



SALIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT R-32-J

Letter of Support for the Opening of School

July 23rd, 2020

We support the school districts in Salida and Buena Vista beginning the '20-'21 school year with in-person instruction, referenced in district planning documents as the 'Green Zone'. This support is dynamic and based on current epidemiological understanding and local public health conditions. If our understanding changes or the conditions change, we will review recommendations. The community should expect that the recommendations will shift throughout the school year.

At this time, there are 224 total positive cases of COVID 19, covering the time period of March 14, 2020 until today, July 23, 2020. If one removes the cases that occurred at Columbine Manor in Salida and the Department of Corrections Facility in Buena Vista, there has been a total case count of 34. We have been open for business and tourism, representing significant public health risk, for over 60 days. Since opening we have not seen a surge in new cases. Our hospital does not have anyone being treated for acute COVID19 symptoms. The epidemiological metrics appear to be stable and within our community's capacity to test, trace, and treat.

Both school districts have worked together with the Department of Education, Public Health, and county leadership to develop dynamic plans that can expand or contract programming depending on the local conditions. Both school districts have made sufficient improvements to practice the essential strategies of disease prevention, including: frequent hand-washing, mask wearing, health screening and maximum distancing possible. The districts have created active partnerships with the medical community to review their response protocols and offer support.

In addition, epidemiological evidence indicates that COVID-19 contraction and infectious spread is at the lowest risk levels among school aged children.

After reviewing the conditions, plans, and capacity of our school districts and communities, we support opening in a manner that best supports in-person instruction, staff safety, and the broader needs of our community.

Andrea Carlstrom, Director of Chaffee Public Health

Greg Felt, Chaffee County Commissioner

Rusty Granzella, Chaffee County Commissioner

Keith Baker, Chaffee County Commissioner

P.T. Wood, Mayor of Salida

Ben Scanga, Mayor of Poncha Springs