

Friday, September 18, 2020

Dear Butte Falls Charter School Students and Parents,

I hope this message finds you well and safe. So much has transpired in the past week that an update is in order. Given the scope and duration of the Obenchain Fire, **we must adjust our start date for school to Monday, September 28**. Here is some background information that may be helpful.

Fire Update. While fire is contained on the Eagle Point side of the mountain as well along highway 62 near Shady Cove, it has continued to methodically burn its way eastward. I confirmed last night that the footprint of the active fire has not significantly grown in the past 24 hours though it still burning. We are hoping that the weather front coming in will bring sufficient rain to further dampen fire activity and that helicopter drops and on-ground efforts will finally result in arresting the fire. The fire was able to advance to within about a mile of the town before moving further east. A number of local residents joined the Butte Falls Volunteer Fire Department and the other crews to fight the fire and protect homes. Others outside the evacuation zone provided shelter for animals that were displaced by the fire. At this point our Butte Falls Natural Resource Center is still standing though the windstorm that preceded the fire did knock loose a number of tree limbs and other debris.

Restoring Basic Services and Cleaning Up. Electricity was restored to the town Wednesday afternoon. Pacific Power made a major push up Butte Falls Road to get power to the city. As of Thursday afternoon, it did not appear that power had been restored to residences along the way nor up (or down) the various side roads (Crowfoot, Cobleigh, Obenchain). There may also be occasional outages as the repair was quick. Century Link had a crew working on their lines yesterday and Hunter Communications (Internet fiber line) were close behind. Water service is also active in Butte Falls. There was a boil water order in place until the electricity came on. That allowed the town to restart the chlorinator so the water is now drinkable. The generator for the sewage treatment plant failed and replacements are in high demand. The plant is working intermittently. We will want all basic utility services up and fully functioning before we resume school services. We will continue to monitor the air quality as well.

Adjusted Start Date for School. Given the factors above, **I have adjusted our target start date for Comprehensive Distance Learning to Monday, September 28**. You or your student may be contacted this next week to make sure they are ready for school the following Monday. Please let us know if you have internet connectivity concerns as we realize some families may still be displaced by the impact of the fire. We were unable to deliver all the instructional materials for school last week as we pulled buses back once the fire started so we may resume bus deliveries next Thursday, September 24. Our meal deliveries will begin (tentatively) the following week when school is officially in session.

Keep in Touch with us. During this time of emergency closure, our teachers and staff have been reaching out to students to make sure everyone landed somewhere safely. We will continue to keep in touch with you via our teachers. If you have not yet been contacted by a teacher, please let us know you are safe as well as any needs you may have. You may email us at feedback@buttefalls.k12.or.us.

Take care and be safe.

Sincerely,

Phil