

**A message to Clackamas Workforce Partnership  
board members, staff, and collaborators**

We need only to open our news feeds or turn on the TV to be reminded about how global issues impact the people around us. **Anxiety levels for all is high.**

The new school year is upon us. In any given year, the first days of school can be exciting and scary. Returning to school, even in a virtual space, is an important return to routines and skills-building. Our K-12 partners have been building up tools and plans to help with preparing future generations to learn, connect with one another, and grow. **Our teachers will be showing up for students in creative ways.** Our gratitude is deep.

As we transition into the new 2020-2021 school year, there is a great deal of consternation. This might be for weeks or months and will be hard on families and children.



*According to recent research by the Society of Human Resource Management, only 32% of companies returning to work have plans for employees' child-care needs even as many schools postpone in-person teaching.*

Our approach at CWP will be to listen with empathy and lead with intention. We asked ourselves - have we taken extra measures to support our working parents? The next several weeks and months could be stressful in new ways. We hope to practice as much mindfulness and grace our humanness will allow. Work may not, and more likely will not, be priority number one for our parents.

**Our staff has requested flexibility and new ways of thinking about our work as their children need more of their attention, and that is okay.**

And, lest I forget to mention, internet bandwidth will be in-demand in households. We may be limiting our use of Zoom and other video conferencing options those first couple of weeks of school.

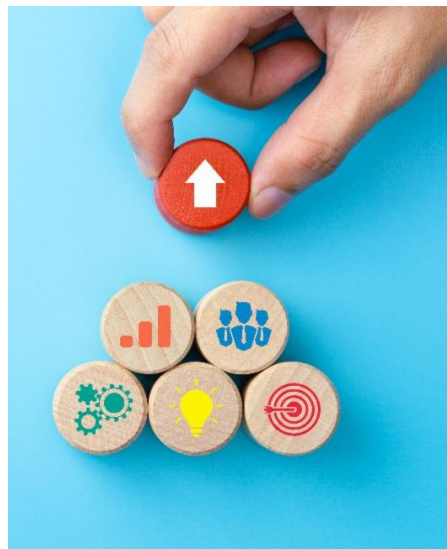
We also are considering how the following will impact our team - a looming increase in COVID-19 cases as fall begins; the 2020 election and holiday season; and mental health. Social emotional learning (SEL) and trauma resiliency will be top of mind.

We also plan to center those we serve in our work and lift their voice and needs as we push for systems change and community alignment. In addition to high unemployment and closing businesses, many are struggling to make ends meet.

Many have had to embrace remote work and telecommuting. Others are not so fortunate. These changes to our workplace will challenge all employees on your team. Those who are experiencing hardship are top of mind.

Remote learning is our new reality. The first day of school is different for each of our regional schools.

**Important Reference Links:**



[Oregon Department of Education Guidance](#) and [Early Learning Division Resource and Guidelines](#).

Please also check out [Reimagine Oregon](#) Plan, as we continue to explore what support can be for our black and brown community.

Consider joining [What Are Schools for? with Alex Sager and Kali Thorne Ladd](#).

An article from the US Chamber of Commerce on [How to Support Employees as They Return to Work Post-Coronavirus](#).

You may not be able to incorporate each of the strategies; exploring possible supports will be important.

We believe in the strength of the human spirit and value each other. We need to rally together. **On behalf of Clackamas Workforce Partnership, we wish for a most successful school year.**

Thank you,

Bridget Dazey  
Executive Director