Key Messages for School and District Leaders - About the 2021-22 School Year

*Use these key messages to initiate conversation and communication with staff, students, families and your community about the upcoming school year. These messages are customizable, and intended to serve as a starting point for school leaders to modify as needed to communicate with their community.*

**Our schools will welcome all students back to full-time \_\_\_ days per week of in-person learning.**

* [Insert local details] about remote learning if applicable.

**Our transition back to school will focus on care and connection.**

* We want you to know it is a priority to create spaces where your child feels safe, cared for, and connected to the learning environment.
* Working together, we can harness this opportunity to rekindle joy and learning in the classrooms, auditoriums, and playgrounds.
* The transition back to school may prompt a range of emotions for you and/or your child - from stress and uncertainty to excitement and opportunity.
* In our community, students and families are still recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Insert local details]

**Our teachers and school staff are the heart and soul of our schools.**

* Our teachers and school staff have pivoted and learned new ways to work together and with students in the past year. The learning curve for online instruction was steep, and we climbed it together. And we accomplished this while experiencing the challenges of a global pandemic.
* We know that similar to students and families, teachers and staff are experiencing mixed emotions about the return to school ranging from stressful and worried to eager and excited.
* We are committed to supporting our teachers and staff, honoring their lived experiences, and making it a priority to focus on health and well-being.
* [Insert local details]

**New state guidance shifts decision-making back to a local model where school leaders and communities can make decisions that serve students best.**

* As Oregon enters the next chapter of the COVID-19 pandemic, K-12 schools will no longer operate under emergency state direction.
* In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school district [Insert local details]

**As schools plan for the fall 2021 in-person school year, it is important to remember: Our communities will be living with the virus until there is widespread immunity.**

* COVID-19 continues to change with new variants and our knowledge of mitigation efforts grows over time.
* Right now, the best tools to protect individuals are vaccination for those eligible, physical distancing, face coverings, ventilation and airflow, hand hygiene, and staying home if ill or exposed to someone with COVID-19. Opportunity for transmission decreases with each mitigation effort that is implemented.

**There are a few requirements from the state that each school district is required to follow**.

* These are requirements that exist in federal or state law or rule.
* All individuals on school buses are required to wear face coverings as described by the CDC’s order for mandatory use of face coverings on public transit. This order remains in effect until lifted by the federal government and cannot be waived by state or local authorities.
* Other requirements include maintaining a communicable disease management plan, excluding students and staff who may have been exposed to certain illnesses, maintaining an isolation space in schools and submitting a plan for operation.
* In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School District [Insert local details]

**We have more than a year of practicing health and safety protocols.**

* Everyone in our community shares in the responsibility to keep our communities safe and healthy.
* In order to return to full-time, in-person instruction, this responsibility requires each person to both maintain their own health and take actions to protect the health of those they come in contact with.
* We will provide our staff with training, support and clear guidelines. [Insert local details]

**The vast majority of health and safety protocols are now advisory.**

* The shift to advisory means that school districts, including ours, determine how to implement health and safety protocols like physical distancing and face coverings.
* In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School District [Insert local details]

**Face coverings are**  {insert local details (ie. required / optional / encouraged)}  **in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School District for all students and staff.**

* In many of our school settings, the majority of students are unvaccinated.
* We know that face coverings, along with physical distancing, handwashing and ventilation and airflow, are effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
* Visitors and volunteers in our schools will follow these protocols [Insert local details]
* In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school district [Insert local details]