



July 29, 2020

Dear Orenda Public Charter School Families,

There have been many updates over the last week to public health guidance from the CDC and TEA, school reopening information for Bell and Williamson Counties, and instructional updates. Below are several important updates.

2020-21 School Start Plan: If you missed it last week, our draft 2020-21 School Start Plan is available [here](#). There were several health updates released late yesterday by TEA that match with the new guidance from the CDC. We will be revising our School Start Plan with those updates by the end of day on Friday, July 31st. Changes will be marked with an updated date so you can easily find them.

3-Week School Start Transition: We have been closely monitoring the number of COVID-19 cases and the level of community spread in the counties where our campuses reside. All campuses except New Horizons will have only virtual instruction during our school transition period from August 19 – September 8th. Please see more information later in this letter related to remote learning.

Below is an update for all campuses on the 3-Week School Start Transition, August 19 – September 8.

New Horizons School:

Due to the low number of cases in Mills County, New Horizons will have on-campus instruction starting on the first day of school, August 17th.

Kingsland School:

Due to the low to moderate community spread in Llano County, Kingsland School will continue with only virtual instruction from August 19 – September 8th with the option for students to come to campus to participate in virtual instruction. Staff will monitor students as they work virtually while implementing our safety guidelines. Students will receive the same instruction, whether on-campus or at-home, during this 3-week transition time which will include a daily schedule with lunch and breaks. We are encouraging all families who can facilitate learning at home to keep their students home during the 3-week transition period. This will help us safely transition to a larger number of students on campus starting in September. This will also allow families without internet access, where both parents are working, and other challenges during this time that prevent them from being able to facilitate learning at home an option for their child to receive instruction.



Click [here](#) to complete the 3-Week School Start Commitment Survey for Kingsland School.

A separate form needs to be completed for each student. Any student without a submitted form will be placed into virtual instruction off-campus during this 3-week period.

Nolan Creek School: On July 23rd, Bell County issued an order to close schools for all on-campus instruction until after September 7th due to the high community spread. Communication was sent out to families last Thursday with this information. Yesterday, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton along with TEA released updated guidance that blanket school closures for counties are not allowed. In addition, Belton and Temple ISD have decided to start school after September 8th. We are working with Bell County Health Department to get more information on having an on-campus instruction option August 19 – September 8 as previously communicated and are also coordinating with BCYC on facility usage with the Belton ISD's calendar change. Thank you for your patience as we continue to get all the information to make a decision. We will communicate a decision related to school start dates and on-campus options to families on **Friday, July 31st**.

Gateway College Preparatory and Gateway Tech High Schools: Williamson County did not issue a public health order. However, Williamson County Health Department did send guidance to all area schools this week strongly encouraging no on-campus instruction until after September 7th. We are coordinating with Williamson County Health Department over the next two days to determine if we can safely have an on-campus option as previously communicated. As a reminder, all instruction from August 19 – September 8 will be virtual, but we were hoping to offer an on-campus option for families without internet access, working parents, or other challenges that prevent families from facilitating learning at home during this 3-week period. While we still would like to offer this, we also need to make sure students and staff are safe on-campus. Thank you for your patience as we continue to get all the information to make a decision. We will communicate a decision related to on-campus options on **Friday, July 31st**.

Remote Learning: Different from the Spring 2020, remote learning for K-8 at Nolan Creek, Kingsland, and New Horizons, and K-12 at Gateway College Prep will follow a daily schedule with both synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) instruction. 100% asynchronous instruction, which is only available for grades 9-12 at Kingsland School, Gateway Tech High School, and New Horizons, will have scheduled teacher support to help students as they work independently on curriculum through Edgenuity for 4 hours each day. Through both models, students need to participate in at least 4 hours of virtual instruction each day, Monday – Friday, to be counted present. Campus schedules for remote and on-campus learning will be released next **Wednesday, August 5th**.



Instruction Commitment: At this time, families will need to complete the commitment form by **August 5th** for only the first three weeks of instruction and only if your campus will be offering both a remote and on-campus option from August 19 – September 8.

Kingsland School is the only campus offering both an on-campus and remote option at this time. Click [here](#) to complete the 3-Week School Start Commitment Survey for Kingsland School.

If we are able to move forward with an on-campus option for Gateway Tech, Gateway College Prep, and Nolan Creek Schools for the first three weeks of school, the commitment form will be sent with the communication on **Friday, July 31st**.

Instructional Commitment Forms for September 9th through the end of the grading period will be included in the communication next Wednesday, August 5th along with the campus schedules to help families make an informed decision. Those will be due no later than **5 pm on Wednesday, August 19th**.

Questions: You can continue to email covid19.info@orendaeducation.org with questions for us to consider in our school start planning. Due to the number of questions submitted, you may not receive an individual response to your email, but we are reviewing all questions as part of our school start planning and are also working on including answers to those questions in our district and campus communications. If your question requires an immediate answer, please email your campus administrator or athletic director.

Thank you for your patience and support as we continue to plan for the 2020-21 school start. Stay safe and take care!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carla Silber'.

Carla Silber
Superintendent/COO
Orenda Public Charter School District