

October 26, 2020



**Jackson County School District #91 (Butte Falls)**

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**Dear Students, Parents, Staff and Community Members,**

**Thank you for working with us to get school restarted.** We have just completed week three of our restart of school. I want to give you an update on our plans for this fall, but first must specifically thank some people who were absolutely essential in saving our school and getting things up and running in the aftermath of the Obenchain wildfire.

First, I am thankful that we did not suffer any loss of human life because of the fire. That is because you took care of yourselves and your loved ones. Many of you also looked out for friends, neighbors, acquaintances and strangers. Thank you, Butte Falls Volunteer Fire Department and many residents of our District (Loggers, Retired Loggers, others with grit and persistence) who battled the fire early on as regional and state resources were concentrated on the urban Almeda wildfire in Ashland, Talent, Phoenix and Medford. Our local heroes were joined by other crews (Oregon Department of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, Crews from Utah, Idaho, and Tualatin, Oregon). We hurt for those among us who lost homes and businesses, one of whom is a fellow school employee and another, one of our students. Thank you, to the local churches and philanthropic groups who have helped our students and families regroup and move forward.



Thank you, teachers and support staff who reached out to our students and families even before the flames were extinguished to make sure everyone was safe and accounted for as well as those in our community who provided safety for animals (horses, goats, chickens, cats, dogs) when others were forced to evacuate. Thank you, Jackson County Sheriff's Department, Oregon State Police, and Oregon National Guard, for notifying us of imminent danger and for limiting access during and after the fire to protect property and lives. There were so many brave and thoughtful actions by people that occurred in the midst of a terrifying event.

Thank you, to the many others whose helpful actions went unseen and, therefore, unreported. That does not diminish the value of those kindnesses. We are grateful for the crews that restored power, phones, water, and sewer, and to those who are helping clean up the impacts of heavy-duty fire-fighting equipment on properties and wildlands. We have much to be grateful for even as we live in a stressful season of pandemic.

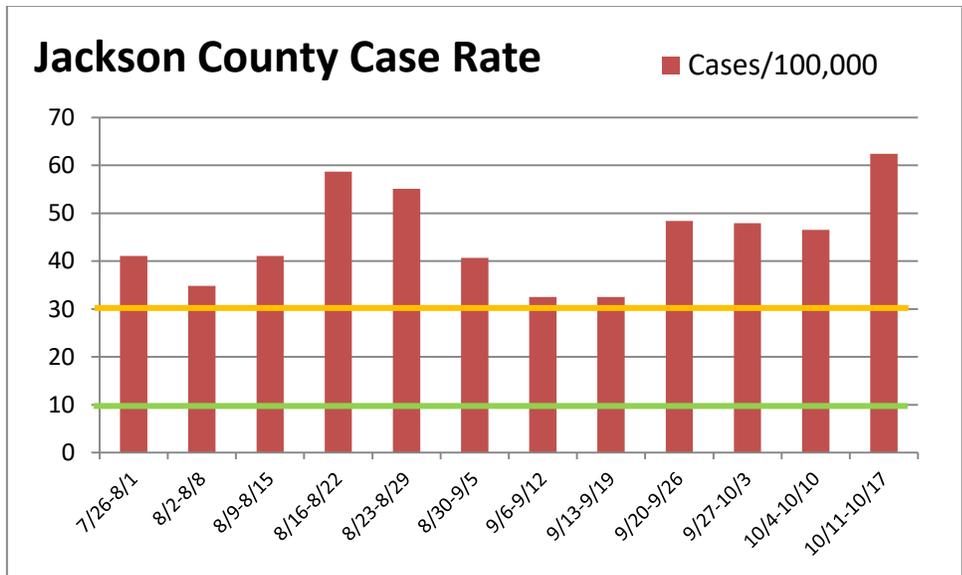
**Enrollment is stable.** This is a very important fact as it means we are able to keep all of our staff and focus them on serving students. Our enrollment as of October 1 was 225. That is slightly higher than our average for last year. Our average class size is about 17. Our smallest is 13 and our largest is kindergarten (at 27). We have redistributed our educational assistants to provide direct assistance for grades K-8 and are assessing where to best add support now that school has been underway for a month.

**Free School Day Breakfast and Lunch.**

We will continue to support students and families by providing free fresh breakfast and lunch meals for our students for the days school is in session. Food and materials deliveries will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our students (and any other children ages 1-18 living in the home) are eligible for meals.

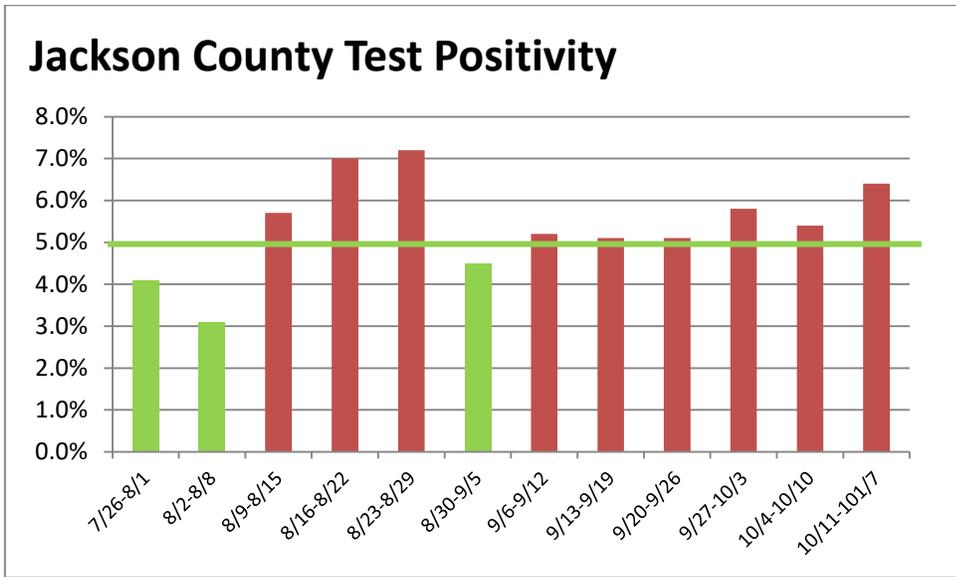
If you have not yet signed up but would like to, please contact the school Office. We plan to deliver meals on Tuesday only during Thanksgiving Week. If you need or know of anyone needing additional information about where children can obtain meals beyond our District program, please visit the Hunger Free Oregon web page at <https://oregonhunger.org> or contact Bridget McGonagle, Program Director at The Landing at 541.865.3500.

**Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) extended through January 28, 2021.** We appreciate our families working with us to implement CDL. Our original plan was to open with a Hybrid Model (a combination of CDL and on-site instruction) but the COVID-19 rates in Jackson County have kept us from meeting the Oregon requirements for bringing students on campus. Unfortunately, the infection rates increased after Labor Day so, after a recent discussion with the School Board, we will continue CDL at least through the Second Quarter (until January 28, 2021). **Below are the County statistics for the two basic measures that undergird this decision.**



**Q: When can we get back to on-site school?**

**A: The weekly CASE RATE must be below 30/100,000 for at least three weeks before we can consider bringing K-3 back to campus and below 10/100,000 for us to bring older students back.**



**Q: When can we get back to on-site school?**

**A: The weekly TEST POSITIVITY must be below 5% *for at least three weeks* before we can consider bringing students back to campus.**

**We have added back some school days to the school calendar.** The Obenchain Wildfire disrupted our school calendar substantially in September. In order to reclaim some of that time for learning, we have made the following adjustments to add back four days of regular instruction.

- **Monday, November 23**, has been converted from a Parent Conference day to a regular school day. Our teachers have encouraged us to make this change so students can have more instruction this fall. Note: Our Parent Conferences will be scheduled and held virtually before Thanksgiving Day. We will share more information about Conference schedules in the next several weeks
- **Friday, February 19, Friday, June 4, and Thursday, June 17**, have been converted from reserved Snow Makeup Days to regular school days.

**We welcome your feedback.** One thing that is helping us improve our support for students is feedback from parents and students. We plan to periodically survey our students and parents this year, so I encourage your participation if you receive a survey. In the meantime, if you have questions, comments or concerns, please email me at [feedback@buttefalls.k12.or.us](mailto:feedback@buttefalls.k12.or.us). Your interest and support are greatly appreciated.

Stay safe and be well!

Sincerely,

Dr. Phil Long, Superintendent  
 JCSD#91 (Butte Falls)