

## Frequently Asked Questions from the School Board Meeting (2/8/21)

### Q1: What is the Clarkston School District's Plan for in-person learning?

*"Is there a plan to return to full-time face-to-face this school year?"*

*"Is the District taking advantage of every square inch of space for classrooms, gyms, common areas, etc.?"*

*"If we were to open full-time, could we not maintain the online learning for folks who are still concerned about COVID? This would reduce classroom numbers and make the 6' distancing more achievable."*

A: The Clarkston School District's goal is to have students back face-to-face this year. However, in order to do this, the six-foot separation requirement would need to be changed by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). (Please see the note below\*.) In the summer of 2019, Clarkston School District measured and reviewed the square footage of usable and appropriate teaching space in each building. It was determined that based on the number of available teaching staff we could not open in-person school for all 2,450 students.

If the six-foot rule is changed or eliminated by the DOH we will be able to resume in-person school for all of our students. We are hopeful that this will be the case once school starts back up in the fall. Until then, we must comply with the DOH and Washington State Labor and Industry (L&I) standards.

\*Please review this official Washington State document entitled:

COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Health Requirements: *Governor's Proclamation Overview*

### **Safety and Health Requirements**

All businesses have a general obligation to keep a safe and healthy work site in accordance with state and federal law and safety and health rules for a variety of workplace hazards. In addition, they must comply with the following COVID-19 work site- specific safety practices as outlined in the Governor's *Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery Proclamation 20-25.12 et seq.*, and in accordance with L&I *General Requirements and Prevention Ideas for Workplaces* ([www.Lni.wa.gov/go/F414-164-000](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/go/F414-164-000)) and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources and Recommendations ([www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/workplace](http://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/workplace)).

Employers must specifically ensure operations follow the main L&I COVID-19 requirements to protect workers, including:

- Educate workers in the language(s) they understand best about the coronavirus and how to prevent transmission, and the employer's COVID-19 policies.
- Maintain minimum six-foot separation between all employees (and customers) in all interactions at all times. When strict physical distancing is not feasible for a specific task, other prevention measures are required, such as use of barriers, minimizing staff or customers in narrow or enclosed areas, and staggering breaks and work shift starts. (<https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/f414-169-000.pdf>)

**Q2: Can the District separate K-6 from 7-12 when making decisions?**

*“Is it possible to separate this conversation into the K-6 littles and the 7-12 olders?”*

A: Yes. Is it possible to separate the conversation by K-6 & 7-12. The guidance from the DOH and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) suggests that we should be prioritizing younger students when we consider bringing students back for in-person instruction. We will keep this in mind as we continue to move forward with our plans.

**Q3: Can you help us understand the 6’ social distancing requirement?**

*“Is the 6’ social distancing considered a requirement or a recommendation?”*

*“Who can authorize 3’ social distancing?”*

A: According to the Safety and Health Requirements from the Governor’s Proclamation document (as mentioned in question 1), the DOH has ultimate authority on the six-foot requirement.

**Q4: What if we don’t follow guidance from public health?**

*“So if we do not follow the guidelines, what are the consequences for school? Will they withhold the funding?”*

*“Can people sign a waiver to release liability?”*

A: It is our highest priority to keep Clarkston School District children and families safe. It is also important for us to follow the recommendations from the DOH in order to continue to be covered by liability insurance from our provider.

**Q5: Why are other local districts allowing students to attend full-time and in-person?**

*“Why are Asotin Schools back to full-time and at full capacity?”*

*“Please tell us what the difference is between what Lewiston School District has done and what we are failing to do.”*

A: Each of the districts in the surrounding region are able to do in-person for a variety of reasons. The Asotin School District has demonstrated that they have the appropriate space and staffing to have all students K-8 in-person. The Pullman School District has newer classrooms that are larger than classrooms in the Clarkston School District, and therefore are able to accommodate K-6 students in-person. The Lewiston School District follows the rules of Idaho.

**Q8: What efforts are being made to support the mental health of our students?**

*“What is being done to support mental health needs of kids?”*

A: The Clarkston School District is aware how this affects the mental health of our students, families and staff. We care deeply about the wellness of our students. We understand how hard this has been for families and students. We have tried to support students in a number of ways including: a partnership with Quality Behavioral Health (QBH), social workers and counselors at school to support the students, families and staff.

**Q9: Can you explain why Asotin County is in Phase 1?**

*“I understand Asotin County is grouped with Spokane. What is the best way to remedy this, contact legislators or the governor’s office?”*

*“Do you know why DOH does not look at school metrics only instead of lumping the entire population?”*

A: Asotin County was placed in the East Region of the state with all of the counties in the eastern section of the state. We are grouped with Spokane and Whitman counties. When these larger counties increase in any one of the four COVID metrics, we experience those effects. As of Friday, February 12, Asotin County and the East Region has been moved to Phase 2. If you have an opinion about this please contact the Governor’s office or your local representative to express your concerns.

**Q10: What are some of the statistics for the Clarkston School District and Asotin County?**

*“Does the number count elderly or just the student population?”*

*“Where are the cases? In nursing homes?”*

A: For all information relating to Clarkston School District COVID data, please refer to our weekly Friday report located on our Facebook page or website. Any specific questions about Asotin County COVID data can be found here: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/DataDashboard>.