



Board Report Date: July 29, 2020

Title: Recommendation to Start the 2020-2021 School Year Online

Submitted by: Dr. Paul Gordon, Superintendent of Schools

Strategy Three: Use the Best Tools and Resources to Advance Learning

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to look at ways to continue to educate the students of the Wenatchee School District, while ensuring the safety and wellness of students and staff and providing high quality instruction, regardless of the delivery method. In a meeting with regional superintendents on July 22, Public Health officials advised that ***opening schools would lead to a significant transmission based on current infection rates***. Medical professionals cited that in Chelan and Douglas counties, COVID-19 cases have increased to 425 per 100,000 people. An acceptable level for possibly reopening schools would be closer to 25 per 100,000. Based on this advice and data, we shifted our previous plans to open schools in a hybrid model, to opening schools in an online model for the 2020-2021 school year.

Discussion: Our plans provide for quality remote learning online for the vast majority of our students, while taking all necessary steps to protect the health of our students, staff, and community. Families can choose to participate in continuous learning online, taught by their classroom teacher, or continue their student's education online through our new virtual academy for the full year (WIA).

A focus on equity is a driving force in our planning. We know that our students with special needs, those who are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and those who are part of historically underserved groups receive vital services through our schools. Our plans call for limited in-person instruction and support for these students

Stakeholder feedback was used by staff to help guide our plans. We took lessons from other systems around our state and from our neighbors in North Central Washington. We tapped into world renowned experts in distance learning to train our staff and looked to leaders at the University of Washington's Center for Innovative Education to develop common templates and instructional experiences in a new learning management system (LMS).

Critically important in our decision making process were the multiple meetings with our region's public health officials to get their advice and guidance on our efforts and planning. Their guidance was instrumental in helping the superintendent have a deeper understanding of the serious risks involved in opening our schools.

Recommendation: We recommend that the Board accept the Superintendent's recommendation to start the 2020-2021 school year online for a vast majority of our students with continuous learning 2.0 and stage in hybrid learning (in-person/online) when local and regional health officials determine it is safe to return to face to face instruction.