

**Contact:**  
**Monique Dugaw**  
**Executive Director**  
**Communications & Public Engagement**  
Educational Service District 112  
360-952-3575  
[monique.dugaw@esd112.org](mailto:monique.dugaw@esd112.org)

## **Cowlitz County School Districts Coordinate to Develop School Reopening Plans**

*\*\*\*School leaders in Cowlitz County anticipate release of 2020-21 school year plans the week of August 10\*\*\**

COWLITZ COUNTY, Wash., July 29, 2020 – Cowlitz County school districts including Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview, Toutle Lake and Woodland School Districts consider multiple options in their return to school planning.

After seeking input from families and staff, and in close consultation with the Cowlitz County Health Department, Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, Longview, Toutle Lake, and Woodland School Districts, plus Wahkiakum School District in Wahkiakum County, are coordinating with one another and considering one of the following back-to-school options:

- **Full in-person return:** Students will return to campus in the fall with physical distancing and masks.
- **Some in-person and some remote/distance learning:** Under this hybrid model students would spend half their time in school and the other half engaged in remote/distance learning.
- **Remote/distance learning:** Under this model, the school year will begin with students engaged in an all-remote/distance learning model. This remote learning option would be an enhanced and more accountable version than the approach used in the spring of 2020.
- **A combination of these options.**

Superintendents in Cowlitz County anticipate sharing back-to-school 2020 plans the week of August 10. According to state guidance, school boards must approve district reopening plans two weeks prior to the official start of the school year and before any plan can be implemented.

While school boards will ultimately decide on school reopening plans, public health officials stress that getting the virus under control to support a return to in-person education is a community responsibility.

“Our community holds the key to getting kids back in the classroom,” said Dr. Alan Melnick, Cowlitz County’s health officer. “By wearing a face covering, maintaining physical distancing and washing our hands frequently, we can help get kids back in the classroom sooner.”

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