NESTUCCA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Inspiring individual excellence, instilling diligence,
And initiating life-long learning.

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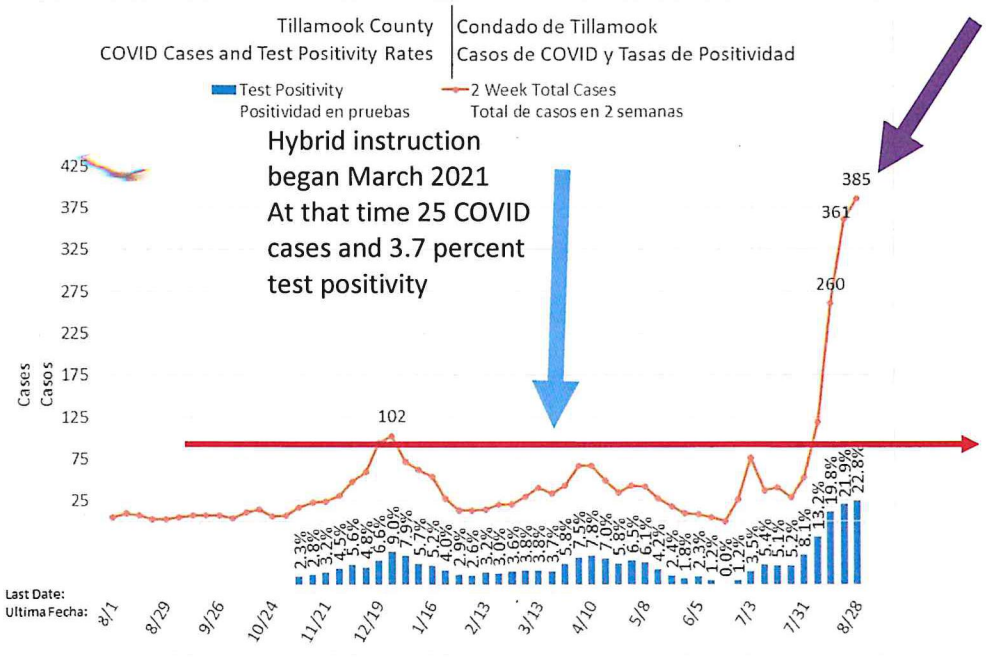
September 2, 2021

NESTUCCA VALLEY COMMUNITY,

Our district has decided to begin the 2021-2022 school year in Comprehensive Distance Learning. Below is some of what we considered in making this difficult decision. Please take a look at this graph:



385 Current confirmed COVID cases in Tillamook County with a 22% test positivity rate over the past two week period

Last years metric, state mandated, that allowed movement from CDL to In Person instruction at or below a 10% positivity rate or 60 cases in a two week period

As you can see, we have an alarming level of COVID 19 community spread occurring in our county.

On Tuesday, the Tillamook County Commissioners shared the following information with us:

"Tillamook County reports 666 new positive cases in the past month. Of those 666, **approximately 13 percent are children**. From July 25 to August 21, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reports that 87 Tillamook County children under 18 years of age were diagnosed with COVID. This information is available online at Oregon COVID-19 Pediatric Report | Tableau Public. Since August 18, we have had eight confirmed COVID deaths and two reported COVID deaths, not yet confirmed by OHA, bringing our confirmed total to 13 deaths. To put that number into perspective, in the first 18 months of the pandemic, we had five tragic deaths. In the past two weeks, ten more people have died. This is a surge of the unvaccinated. Statewide, 88 percent of new COVID cases are among the unvaccinated. Of 13 confirmed COVID deaths in Tillamook County, 11 were unvaccinated, and two did not have vaccination records, so they are presumed unvaccinated. Adventist Health system wide, which includes 25 hospitals in three states, reports that 88 percent of their patients hospitalized with COVID are unvaccinated. The numbers are very clear. Unvaccinated people are at highest risk of infection, severe illness, and death. The good news is that our vaccination rates are going up. To accommodate the need, Tillamook County Public Health Department is offering walk-in vaccinations Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Tillamook County Fairgrounds from 9 to 3 p.m. beginning September 2, 2021. All three vaccines will be available both days, no appointment is necessary, and there is no charge to be vaccinated. The public health department is also offering drive-up COVID testing at the fairgrounds on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 to 3 p.m. beginning September 1, 2021. No appointment is necessary, and there is no charge for testing."

The Delta variant is a different beast than we encountered last school year. Children are now more often becoming infected, and vaccines are only available for children 12 years and older. In order for NVSD to feel we can safely offer In-Person instruction again, it will require our entire community to take action. We must lessen the community spread to get our kids back into our buildings. We do that by not mixing households unless we practice masking and social distancing. We do that by getting vaccinated. We do that by limiting travel. We do that by wearing masks indoors and out. This is not a

student problem, quite the opposite it is an adult problem. We do not have enough of our population practicing what we know works in lessening the spread of the virus. The only way we will get the numbers to go down is to start implementing a more diligent effort at safety measures by all.

Will we be in CDL for an entire trimester?

Hopefully not. As a governance team, we will look at the data points and consult the Tillamook County Health Department to make a decision about the model of instruction every two weeks. The community spread must go down in order to return safely, so the length of CDL will be determined by the actions of our community.

Are athletics also called off?

No. Our kids are doing a great job of following the rules and we want them to be able to have these experiences. We will continue to offer these opportunities as long as we do not have an outbreak.

We are not allowing spectators indoors and only allowing two spectators per athlete outdoors as a mitigation strategy. We will offer live streaming of the competitions

Have we seen any kids with Covid?

Yes. We have had quite a few cases reported back to our district, and those are just the families that were tested. We are aware of many more families who have all of the symptoms, but are choosing not to be tested. This means the positive cases being reported, are very likely lower than the actual cases in our community. Please get tested if you think you may have COVID and follow the Health Departments directions if you test positive. Also, please let us know if your student tests positive for COVID, or if you've had direct exposure. This will help us keep the rest of our students safe.

At what level do we need to be, as a community, to get our kids back in the building?

This has changed since last year because of all we have learned thus far in the pandemic . It has also changed because we now have all adults working, coaching and volunteering in our schools vaccinated and/or testing weekly. We have the option for 12 year olds and up to get vaccinated and many of our students are beginning to do that. Once we begin to see a decline in case counts, and an increase in the vaccinated population, we will begin to bring kids back into our buildings.

Will CDL be implemented like last year?

No. Students will now have an entire day schedule. It will be the same daily schedule when they return to the buildings. Next week, September 7-10, we will be communicating with you each day about new routines, how to pick up a laptop, student teacher assignments. The early learning center staff plan to work with families to develop a daily schedule that works for all of the students and families.

Why was there a delay of the start of school if we are going to start in CDL?

From a management perspective, it takes five days of work for our district to ready everything for transition to CDL. To transition from CDL back to In-Person, it will take the district a day. Therefore, when we are able to move back into In-Person instruction, it will be a fast transition. The delay allowed our teachers and staff to complete all of their professional development. Next week, they will prepare for CDL. Delaying the start of school also gives us the opportunity to monitor other school districts choosing In-Person to learn how the Delta variant acts within a school building, so that when students are brought back to our buildings, we are using the correct mitigation strategies.

Why not start In Person and if an outbreak occurs move to CDL?

Continuity of service is important to us. If we did that and had an outbreak, we would have to pause instruction for five days to prepare to launch CDL. More importantly, no parent or family wishes for anyone to become ill.

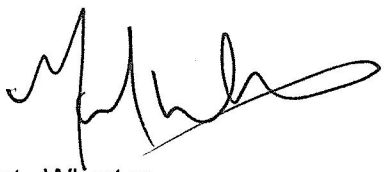
As a district, all of us wish that we were starting with In-Person instruction. The number one charge as the Chief Executive of the School District is to keep students and staff safe. With the current level of spread, and positive test percentage, we cannot keep students safe with In-Person Instruction.

I know this will bring disappointment to some, and relief to others. Regardless of how you feel about this decision, we will need each of your help in making this as positive as possible for our children. We will push hard to get them back in the building, when it is safe. It will only get safer when we as a community do everything we can to slow the spread of COVID, especially the Delta variant.

I know there will be many questions. Please feel free to use the questions@nestucca.k12.or.us to submit those questions. We will also be offering a meeting for all parents, of registered students,to attend, via Zoom, on Wednesday, September 8th, at 7:00pm, where previously submitted questions will be addressed. Please have your questions submitted by 5 pm on Tuesday, September 7th, to the above email address. The district will be pushing out a flier with further meeting details very soon.

I appreciate everyone doing his or her part to mitigate the spread of COVID 19. I know that as a community we can do it, because we have done it before.

Respectfully,



Misty Wharton