



Bend-La Pine Schools School Board Special Meeting Agenda

January 25, 2022, 5:30 PM

Location:

Virtual with live streaming available at <https://bls.fyi/boardmeeting>

1.	<u>Call to Order</u>		
	Speaker(s): Chair Barnes Dholakia		
2.	<u>Pledge of Allegiance</u>		
	Speaker(s): Chair Barnes Dholakia		
3.	<u>Review of Agenda</u>		
	Speaker(s): Chair Barnes Dholakia		
4.	<u>Public Comment</u>		<u>2</u>
	Speaker(s): Chair Barnes Dholakia		
	Description: This is the time provided for individuals to address the Board.		
	Public Comment is accepted via Google Form until 12:00 p.m. on January 25, 2022.		
	Attachments:		
	1.25.22 Public Comment		2
5.	<u>Action Items</u>		
	A. Continuation of In-Person Instruction Plan		7
	Speaker(s): Superintendent Cook		
	Description: Review of Appendix A: Meals		
	Attachments:		
	Executive Summary - Appendix A- Meals		7
	Appendix_A_Bend-La_Pine_Schools_Continuation_of_In-Person_Instruction__2021-22		8
	Additional Questions submitted by the Board		11
	Health Consultants Recommendations for Transition from 10- to 5-day Isolation for Students		14
6.	<u>Adjourn</u>		



PUBLIC COMMENT

January 25, 2022

5.A. – Action – Continuation of In-Person Instruction Plan, Review of Appendix A: Meals

1. Debbie Christian – OSEA Chapter #6

- With communication now coming out about the change to student quarantine/isolation times and the addition of lunch isolation rooms, it seems the board meeting is just a formality for the change and public comment will not be considered in this decision. However, we, as the Classified Staff of BLPS, will still voice our concern: Students returning on days 6-10 are still sick and still emitting the disease. These students will be required to isolate during lunch time, to eat their meals unmasked (obviously) away from their peers. It is highly likely that Classified staff will be assigned to monitor these isolation lunch rooms, especially at the elementary and middle school sites. This assignment will put the Classified staff at higher risk of contracting covid. We know in the lower grade levels students will continue to need assistance with baggies, containers, and straws, so maintaining 6 feet of distance from these still sick, unmasked students will not be our reality. When making the decision to lower the quarantine/isolation times and create isolation rooms for lunch, please have a plan in place to ensure the safety of your Classified staff members assigned to these areas. Additionally, there should be a plan in place for thoroughly cleaning/sanitizing the isolation space, which would likely be a classroom, for safe use by staff/students after the lunch period. We appreciate your consideration to the health and safety of the Classified staff as you make the changes to the quarantine/isolation period. Thank you, OSEA Chapter #6 Executive Board

Comments submitted to the Board for record only; speaker has chosen not to join live to read their comments.

1. Rachel Schendel

- I think this is wonderful! As a mom, it is hard to hear my high school junior talk about how restrictive lunch is. He says there is not enough inside seating and so he has to go searching around the entire school looking for a place to sit. This usually doesn't allow him time to eat his lunch. He doesn't leave campus so he ends up eating alone much of the time which is NOT good for him socially. As a 5th grade teacher, I love the idea of students being able to sit closer to each other while eating. It feels very cruel to make these sweet, innocent children feel like they are doing something wrong because they want to sit by their friends to eat. It's awful! And it certainly doesn't seem very sanitary to have students eating on the floor which is what happens a lot. If students can eat in the cafeteria again, that would be great for teachers as well. We lose a lot of duty free time each day monitoring students with the already added workload that Covid has demanded. I certainly hope Appendix A will be removed. Thank you!

2. Natalie Yurkovich

- I am concerned seeing the topic of this meeting; is the "meal" section Dr. Cook is referring to meaning students will begin eating in the cafeterias? If this is true, I am truly concerned, both as a parent and an employee of the district (High Lakes Elementary Inclusion Specialist). During this current surge, this is simply the wrong time to implement such a different way of eating. I understand fully the stresses put on the staff to cover these meals; I myself have been pulled more times than I can count to cover a lunch duty. No one wants to be pulled unexpectedly, but I, along with my peers, understand this. I know in my heart that how we are handling this is working. It is not the time to change this. I have two children at High Lakes and I would feel extremely uncomfortable with them eating with their classes en masse. I am asking you to not recommend transitioning to cafeteria or whole group meals for the safety of not only the staff, but for the children as well.

3. Stephani Scott

- Dear Bend-La Pine Schools Board of Directors, The Executive Summary does an excellent job of explaining the lack of capacity to continue to implement current lunchtime practices – the toll it takes on staff is not sustainable. The Executive Summary also states that the recommendations within it, "... most importantly could provide some supervision relief to our beleaguered staff." Providing relief to beleaguered staff while also ensuring the safety of students and staff are both profoundly important. Balancing these two priorities, I imagine, is exceedingly difficult - to put it lightly, during these unique and challenging times. I am interested in learning more about how the recommendations in the Summary (to remove Appendix A altogether without replacing it with other guidance and as to the recommended use of the cafeterias) is not a trade-off that decreases administrative burden while increasing risk for students and staff. I hope to hear this discussed in more detail at the January 25th Special Board meeting. The schools are playing a monumental and historic role in carrying the community through this pandemic. The burden, value, and meaning of that work cannot be understated. I thank you for this. Sincerely, Stephani Scott

4. Stephanie Barss

- Please lift the 10 day requirement and allow students to return after 5 days (wearing a good mask) if they have been without a fever and are otherwise well enough/recovered. Please make this change effective immediately. Please do not wait until next week. Every day a child is not allowed to return to school compounds and complicates their ability to catch up. Please do not allow administrative processes to get in the way to make the change effective today.

5. Gary Lewis

- Regarding the special meeting topic of school lunch protocol: I urge the members of the school board to lift the special restrictions that spread students out around the school during lunch time. Thank you.

6. Nancy Stuart

- The Board Meeting is closed for health and safety reasons, yet the recommendation is to loosen our guidelines. This is a conflicting message. Can we keep our current health and safety guidelines until the positive COVID cases are down. Loosening our guidelines sends a mixed message to our families that we can let our guard down at a time when just sent a message that KN95 masks are available. Thank you.

7. Danielle Rosenfield

- I hope that the Board will take into consideration in reviewing this request that the Deschutes County Covid case numbers are at their all-time peak at the moment with omicron numbers soaring. I understand that there is a shortage of employees in the school district and that the extra lunchtime precautions are costly from a personnel perspective. However, moving the kids into a busy cafeteria, where they will take their masks off to eat, seems unnecessarily risky when we are at a time of peak transmission. I sincerely hope that you do not approve the Superintendent's request and continue to implement safety procedures during lunchtime to protect our children. My daughter is in first grade and while she is vaccinated our 1.5 yr old cannot be yet. Please help us protect all of those who cannot yet be vaccinated (immune compromised, young children, etc.) and keep the lunchtime protocols in place.

8. Michelle Beaudreau

- Hello, thank you for reading my comment. I'm not sure if there's a better place for staff to comment. I don't want to speak at the meeting but do want to add the perspective of a certified staff member. I help supervise lunches at Cascade MS. At our school, this change would mean approximately 300 students in the cafeteria each lunch. Although it's next to impossible to maintain 6 feet between students eating lunch in the hallways, the current guidelines allow us to spread students out so that they're not all crammed in one space. We're able to supervise students using three admin and 1 counselor on duty each lunch. Teachers are not part of supervision unless they volunteer to help when we're short on lunch supervision. We don't have any space that could be used for students returning after 5 days of covid quarantining other teachers' classrooms, and I know I would not feel comfortable supervising this space or sharing my classroom if I were a teacher. We have no unused classrooms. This would also require more supervision creating more not less stress. I also believe it would be a HIPPA violation to require all students returning to school post having Covid to eat in one place -- it immediately identifies who they are. Tracking them down during lunch if they don't go to their required location would also be difficult. Finally, one of the great stresses of this year and last is the possibility of contracting Covid and also the risk of passing it on those in my life who are more vulnerable. The student 10-day quarantine, masking, and other mitigating measures are part of what allow us to teach, counsel, support, and provide a safe learning environment as close to "normal" as possible. Reducing any mitigating measures at this point creates more stress making it more difficult for us to do an already challenging job during an already challenging year. Thank you for reading and considering!

9. Ashley Myers

- Please continue to have students eat outside with their own class. I don't want to have my child in the cafeteria with all students

10. Greg Lampard

- As a parent, I am concerned with a change in the lunch policy at our elementary schools. I appreciate the extra work and time faculty are putting in to have students eat in classrooms. I also understand the desire and need to get back to "normal." However, There is a fundamental difference between having students congregate in cafeterias in middle schools and high schools compared with elementary schools. Namely, middle and high school students have choice over where they eat their lunch. If they do not feel comfortable eating in the cafeteria, they can eat in hallways they can eat outside. High school students can go to the car or leave campus. If we change the policy and force all of the elementary school kids to eat together in the cafeteria, what choice do they have to do something that is safer? Will, for example, students be able to eat in less trafficked areas or will they simply have to subject themselves to a cramped cafeteria? Without a safer alternative available to students who are conscientious and concerned about the spread of this virus, at this time, when we are seeing higher rates of transmission and infection, why would we do something that risk putting more students out of school while they recover from this infection? I would ask that if the school board is going to support any change to the lunch policy, they include a clause that allows students choice so that they can eat in better ventilated more open air, less crowded areas. Thank you

11. Megan Dawley

- My daughter is a current student in the Bend-La Pine School District. I respect that there are many sides to current safety protocols for the children in our schools currently. I hope my perspective offers another side to this complex situation. Our home has a medically fragile child. If she were to get Covid, it would absolutely hospitalize her. While my medically fragile child is not yet in Elementary school, our oldest daughter is. We have greatly benefitted from the current safety protocols such as masks, social distancing, and particularly social distancing during the lunch period when masks are off. To be blunt, it would be foolish to have our children gathering in large numbers, un-masked, at a time when our hospitals are full and our school systems are already teetering on whether they can safely stay open. It just doesn't seem like a wise decision. I love that my daughter leaves our home every day excited to go to school! I enjoy seeing her thrive, make friends, and love learning. I fear that if hundreds of students are joining each other in a single space, unmasked, and in close contact, my daughters school will no longer be a safe place for her. I can confidently say that my child is having an excellent experience. She is not lacking in social interaction. She enjoys the social time within her classroom and outdoors during recess. I fully believe that placing her in a cafeteria setting with many other children would not change her "social" experience. If anything, placing her in a cafeteria of unmasked children eating would only negatively impact her by increasing exposure risk to Covid, potentially increasing case numbers within the schools, and increasing the chances of our schools needing to close due to lack of staff from illness. One of our family goals is to educate others on our own experience as a family raising children with disabilities. We are often a demographic that is not considered when making large scale decisions. We simply ask that you would consider those that have no control over their risk factors and take the most safety precautions possible in hopes that it protects them. We greatly love this school system and we appreciate all the hard work that keeps our students thriving! Thank you, Megan Dawley

12. Stephanie Russell

- I am a parent. Please take a close look at how high school sports are being impacted by the return to play after Covid. It seems that the roads are really strict and unfair to the player.

13. Ryan Andrews

- I have a daughter in second grade at Elk Meadow. She has down syndrome and is part of the special education services. I support the removal of all Covid related restrictions and safety measures related to in person education and meals. I believe that normal social interactions, including mealtime and the discontinuation of masks, is more important to my child's social and academic development than any safety obtained for her through the Covid restrictions that have been in place.



ACTION ITEM: Removal of Appendix A: Meals from Continuation of In-Person Instruction Plan

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Steve Cook, Superintendent

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

New guidance from the CDC and OHA shifted the isolation and quarantine period to a standard 5-days (for students that meet the guidelines), returning on the 6th day with a well-fitted mask and enhanced restrictions through the 10th day. In discussion with the districts in our region and many of the larger districts in the state, I found that every district I have reached out to has implemented these changes completely: 5-day isolation/quarantine period for both students and staff, return on day 6.

The struggle to adopt these recommended changes in Bend-La Pine Schools, is due to the challenge it creates during lunch period at each of our respective schools. We are currently implementing a resource-demanding lunch plan at every school to cohort students as much as possible and to space them out throughout the school as much as possible to minimize spread of the virus and, subsequently, loss of learning time for students due to possible exclusion. These plans vary in exactly how they are being implemented by school; however, the one factor that is absolutely consistent for each school is - the number of staff, supervision hours, and demand for coverage to meet the expectations of our responsibilities, to live within the parameters of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and to ensure the safety of our students and staff, have completely tapped our resources. Any new demands or additional asks to the plates of our teachers, our administrators and the staff in our schools will take a tremendous toll on staff morale.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

Allow schools and administrators the flexibility to use their cafeterias as they are used to, spreading kids out to the extent possible by removing the current lunch plan expectations. This would free up a tremendous amount of supervision responsibility and a tremendous number of rooms/spaces that are currently being used to cohort student lunch groups. It would also provide the opportunity to give a lot of relief to staff who can't use their rooms during student lunch due to students eating their lunches in these rooms and reduce the load on custodial staff and teachers who are cleaning lunch mess in many classrooms. It would also reduce the operational moves needed at the building level for administrators and staff to be prepared to eat indoors or outdoors on any given day when it warms a bit. In return for removing this lunch plan, schools would be expected to have a supervised lunch space for isolated students returning to school for days 6-10 that was separate from the general population during the lunch period. Each of these spaces would be unique to the facilities in which they are operated in our 33 schools. In each instance, we would ask that the parameters of the space be as follows: separate from the main lunch space, well-ventilated, students spaced apart, shortened time unmasked.

This recommendation aligns us to the current guidelines of all of our public health partners, brings us in closer alignment with the plans of other districts both in the region and the state and most importantly could provide some supervision relief to our beleaguered staff.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

I move to remove Appendix A: Meals from the Continuation of In-Person Instruction Plan.

Appendix A

Meals

General - Food Service and School Meals

- Students will be expected to wear masks when moving through the food service line.
- Staff should wear masks at all times during meal preparation and service, and during breaks, except when eating or drinking.
- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving students through the food service lines.
- Students will eat meals outdoors, as weather permits.
- Staff will clean frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces that come in contact with food will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.
- According to the CDC, given very low risk of transmission from surfaces and shared objects, there is no need to limit food service approaches to single use items and packaged meals.
- Schools will promote handwashing before, after, and during shifts, before and after eating, after using the toilet, and after handling garbage, dirty dishes, blowing noses, or removing gloves, to name a few ways handwashing will be promoted.
- Schools have improved ventilation in food preparation, service, and seating areas.
- Contact tracing will be implemented, as needed, to identify close contacts who were without mask(s), and within 6-feet of others, for more than 15 minutes (cumulative in 24 hours).
- Universal, free breakfast will be available at all school sites. Free supper will be available at select school sites.

Elementary School Meals

- Meals will be eaten outside, within the school fence perimeter, as weather permits.
 - Breakfast will be consumed in classrooms.
 - Students will maintain 6-foot distancing, to the extent possible, and follow assigned seating charts.
 - Lunch will be eaten outside, within the school fence perimeter, as weather permits.
 - When eating outside is not possible, groups of students will eat in designated areas inside the school.
 - When eating lunch indoors, students will maintain 6-foot distancing, to the extent possible, and follow assigned seating charts.

Middle School Meals

- Meals will be eaten outside, within the school fence perimeter, as weather permits
 - When eating outside is not possible, groups of students will eat in designated areas inside the school.
 - Social distancing of 6-feet, to the extent possible, will be expected to be

maintained indoors.

High School Meals

- Meals will be eaten outside, as weather permits
 - When eating outside is not possible, groups of students will eat in designated areas inside the school.
 - Social distancing of 6-feet, to the extent possible, will be expected to be maintained indoors.

Grouping and Contact Tracing

Elementary School Grouping and Contact Tracing

- Students on the same bus are considered a group.
 - In the event of a positive case, drivers will be asked for seating charts and interviewed regarding student adherence to distancing and masking. Positive students may be interviewed for close contact information.
- Students in the same grade level are considered a group.
 - Teachers will keep seating charts and maintain 3-feet of distance between students, to the extent possible.
 - During small group instruction of students at the same grade level, teachers will maintain seating charts, enforce 3-feet of distance between students, to the extent possible.
- Teachers are expected to keep seating charts for the purpose of contact tracing.

Middle School Grouping and Contact Tracing

- Students on the same bus are considered a group.
 - In the event of a positive case, drivers will be asked for seating charts and interviewed regarding student adherence to distancing and masking. Positive students may be interviewed for close contact information.
- Athletics and activities are considered a group.
 - In the event of a positive case, coaches and/or staff will be interviewed regarding student adherence to distancing and masking. Positive students may be interviewed for close contact information.
- Teachers are expected to keep seating charts for the purpose of contact tracing.

High School Grouping and Contact Tracing

- Students on the same bus are considered a group.
 - In the event of a positive case, drivers will be asked for seating charts and interviewed regarding student adherence to distancing and masking. Positive students may be interviewed for close contact information.
- Athletic and activities teams are considered a group.
 - In the event of a positive case, coaches and/or staff will be interviewed regarding student adherence to distancing and masking. Positive students may be interviewed for close contact information.
- Teachers are expected to keep seating charts for the purpose of contact tracing.



Additional questions submitted by the Board

1. What process are we using to determine which students/staff are eligible to return at day 6?
 - A. Staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 that have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms are improving (or asymptomatic) may return as early as day 6. Staff who return on, or after, day 6 are required to wear a properly fitted medical grade 3-ply or KN95 face covering. They are also required to eat meals away from others.

Staff are notified by our COVID-19 Response and Recovery team and/or nurse by letter and generally, as a courtesy, by text or phone call.

The same will be true for student cases.

Information channels for distribution of COVID-19 isolation information have included family and staff newsletters, podcasts, school newsletters, news interviews, board reports, website content, and isolation letters, to name a few.

2. If students/staff return and are still very symptomatic (lots of coughing, blowing noses, etc), are we sending them home and who is making that determination?
 - A. If students or staff return from quarantine early and they are still demonstrating substantial symptoms, building administrators and school nurses may evaluate and recommend returning home until symptoms resolve. The same is true for staff isolation protocols and would be true for student isolation protocols, if isolation is shortened.
3. How are we defining a well-fitted mask? Who is checking to ensure these students are wearing masks that stay over their nose/mouth?
 - A. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Staff will continue with mitigation strategies including ongoing visual assessments and reminders to students/staff to include mask adjustments. Families will be contacted to assist with compliance, as appropriate.

4. CDC guidance includes the following line: Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days. - How are we ensuring our immunocompromised students and staff are not exposed to students/staff who are returning on day 6? What protections are we offering for the medically vulnerable in our educational community?
 - A. We will continue preventative measures against COVID-19 which include wearing a well fitted mask, social distancing, ventilation, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfecting practices per district protocols. Staff working with our highest risk students may be reassigned until day 11 of their isolation, if appropriate.

5. CDC guidance includes this line: If they are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to quarantine/isolate for 10 days. -If we have students/staff return on day 6 and they are unable to wear their mask properly, will they be excluded until after day 10 and who is making this determination? Will our educators know which students/staff are returning under this guidance?
 - A. Students/staff who are unable to wear a mask will be excluded from school for at least 10 days.

6. Per CDC: "Stay home from school and all other extra-curricular activities, as well as community events, social gatherings, etc. that take place with anyone that is not in their household." - Are students/staff returning day 6-10 exclude from extracurriculars?
 - A. This applies to those in days 6-10 of isolation. A person who was asked to isolate because they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should take those steps.

7. "Oregon Department of Education strongly recommends that all schools immediately implement stable lunch cohorts (for example, table groups, lunch bunches, etc.) where this is not already in practice," the agency said. "If a case occurs within a lunch cohort, the entire lunch cohort group should be considered exposed. Similarly, when a case occurs in an indoor unmasked extracurricular cohort, the entire cohort may be considered exposed." -With a plan to go back to the cafeteria, does that mean the entire cohort eating at that time would be exposed due to one positive case?
 - A. If contact tracing permits, close contacts will be identified (within 6 feet) and quarantined if not fully vaccinated. Depending on the level of case investigation and depth of contact tracing, the lunch classroom cohort could be quarantined if not fully vaccinated.

Does lunch in the cafeteria include assigned seating for contract tracing purposes?

A. Yes, (primarily) elementary.

Does that mean the entire group would be subject to quarantine protocols? How does that affect staffing/capacity per above in terms of ensuring well-fitting masking procedures are followed?

A. See answer to question above.

8. Are we going to have separate eating areas for those returning from isolation vs quarantine, as it would seem we would not want those two populations mixing from day 6-10?

A. Yes, students' days 6-10 of isolation would be separated from those not in isolation during meals. Students returning from quarantine would be treated similarly as students participating in test-to-stay. They are part of the general population and not subject to separation unless they demonstrate or develop symptoms.

Are we still having lunch outside when weather permits per previous guidance with this plan?

A. The Bend-La Pine Schools Health Consultants Team recommends that the District return decision making control to school administrators to determine location for meals (indoor or outdoor) and continue using administrator judgement to determine if outdoor conditions are conducive to dining outside, rather than a prescribed temperature.

9. Can you please describe the guidance/professional opinion from our medical advisory committee on this recommended updated plan?

A. Recommendation from the Health Consultants Team is attached.

January 21, 2022

RE: Bend-La Pine Schools Health Consultants Team Recommendations - Transition from 10- to 5-day Isolation for Students

The team understands the need to implement a safe strategy for return of students from isolation or quarantine back to the classroom, using new CDC guidelines, though some members of the Bend-La Pine Schools Health Consultants Team are apprehensive about moving from 10- to 5-day isolation and quarantine during our community's biggest wave of COVID to date.

To that end, the team recommends several strategies to promote healthy school environments for students and staff returning from isolation after day 5. Communication from schools should remind families and staff that a 10-day isolation continues to be the 'gold standard', but is no longer required, only recommended.

ISOLATION

Students, teachers, and staff who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate for at least 5 days. Students and staff can end isolation as soon as day 6 of isolation IF:

They are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved,

AND they wear a [well-fitting mask](#) KN95 or 3-ply medical grade face covering around others in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period. This includes during in-school instruction and school-related activities. If students are unable to wear a mask when around others, they should continue to isolate themselves for 10 days.

Note: Share with families that KN95 or 3-ply medical grade face coverings are available to students at their school and that students may also wear their own KN95 or 3-ply medical grade face covering.

AND, during times in the school day when students or staff members may typically remove masks indoors (such as during lunches, snacks, etc.), schools have a plan for those students/staff to adequately distance themselves from others and ensure they wear their masks when not actively participating in these activities (such as when they are not actively eating).

Note: Per the CDC, eating and drinking will only be allowed to take place when you are not in the presence of others.

District isolation communication to students should continue to include Return to Play information for student athletes, including the [BLS COVID-19 Return to Play Form](#).

Additionally, the team believes the District should return decision-making control to school administrators to determine location for meals (indoor or outdoor), allowing administrators to use their judgement to determine if outdoor conditions are conducive to eating, rather than following a prescribed temperature.

Communication to families/staff should include clear masking expectations for days 6-10, if returning to school or work.