

COVID-19 Update - Friday, July 31, 2020

Hello all.

I know many of you have heard about the attached letter in which the Thurston County Health Officer, Dr. Dimyana Abdelmalek, has recommended that all schools in Thurston County begin the school year this fall with remote learning.

Rather than wait for each of you to call or email to ask, I want you to know what I have already done and am in the process of doing in response to this news.

I have contacted the Thurston County Health Department and left messages to discuss and clarify exactly what this guidance means for Faith Lutheran School. I heard back from our contact person late last evening. He agreed to read through Faith's Return to Campus Plan and provide assistance with ensuring it meets the expectations of the health department for mitigation measures. No guarantee was offered that this would allow us to open on campus, however, it does provide opportunity to have further discussion. I sensed a willingness to at least hear the Faith community's perspective and that alone brings me hope that the possibility for face-to-face learning may still exist.

As a private school, Faith is not mandated to follow the actions or decisions of any public school district. We often follow the North Thurston School District calendar simply because we have many families who have students in NTSD schools as well as Faith. However, Faith is free to make independent decisions and will certainly do so when it is in the best interest of students and their families as well as the staff at FLS.

In our present situation, this is exactly where the rub lies: What is truly in the best interest of our staff, our students and their families?

I believe and trust that Dr. Abdelmalek has the health and safety of all people in Thurston County at the heart of her decision. My goal for continued discussion is to clarify that, as a small, private, Christian school, Faith has a far greater ability to effectively implement state health and safety standards for reopening schools and is far less likely to add to community virus spread.

I will continue to do everything within my power to have on-campus learning this fall, because I believe that is what is best for students and teachers; to be building and growing in relationship with one another and our world. However, not one of your lives (even those of you I don't know well yet!) is worth giving up for this educational ideal to be adhered to in this difficult time.

So, I continue to pray for God's wisdom and guidance and ask that each of you join me in doing so. I believe and trust that He will answer our prayers; not necessarily the way we want, but always and forever in the way we need.

Please watch for emails and check the website often to see updates and any potential changes to Faith's status for opening this fall.

God's Peace!  
Mr. Neumiller