


From: **Office of Senator Kim Thatcher** sen.kimthatcher@oregonlegislature.gov 
Subject: Time to reopen schools?
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Time to reopen
schools?

**December
2020**

Senate District 13 Constituents,

I have received hundreds of letters and emails concerning the reopening of schools. The overwhelming majority of them are from parents who are struggling with the online learning that has been foisted upon them. Parents with multiple children have an increased challenge as they try to juggle different needs for each child, different classes, different times, and often overlapping schedules. Mental health has been or is becoming a struggle as children have no social life, no sports and very little interaction with anyone outside their household except through their computer screen. Some parents have had to quit their job or rearrange their work schedule in order to help teach their children. **Many children are failing in the COVID lockdown. As hard as the teachers try, it isn't working.**

I've had very few letters from teachers who are afraid of catching COVID from their students. **Most I have heard from would like to get back in the classroom with safety measures in place.**

With high unemployment, slow unemployment benefits, children struggling both mentally and physically, and with what we now know about COVID, people are wondering **:why the lockdown as it currently is? We now know that children often have mild symptoms and very rarely pass away from COVID.**

The December 16, 6:30-8:30 PM [online event](#) is an opportunity to join the discussion about reopening our schools. I encourage everyone to participate. **Too many of our children are falling behind and giving up.**

The information that follows tells how to attend. Questions should be submitted prior to the event.

Balancing Risks and Benefits of School Closures and Reopenings During Covid 19

REGISTER TODAY

Schools across Oregon closed at the beginning of the pandemic due to concerns around viral transmission. This fall, most schools in Oregon have been operating using virtual learning exclusively. Children are overall at low risk of having severe disease with COVID-19; however, there remain significant concerns around the health and safety of staff and teachers. This panel discussion will weigh the risks and benefits of reopening schools versus keeping them remote, using a public health lens to examine how children and families are impacted by remote school and how we can approach re-opening safely. Panelists include public health faculty and leaders in education from Portland and the State of Oregon.

Please Note: Because of the tremendous interest in the topic, we have extended the length of the event to two hours. We also encourage audience members to submit their questions in advance in order to help the panel address as many of your questions as possible.

SUBMIT QUESTION

Moderator

- Dr. Leslie Bienen, MFA, DVM, Pilot Project Coordinator for BUILD EXITO and faculty at Portland State University and PSU/OHSU School of Public Health
- Panelists
- Lora de la Cruz, M. Ed., PhD, Superintendent, Lake Oswego School District
- B. Alex Foster, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor in the School of

Public Health's MPH and PhD Epidemiology programs and
Pediatrician at Oregon Health & Science University

- Colt Gill, M. Ed., Director of the Oregon Department of Education
- Amy Kohnstamm, Board of Education, Portland Public Schools
- Nathaniel Williams, Educator with Portland Public Schools,
community leader, coach and father

REGISTER TODAY

Thanks,



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