



Ravalli County Commissioners
215 S. 4th Street, Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

April 11, 2020

Dear County Commissioners:


As residents of Ravalli County contend with the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Corvallis School District is working to reopen school this fall in the safest manner possible for our students and staff. We know that most students learn best with access to in-person instruction and that many of our students' families struggled last spring with managing remote learning along with the rest of their responsibilities. This next year is unlikely to resemble a completely normal school year, but we hope to do everything possible to ensure that students can attend school and that parents can devote themselves to their jobs.

A critical component of our efforts to reopen schools, and to keep them open, is guidance and assistance from our county health officials. We are appreciative of the work they have done during this unprecedented public health situation. The fact that Ravalli County has thus far had relatively few cases and has been able to contain most instances of community spread is due in no small part to effective contact tracing efforts by the county health department. As cooler weather drives people indoors and schools reopen, we are very concerned that the number of COVID-19 cases will increase and that the workload of the health department will similarly increase.

We would like to urge you to do everything you can to ensure that the county health department is adequately staffed and has the capacity to do robust contact tracing when the inevitable increase in cases occurs. When there are positive cases in a school, we will be turning to the public health staff to do contact tracing and help us contain the outbreak so that school overall can remain open. And, because limiting illness in schools is connected to limiting it in the larger community, contact tracing and other measures outside the school setting need to also remain strong. We hope that you will prioritize making sure the health department has the resources to help keep schools open this year. Thank you for all your efforts to ensure the health and vitality of our community.


Respectfully,


Corvallis School Trustees

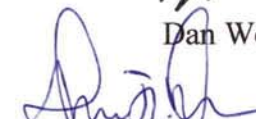

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