



# Oregon Schools Briefing to the House Interim Special Committee on COVID-19 Response

January 13, 2022

Colt Gill, Director of the Oregon Department of Education

# Today

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- OHA/ODE School Health Advisory - Omicron Variant
- Recent CDC Isolation and Quarantine Changes + Test to Stay
- Current Status, Contingency Planning, and Decision Tools
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Funds
  - Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan



# OHA/ODE School Health Advisory - Omicron Variant

# North Star

**It's our highest priority is to keep kids learning in-person, every day.**

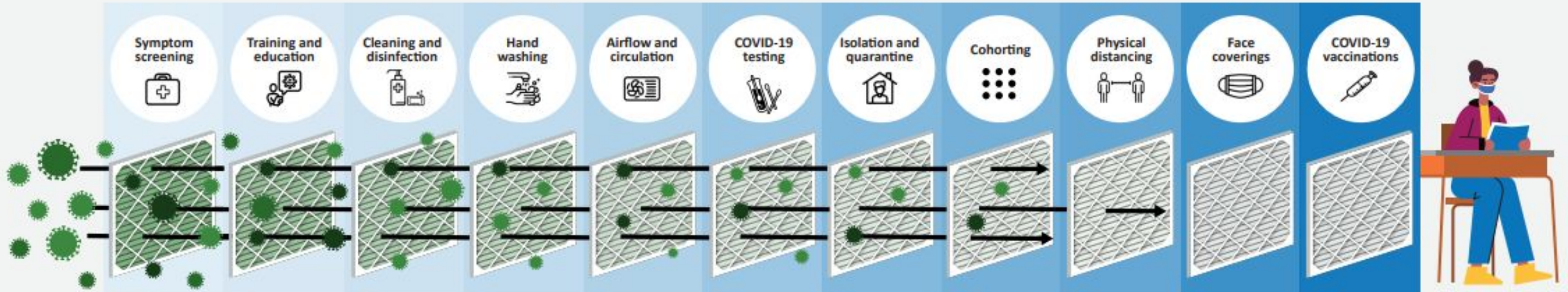
- Nearly all children learn better when taught in-person.
- Children and families rely on schools to provide a caring and safe environment.
- Many need access to a solid breakfast and a warm lunch.
- For parents and families, consistency matters, and for many, school is a way to ensure they can go to work and support their family.

# School Health *Advisory*

- The ODE/OHA School Health Advisories name actions that individuals, families, schools, and/or communities can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and help schools stay open to in-person instruction.
- January's School Health Advisory is the most critical and urgent issued to date.
- Omicron variant may result in less severe disease than previous variants but it spreads much more quickly.
- This surge is likely to be much steeper than the Delta variant, impacting schools, hospitals, and other sectors and workforces more severely than we experienced in the fall.
- Indoor settings in which people do not adhere with purpose and intention to masking requirements and other layered safety protocols is expected to result in rapid transmission.
- Student access to in-person instruction is under threat.

# Layered Health and Safety Protocols

Layered health and safety measures help us maximize full-time, in-person learning and reduce disruptions for students, staff and families. The virus can pass through one or two layers but not all. That's why every layer matters and every layer helps keep students in class.



# School should:

- Exclude students or staff that show COVID-19 symptoms or are a close contact. Schools may offer testing to the individual through OHA's Diagnostic Testing Program.
- Reinforce the importance of [layered mitigation efforts](#). Plan to re-teach appropriate use of face coverings, reestablish consistent physical distancing practices, incorporate frequent handwashing, recheck ventilation systems, and attend to [other layered health and safety measures](#).
- Work with health partners to offer vaccination clinics and encourage eligible students and staff to get their vaccinations and boosters.
- Pause extracurricular activities **or** ensure they follow the same layered mitigation safety protocols practiced during the school day.
- Hold events (parent/family conferences, fundraisers, etc.) online, rather than in-person.

# Families should:

- Not send your children to school if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Get vaccinated now if you're not. Vaccination remains the best protection against serious illness from COVID-19 and reduces spread of the disease.
- Get boosted if you're not. If you're eligible for a booster, make your appointment today. Boosters provide an extra layer of protection needed to slow spread of the omicron variant.
- Limit gatherings and non-essential activities with people from other households to the extent possible throughout January and February. Before getting together with family, friends and loved ones, ask if attendees have received their COVID-19 vaccinations, including boosters, and consider postponing visits if many attendees are not up to date with recommended doses.





# Recent CDC Updates

# Up To Date On Vaccinations

CDC recommends that individuals remain up to date with their vaccines, which includes [additional doses](#) for those who are immunocompromised or booster doses at regular time points. Within the K-12 setting, those who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination include:

- Individuals 18 or older who have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.
- Youth 5-17 years who have completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Individuals who have confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (individuals who have tested positive using a COVID-19 viral test.)

# CDC's Isolation and Quarantine Changes to 5 Days

Students, teachers, and staff who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are **up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination as defined by CDC** do not need to quarantine. These individuals should:

- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 10 days from the date of their last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0) and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
- [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after having close contact with someone with COVID-19. If they test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should follow recommendations for isolation.

# CDC's Isolation and Quarantine Changes to 5 Days

Students, teachers, and staff who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are **NOT up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination as defined by CDC** should:

- Quarantine for at least 5 days after their last close contact with someone with COVID-19. Individuals in quarantine should not go to school or school events in-person during their quarantine period unless they are participating in a school sponsored test to stay protocol.
- If unable to wear a mask, an individual should complete a 10 day quarantine
- If an individual is unable to quarantine, they should wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public for 10 days
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of their last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0) and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Get tested at least 5 days after having close contact with someone with COVID-19. If they test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should follow recommendations for isolation.

# CDC's Isolation and Quarantine Changes to 5 Days

Students, teachers, and staff **who have presumed or confirmed COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19** should [isolate](#) regardless of vaccination status.

- Individuals can end isolation after 5 full days since symptom onset if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved.
  - Day 0 is the day symptoms began or the day the person took a test that had a positive result. Day 1 is the day after symptoms began or, if a person does not have symptoms, the day after the person tested positive (use the date the test was collected).
  - If they continue to have fever or their other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of [isolation](#), they should stay in isolation until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved.
- Individuals should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public places for an 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation.

# Oregon's Test To Stay Protocol

- In following the CDC recommendation of a 5-day quarantine period, the test to stay protocol's eligibility and testing timeframes have been updated to align.
- Additionally, Oregon schools may now choose to offer test to stay with newly available at-home iHealth COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests.
- For test to stay using at-home tests, schools will distribute a single test kit containing two tests to exposed students and staff. Testing is then performed at home and students who continue to test negative may be allowed to continue with in-person instruction in a modified quarantine. For children under age 15, the parent/guardian must perform the testing.
- Schools may offer both at-school and at-home test to stay options and may enroll in self-testing [here](#).

# Booster Availability

- Following updated guidance from the CDC, and the successful review by the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workshop, Governor Kate Brown announced last week that children age 12 and older across Oregon are now eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech booster vaccine dose.
- Additionally, the CDC shortened the time between the completion of the primary vaccination of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and a booster dose to at least 5 months and to allow for a third primary dose for certain immunocompromised children 5 through 11 years of age.



# Current Status, Contingency Planning, and Decision Tools



# Impacts of Omicron

- Like other sectors (health care, airline travel, professional and collegiate sports), the education workforce will likely be impacted.
- Some schools may need to move to short-term distance learning due to staff shortages or, possibly, broad community spread.
- Staff absenteeism rates across 20 Northwest Regional ESD School Districts this week range from 10-17%. Student COVID cases have doubled what they were before winter break. Includes: Astoria, Beaverton, Banks, Sherwood, and others.
- Local school districts, in partnership with local health authorities, make the decision to serve students in-person or through distance learning.

# Supports for Continuity of Instruction

## Supports for Continuity of Services

Since March, 2020, school leaders in Oregon have navigated an ongoing pandemic, wildfires and ice storms. Each of these events disrupted school for students, families and staff, and required significant response from schools and districts. As we head into the 2021-22 school year, our priority is to implement the protocols needed to reliably and safely hold school in-person, every school day, for all students, all year long.

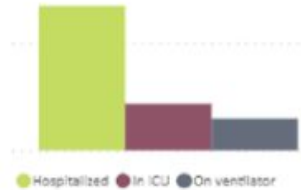
At the same time, it is important to be as prepared as possible for future disruptions to in-person learning, whether from disease, wildfires, ice storms or other circumstances which may affect a school building, a district or an entire region. One of the hardest lessons learned from the last 18 months is how unprepared our systems were for the unexpected. Now we know more, and we can be more prepared.

Decisions about when or how to operate school are in the hands of district leaders and school boards. These decisions are significant and complex and have impact on students, families, staff and community members now, and in the long term. The importance and weight of these decisions cannot be underemphasized; ODE stands with school partners to support the decision making process and implementation of these decisions.

The resources below will be helpful to schools and districts as they plan for and support continuity of services for students and families should the need arise.



[Oregon Data for Decisions Guide](#)



[Oregon Data for Decision Dashboard](#)



[Care & Connection](#)



[Transportation Supports](#)



[School District Contracting Opportunities](#)



[Planning Guide for Short-Term Distance Learning](#)



[Planning Guide for Long-Term Distance Learning](#)



[Oregon Child Nutrition Programs COVID-19 Response and Resources](#)



Telemental Health (under development)



[Verizon Distance Learning Website](#)



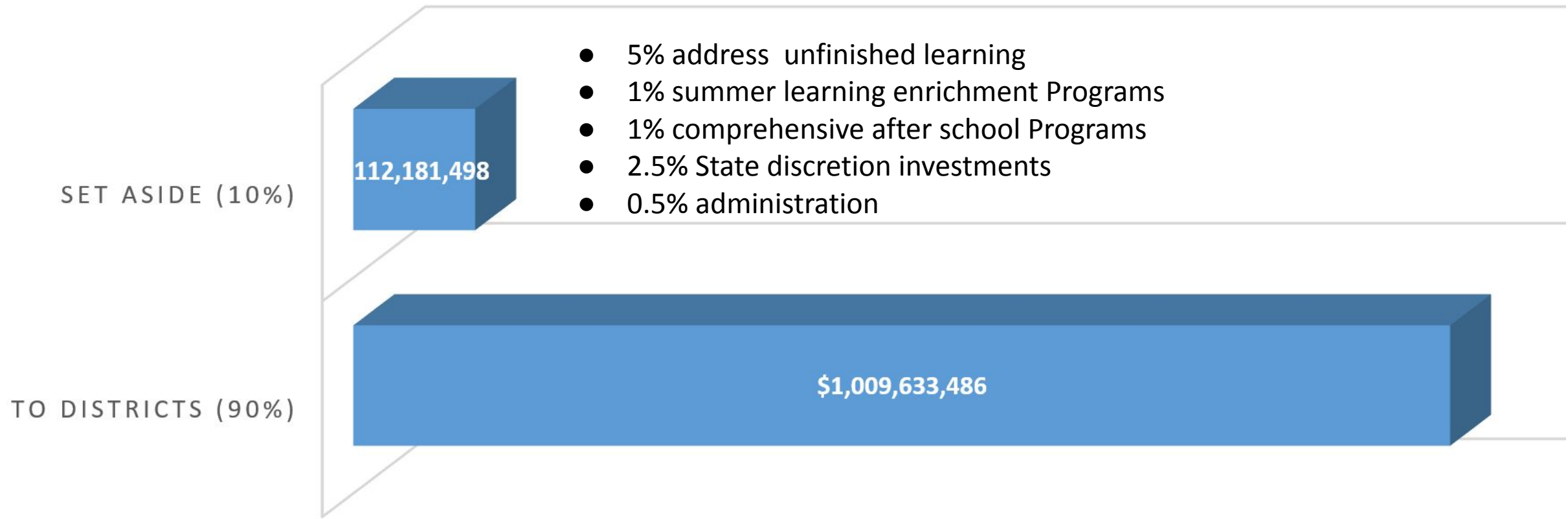
# American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Funds

# ESSER III Timeline

- **March 11, 2021** - American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act was enacted
- **May 25-28, 2021** ESSER III engagement sessions in Oregon
- **May 25, 2021** - ESSER III funds available to districts
- **June 7, 2021** - ESSER III State Application Submitted
- **July 15, 2021**- USDOE Approval of Oregon's ESSER III Plan
- **August 27, 2021**- ESSER III required Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans due to ODE
- **October 20, 2021** -ESSER III District Plans due to ODE
- **November 17, 2021**- ESSER III Refinement Roundtables
- **December 8, 2021**- ODE posted the Set Aside Plan
- **March 24, 2022**- Date by which ODE has to obligate ESSER III set aside funds
- **September 30, 2024** - Last date to expend ESSER III funds

# OREGON ESSER III FUNDS

\$1,121,814,984



# Oregon Invests & Envisions Equity in Education

## Prioritize Health & Safety For All Communities

During the pandemic, health and safety protocols were instituted that must remain a top priority to prevent and respond to any further public health crises. **Facility and public health protocols as well as targeted professional learning** must continue in a purposeful way.

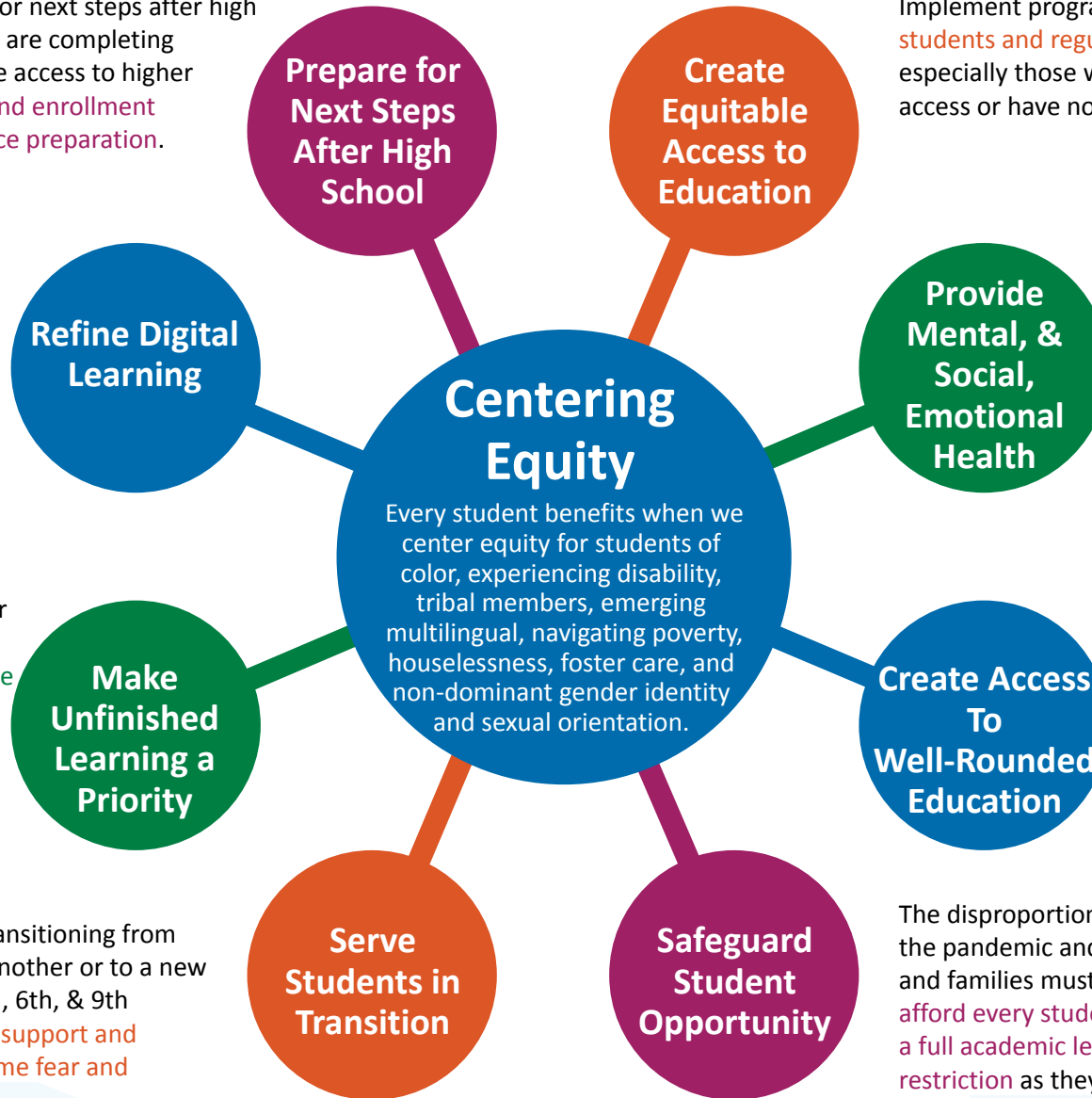
We must recommit to creating schools that are welcoming to each and every student we serve. Vigilance against hate and violence keeps our schools safe.

Help students prepare for next steps after high school by ensuring they are completing **financial aid** forms, have access to higher education **application and enrollment processes**, and **workforce preparation**.

Learn from Comprehensive Distance Learning in 2020-21. **Improve upon and apply best practices to online programs** offered in 2021-22 and beyond.

Extend the learning day and year. Provide before and after school enrichment and learning activities. **Collaborate with tribes and community based organizations** (especially culturally specific organizations).

Students who are transitioning from one community to another or to a new school (kindergarten, 6th, & 9th grades) need to **feel support and belonging to overcome fear and isolation**.



Implement programs to **enroll all students and regularly engage families**, especially those who have not had access or have not been attending.

Support students and staff with culturally responsive **trauma-informed care**, social emotional learning (SEL), racial equity and anti-racist approaches, and a **strengths-focused multi-tiered system of support**.

**Center student learning that builds on strengths**, addresses needs, provides active engagement, and is culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate.

The disproportionate and severe impact of the pandemic and our response on students and families must be recognized, we must **afford every student a full academic learning experience without restriction** as they regain their learning stride.



Oregon achieves... together!

# Oregon Identified ESSER Priorities

1. Address **unfinished learning** as part of a responsive system, grounded in equity, meeting students where they are and accelerating their learning by building on strengths and addressing needs.
2. Prioritize **health, safety, wellness, and connection** for all communities.
3. Strengthen **high-quality, culturally-sustaining and revitalizing instruction, leadership, and programming**.

# Community & Educator Input: *What Matters*

## Oregon themes:

- **Family Engagement:** Realize family and community engagement strategies in each area and hold districts accountable to their plans.
- **Centering Equity:** Don't let equity get lost in the shuffle within each priority area.
- **Disparate Impact:** Students who experience disability, who are in foster care, from highly mobile populations, who are members of tribes, who are Black/African America, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, from areas with low vaccination rates, and others were affected differently and may need different solutions in each area.
- **Grade-Level Transition:** Assessments can be a part of ensuring students are acknowledged for their achieved mastery, acknowledging students may not need to only be learning in one grade level across subjects.
- **Sustainability:** The one-time nature of these funds is of concern when it comes to sustaining efforts in each area, as well as ODE's ability to support the continuity.



# District Plans Show...

- Strategies focused on **maximizing and extending learning time**, including summer school, after school and technology for distance learning, and additional FTE to help cover for absent teachers in the case of illness or the need to quarantine
- Strategies focused on **mental health and relationships**. These include:
  - Hiring additional counselors and school psychologists
  - Curriculum to support relationships and belonging and other aspects of students social and emotional well-being and development
  - Mental health literacy training for staff and students.
- **Community-based strategies** such as:
  - Activities to increase and support communication with parents
  - Activities that engage community-based organizations and partners including after-school learning, career-connected learning, and STEM Hubs.
- Strategies to **improve health and safety** including:
  - Hiring school nursing staff
  - Extra staff to employ covid-mitigation strategies during the school day
  - Capital expenditures (including many HVAC system updates, space to enable greater physical distancing, additional school buses and cafeteria seating).

# Barriers to ESSER III Implementation

- **Speed of the allocation** and the reality of what districts were/are dealing with at the local level has challenged longer term planning and innovation.
- **Staffing shortages** in districts (teachers, substitutes, assistants, bus drivers, nutrition, administrators and more) will be a barrier to implementing planned district investments in a timely manner.
- Districts understand the challenge of **sustainability** and are navigating the tension between investing in FTE and other one-time purchases, knowing the funds are not sustainable.
- **Timeline for use of funds** due to several issues (supply chain, staffing shortages, speed of the funding allocations).
- The **ever changing nature of the pandemic** and the variation in COVID-19 conditions at the school and district level creates a challenge to expected consistency and tangible measurable outcomes for the use of funds.
- District plans submitted aspire to spend 55% of total funds in the first year, however, actual **spending to date lags significantly** at 1.9%.

# Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Updates

ARPA required that all districts review and revise their Plans every 6 months to stay aligned with any updates to guidance from the CDC or the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

The State Board of Education adopted permanent rules regarding Individualize COVID-19 Recovery Services (12/9/2021).



# Update: Planning Mental Health Supports

- Revise to reflect additional or new approaches to center Care and Connection for the remainder of the school year.
- We have provided additional resources, ideas and recommendations for districts to address mental health needs of school community members.



# Update: Health and Safety Strategies

- Update to include a hyperlink to communicable disease management plan.
- Update Health and Safety Strategies to reflect new mitigation strategies related to COVID-19 such as implementation of test to stay protocol.



# Add: Individualize COVID-19 Recovery Services

- Revise to include policies and procedures for individualized COVID-19 recovery services offered by your district .
  - Recovery services are special education services designed to meet the needs of eligible students in special education who were adversely impacted by the educational limitations caused by COVID 19.
  - ODE has developed a guide for [Planning for Individualized COVID Recovery Services](#) to support school districts in understanding and developing a process to implement this rule.





# Questions?

[colt.gill@ode.oregon.gov](mailto:colt.gill@ode.oregon.gov)