

Update – September 18, 2020

RE: Shift to “Moderate Risk” Level

Parents and Patrons,

It truly is with a heavy heart that I inform you of a recommendation I made to the school board last night. The school board ultimately approved my recommendation with a slight adjustment. I need to inform you that yesterday during a meeting of the regional Board of Health, Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH) was authorized to place Bingham County in the “Moderate Risk” Level. I completely understand that this movement brings into play heightened “recommendations”. Multiple people have informed me that it is exactly that “recommendations.” However, I do not believe this decision was made lightly. I believe information and data were considered when this decision was made. Therefore, I cannot take lightly that this change was made.

During our school board meeting last night, I made the recommendation to our school board that Blackfoot School District follow the identified step in response plan to this change in risk level. Our reopening plan calls for the implementation of an A/B attendance schedule when we are placed in the “Moderate Risk” Level. As a reminder, the A/B attendance schedule is what we used for the first two (2) weeks of school. The school board did make one adjustment to the A/B attendance schedule. **Each cohort will attend consecutive days, rather than alternating days.** What does that look like?

Cohort A will attend school on Monday and Tuesday.

Cohort B will attend school on Wednesday and Thursday.

The school board felt consecutive days might be better for our students and their families. **The school board approved this protocol for two (2) weeks.** Prior to the end of the two (2) week period, the board has asked me to collect information about which A/B attendance method is better: alternating days or consecutive days, and other factors regarding our response plan. I will be working on gathering that information in the coming days.

I sincerely apologize for the inconvenience this is likely to cause our students and their families. I assure you my goal is to keep our schools open and running as much as possible and for as long as possible. I truly want them to be open for the entire school year. I do not want a repeat of last spring. Please understand I believe this decision, while inconvenient, will likely improve our chance of keeping schools open. Thank you for your support and understanding. I have come to truly understand how divisive this situation can be, but if there is anything I have learned from living in the Blackfoot community for twenty (20) years, it is the community supports its children and students through thick and thin. Remember, Blackfoot Strong and TOGETHER WE OVERCOME!

God Bless!

Brian Kress
Superintendent of Schools
Blackfoot School District