-recorded lessons and learning activities that students can

access at any time. Our teachers will customize each course/class by selecting and narrowing the content to assure the materials align with our learning standards and goals providing a smoother transition into our Lind-Ritzville curriculums, when the time comes. An online program will provide us with a consistent, Lind-Ritzville learning model that will serve students whether in On-Campus, Distance, Remote, or Continuous learning mode and, hopefully, make things a little easier on our distance and remote learners. More information about building specific Distance Learning will be released soon.

At 7:00PM Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, there will be a **Special School Board meeting** for the boards to consider adoption of the Lind-Ritzville Cooperative Schools Reopening Plan. At 6:30PM Tuesday, Aug 11<sup>th</sup> there will be a **Reopening Plan Community meeting** where we will share the Reopening Plan and do our best to answer your questions about Distance Learning. Questions may be submitted ahead of time by email, or at the meeting by using the Zoom "chat" feature. You are invited to listen in on the Special Board meeting and to participate in the Reopening Plan Community meeting. Both meetings will be virtual only using Zoom. Meeting links will be posted on the district website and sent via email to parent/student emails.

It was extremely difficult making the decision to start the year in Distance Learning mode; however, we are determined to take care of all our students and continue working to open schools for On-Campus Learning, as soon as possible.

All my best,



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