



August 7, 2020

Dear CAA Families,

You have likely heard that Wednesday Governor Inslee held a press conference to announce new guidelines for reopening Washington private and public schools. While not proclaiming these guidelines as “mandates” it was made clear that not following the guidelines could result in the local (county) health authorities closing schools if they choose to reopen in a way that endangers public health.

The key component of the new guidelines is a “decision tree” meant to guide both school administrators and local health authorities as they determine when it is safe to reopen a school for in-person learning. This decision tree, which I have attached, introduced two new external factors to CAA’s reopening plans.

First, it is recommended that high schools wait to resume in-person learning on their campuses until there is a low risk for community spread. The primary indicator for low risk is a rate of new cases in the county that is less than 25 cases per 100,000 residents. Second, the local health authority must advise the school that based on their understanding of community spread, 1) the community health system has adequate testing capacity for ill students and staff; 2) capacity within the local health department to investigate confirmed COVID-19 cases, quarantine their close contacts and assess whether transmission is occurring in the school; and 3) they have the ability to monitor the level of community spread to determine when a change in education modality is needed.

While this does not change our desire to return to full in-person learning to start the school year or our belief that we have taken all the precautions necessary to provide a learning environment that meets the state Department of Health and CDC guidelines, it does mean that factors outside of our control will determine when all CAA students will be able to return to in-person classes on campus.

Following the Governor’s press conference on Wednesday I reached out to my contact at the Clark County Department of Public Health to determine first, what data source they will use to assess the current level of community spread and thus our risk category. County data is available but varies between the [Clark County COVID-19 website](#), the state [Department of Health COVID-19 data dashboard](#), and the [state COVID-19 risk assessment dashboard](#). Second, how do we get answers to the three questions identified on the decision tree regarding testing capacity, contact tracing capacity, and their ability to monitor and advise education modality decisions.

As you can understand, there is a lot of complexity surrounding our decision to reopen school for in-person learning. It appears from all three data sources that Clark County is currently in the moderate risk category for community spread. This would mean that we would not meet the requirements for high school students to return to in-person learning but we would be able to have limited numbers of students on campus to meet specific learning objectives. However, any return to in-person learning rides on a determination from the Clark County Department of Public Health regarding the risk of community spread and their ability to test, contact trace, and advise our school as we move forward.

Therefore, after seeking input from our school board's Executive Committee, the Oregon Conference Department of Education, and CAA staff we have determined it is in the best interest of our students to delay the start of school. This not only gives us the best chance to get a positive answer from Clark County Public Health it also gives our students an opportunity to enjoy an extended summer break on the chance that at least part of their fall semester of school will include online classes. We do not make this decision lightly and we do so with the understanding that the decision to delay will not extend the school year or eliminate other scheduled school vacations. Due to the lack of extra-curricular activities we will plan to accomplish our primary educational goals within the framework of our existing school calendar, assuming no other unforeseen scenarios arise.

So, what does all this mean? On September 3, we will welcome all new students to campus in small groups for orientation and individual school photos. On September 8, we will welcome returning students to campus in small groups for orientation. Then on September 9, classes will begin. Whether or not classes will begin in-person or online will be determined in consultation with the Department of Public Health and CAA's Administrative team as we process plans through the attached decision tree.

Likely, unless there is a significant change in the trajectory of COVID-19 in Clark County, the majority of our students will start classes online but we hold out hope that through heightened attention to mask wearing and physical distancing county health officials will determine CAA's students returning to campus does not pose a risk to public health.

Should the majority of our students need to return to classes online we will create a schedule that allows small groups of students to be on campus to meet specific learning objectives, all classes will include live video interactions with teachers and students thanks to updated equipment and software, virtual chapels and student association events will take place on a regular basis, and teachers will be available for either in-person or virtual meetings with students.

I hope it is apparent that we intend to do everything within our control to welcome students back on campus for in-person learning as soon and as safe as possible. We are making significant investments in professional development and infrastructure to continually enhance the learning environment at CAA both on campus and virtually. We also understand that COVID-19 has created financial challenges for many families. Through support from our amazing group of constituent churches, their members, and our alumni we have additional gifts available to assist families who have been financially impacted by COVID-19. We are also receiving calls daily from individuals in the broader community who heard from their friends and neighbors about the positive experiences their students have enjoyed at CAA, even during online classes, and we are approaching capacity in many classes. Waiting lists for some elective classes have already begun to form. While none of us want to return to an online learning environment we are determined to make it possible for your students to be fully engaged in a learning system that promotes their growth and development and allows them to interact with their CAA family on a daily basis.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns that we can address together.

Sincerely,
Mr. Heinrich

Gene Heinrich, Principal
Email: Gene.Heinrich@CAAschool.org

Decision Tree for Provision of in Person Learning among Public and Private K-12 Students during COVID-19

Should your community provide in person learning and for whom?

For School Administrators, Local Health Officers, and Community Stakeholders

The risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the school depends on the level of COVID-19 spread in the community and the health and safety measures taken by schools. Consider the following educational modalities based on community transmission and other health and education risks and benefits.

COVID-19 Activity Level

Education Modality*

Extracurricular

HIGH >75 cases/100K/14 days

Other considerations:

- Increasing trend in cases or hospitalizations
- Test positivity >5%
- Other health and education risks and benefits to children and their families

Strongly recommend distance learning with the option for limited in-person learning in small groups, or cohorts, of students for the highest need students, such as students with disabilities, students living homeless, those farthest from educational justice, and younger learners.

Strongly recommend canceling or postponing all in person extra-curricular activities, including sports, performances, clubs, events, etc.

MODERATE 25–75 cases/100K/14 days

Other considerations:

- Increasing trend in cases or hospitalizations
- Test positivity >5%
- Other health and education risks and benefits to children and their families

Recommend distance learning as described above. In addition, consider expanding in person learning to elementary students.

Over time, consider adding hybrid in person learning for middle or high school students if limited COVID transmission occurs in schools.

Strongly recommend canceling or postponing all in-person extra-curricular activities.

Consider low risk activities when all students have some level of in person learning.

LOW <25 cases/100K/14 days

Encourage full-time in person learning for all elementary students and hybrid learning for middle and high school.

Over time and if physical space allows, consider full-time in person learning for middle and high school.

Can the school(s) implement recommended COVID-19 health and safety measures?

For School Administrators and Staff

The risk of COVID-19 spreading in schools depends on the ability of the school to implement [DOH's K-12 health and safety measures](#).

Does the school have the plans, staff, space, and supplies to do the following?

✓ Protect staff and students at higher risk for severe COVID-19 while ensuring access to learning

✓ Transport or facilitate drop-off and pick-up of students

✓ Group students (required in elementary, recommended for middle and high school)

✓ Practice physical distancing of ≥6 feet among students and staff.

✓ Promote frequent hand washing or sanitizing

✓ Promote and ensure face covering use among students and staff

✓ Increase cleaning and disinfection

✓ Improve ventilation

Are all staff trained on health and safety practices?

When any in-person



When all YES



Is the school and health system ready to monitor for and respond to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19?

For Schools and Local Public Health

COVID-19 cases in the school should be expected. The risk of COVID-19 spreading in schools depends on the ability to quickly identify and respond to suspected and confirmed cases and the level of community transmission.

✓ Can the school ensure monitoring of symptoms and history of exposure among students and staff? (attestation acceptable)

✓ Is the school prepared to manage students and/or staff who get sick onsite?

✓ Does the school have letters drafted to inform families and staff about confirmed cases or outbreaks?

✓ Is there adequate access to testing in the community health system for ill students and staff?

✓ Is there capacity in your local health department to investigate confirmed COVID-19 cases, quarantine their close contacts and assess whether transmission is occurring in the school?

✓ Can local public health monitor the level of community spread to determine when a change in education modality is needed?

When all YES

Begin in Person Learning Model and Monitor

*Staff may work in school at any COVID-19 activity level if the school follows DOH and LNI health and safety guidance