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## **County, city schools plan to reopen to in-person instruction starting Jan. 11**

Both school districts in Klamath County plan to reopen schools to in-person instruction for all students starting Jan. 11.

New guidance by Gov. Kate Brown changed COVID-19 case metrics from mandatory to advisory, allowing school districts to work with local public health officials to determine when to reopen schools.

During a meeting Monday with district superintendents and school nurses, county public health officials advised a 10-day waiting period following winter break because of current high case counts of COVID-19 in the county and an expected spike in cases following Christmas and New Year's.

The reopening date allows for 10 days between the holidays and the first day of in-person classes. All students still will return to class Monday, Jan. 4 for a week of distance learning before transitioning to in-person and hybrid models.

"The district has been working with public health since September to keep students in school to the maximum degree possible. It will be good to finally get back to all students having the opportunity to do in-person instruction," said Glen Szymoniak, superintendent of the Klamath County School District.

Paul Hillyer, superintendent of the Klamath Falls City Schools, agreed.

"We are extremely excited to be able to offer in-person instruction to all our students once again," he said. "This is an exciting development that will help students academically, socially, and emotionally. It will also be exciting for our staff who have so much missed the day-to-day interaction with students."

All students in Klamath County returned to comprehensive distance learning Nov. 30 after rising COVID-19 cases in the county exceeded state-mandated metrics. On Jan. 11, students will return to in-person instruction models their schools were following before the closure.

Schools must still follow all safety and health protocols in Oregon Department of Education's [Ready Schools, Safe Learners](#). The new guidance from the governor does not mean schools can resume in-person instruction without regard for COVID-19 spread in the community.

"We will continue to work closely Klamath County Public Health, the Oregon Department of Education, and Oregon Health Authority to ensure our decision-making process remains grounded in sound science, public health, and student, staff, and community safety," Szymoniak said.

Both districts will continue to offer virtual options for students and families who are not comfortable returning to in-person instruction because of COVID-19 concerns.