

## RPS Return to School Recommendations • Fall 2020

Seeking Family and Student Feedback

### TRANSLATIONS

The following document is also available in [Arabic](#), [Hmong](#), [Khmer](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

Para asistencia en español, por favor marque al 328-4241.

Za pomoc na bosanskom jeziku pozovite 328-4243

"إذا رغبت في الحصول على هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية يرجى الإتصال بقسم الترجمة علي الرقم 328- 4246"

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in aad hesho macluumaadkaan oo ku qoran Soomaali, fadlan la soo xiriir waaxda EL(bartaha ingariiska) 328 4247.

### CONTEXT

As Rochester Public Schools (RPS) looks ahead to the approaching 2020-2021 school year, in the context of a world-wide pandemic of the illness known as COVID-19, we recognize that many families, district staff members, and members of the broader community have significant concerns about the risks posed by returning to school in its traditional, in-person form. We also recognize that many families, staff, and community members have serious concerns about continuing school through distance learning, which brings several of its own risks to learning, employment, mental health and more. During this challenging period in history, there exists no path without risk, and many unknowns remain. This is the background against which we must make education decisions.

The pandemic has affected schools since early March, requiring all of us to think differently about how we deliver instruction to foster rigorous learning. Responding to these challenges has been ongoing since March 15, and we continue this work today.

School districts in Minnesota received a directive on June 18, 2020, from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), to develop local district plans for three scenarios: full in-person return to school in the fall, full distance learning, and a hybrid of the two. Guidance for these plans was provided at that same time from MDE and MDH, including the prediction that school districts, schools, even classrooms could be directed to transition among the three scenarios at different points in the school year, depending on local COVID-19 transmission levels.

RPS Superintendent Michael Muñoz and Cabinet members recruited a task force to complete perhaps the most complex plan ever attempted in the district. This month, a task force of more than 160 district staff members, students and others gathered to identify the many intertwined

issues in the three scenarios to be addressed in any high quality plan. Their work resulted in a detailed plan for district action in areas from technology to instruction, building safety to mental health, and many more.

A high-level overview of that plan is presented here for student and family feedback, before the task force finalizes its planning work for the 2020-2021 school year. These recommendations must be flexible and allow for changes per the guidance of MDE, MDH, and the CDC.

### Expert Advice

School Districts typically rely heavily on the advice of the medical/scientific communities when it comes to health-related policies and procedures. At most, we are seven months into the pandemic, and advice from the medical/scientific community has been variable, as knowledge resulting from research on the virus has been developing.

Unlike other illness response, where decades of data has resulted in a reliable set of precautions, we seem to learn more each day about how the virus causing COVID-19 travels from one person to the next.

Needing to move ahead with planning, despite the lack of a complete knowledge set, we relied on these guiding principles to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus:

- A distance of at least six feet between individuals under normal circumstances can reduce the opportunity for the virus to move from one person to another. Additional space may be required under specific circumstances where exhalation increases (e.g., exercising, playing wind instruments, singing, shouting).
- Face coverings, both cloth and disposable, can reduce spreading from one person to another through the droplets that appear in exhaled breath.
- Effective hand washing and use of specific sanitizers can reduce virus on hands.
- Specific cleaning techniques and products can remove the virus from surfaces.
- Some COVID-19 cases begin with a fever, sometimes low grade and increasing, and some have no fever.
- Some individuals who have the virus show symptoms and others do not.

We continue to review available medical/scientific guidance as it becomes available and we are working closely with Olmsted County Public Health Services and local medical experts to learn the latest best practices for response to COVID-19.

### Student and Family Needs

In developing our plan for the three scenarios – in-person learning, distance learning, and a hybrid of the two – the RPS task force brought family needs into the forefront in many ways. Several students brought their expertise to the task force, joining committees directly or serving on student panels to share their experiences and advice with various teams.

Committees considered the feedback of parents, including the statewide survey developed by MDE, a local Thoughtexchange on what to keep in distance learning, and audience-specific tools, such as school surveys of students and families, a survey of our families experiencing homelessness and other insecure housing situations, and more.

We intentionally included district staff members whose roles are designed to support students and families, such as equity specialists, nurses, social workers, school counselors, and we consulted partners who also serve families in need, such as Olmsted County Health, Housing, and Human Services. A small number of advisory council leaders also joined the task force.

As we share this high-level overview of the plan, we intend to gather broad feedback on whether we have met our community's expectations for school year planning, or more needs to be done.

#### Staff Needs

In addition to family needs, the needs of RPS staff members in all roles was critical input for the task force. We intentionally included members of all the district's staff units, from operational to instructional, including significant representation from classroom teachers and other school building staff.

To complement direct task force participation, RPS recently conducted a survey of all staff members to assess what would be important to making a positive decision to return to work in the fall. Several needs emerged in this feedback:

- Following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for social distancing, masking, hand hygiene, screening and exclusion, and other protective measures.
- Restrict the number of people in buildings and classrooms at any given time.
- Increase cleaning procedures throughout district facilities.
- Plan for various situations when staff members are exposed or ill.
- Frequent and clear communication with staff and families.
- Hold all students, parents, and staff accountable for doing their part to minimize the risk for all involved.

We know that staff in all roles will be critical to a successful return to school in whichever format this happens.

#### Finance & Feasibility

Throughout the planning process, task members had to balance health and safety concerns with the feasibility of carrying them out within the financial capabilities of the district. The district has received some Federal funding to help with COVID-19 response, but the planning process has confirmed that much more will be needed to achieve a successful restart.

Especially in the hybrid model, drastically reduced transportation capacity due to social distancing requirements will reduce the frequency each student can attend school in person. In both the in-person and hybrid models, increased investments in supply and labor will be necessary to meet increased cleaning and hand hygiene requirements. In the distance learning and hybrid models, technology investments are needed to equip families with devices and connectivity. There are several more examples where each model brings new expenditures to the table.

With the economic impact of the pandemic on State and Federal finance, we recognize any funding increases may be limited in the near future. Without an infusion of more funding, difficult decisions are likely on the horizon eliminating other district investments to make up for the cost of pandemic response.

#### Shared Beliefs

The task force relied on a number of shared beliefs to guide its work. First, equity and access matters in our ability to serve all students and families. In serving people of all backgrounds, we believe and value life experiences as critical inputs to our work. Second, our Graduate Profile reflects what our community identified as the most valuable skills to develop – critical thinking, collaboration, resilience, and more. The instruction we provide, either in person or at a distance, supports students in developing these essential life skills. Third, physical and mental wellness are critical in the pursuit of learning. As a school district and community partner, we have a role to play in supporting the wellness of our students, staff, and families. Supporting all of these are a strong foundation of policy, procedure, and implementation that follows the best in instructional and operational practices.

## PLANNING PROCESS

### Task Force

RPS district and building leaders have been working together for several months - reviewing guidance, considering options, and seeking input through surveys, Thoughtexchange, focus groups, and advisory groups. In April, district leadership also worked on re-entry for fall with the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE).

Then, RPS developed an extended task force of more than 160 individuals (teachers, paraprofessionals, support area professionals, administrators, students, parents, and partners from Olmsted County Public Health and Mayo Clinic) to formalize recommendations for all three scenarios for community consideration.

**RPS is now sharing this document with families and students to seek feedback.** This feedback will be reviewed by task force members before finalizing the plan.

### *Key Dates*

#### *Week of July 20:*

Opportunities for families and students to review task force recommendations and provide feedback.

#### *Week of July 27:*

According to the Minnesota Department of Health's 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools, Governor Walz's Office, in consultation with MDH and MDE, will determine and announce the scenario model under which schools may reopen for the 2020-2021 school year based on state COVID-19 metrics by the week of July 27.

#### *August 4:*

The school board will receive the final recommendations from the task force as an information item during the public school board meeting.

The District will follow the guidance of MDH and MDE and implement the scenario recommended by MDH and MDE. The District's plan will be published on the website.

### Scenarios

MDE provided definitions for each of the three scenarios possible for fall 2020.

#### ***In-person learning for all students***

In this scenario, districts will create as much space between students and teachers as is feasible during the day, but will not be held strictly to enforcing 6 feet of social distancing during primary instructional time in the classroom. Activities and extracurricular programming will continue to follow the [Guidance for Social Distancing in Youth Sports](#). This scenario may be implemented assuming state COVID-19 metrics stabilize and/or improve.

#### ***Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity limits***

In this scenario, districts must limit the overall number of people in school facilities and on transportation vehicles to 50% maximum occupancy. Sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people must occur at all times. If distancing cannot be achieved in a space or on a transportation vehicle, the number of occupants must be reduced. This scenario may be implemented if COVID-19 metrics worsen at the local, regional, or statewide level. This scenario may also be implemented within a school if they experience clusters of cases within a classroom or the school.

Hybrid learning defined – Hybrid is commonly used to describe classes in which some traditional face-to-face instruction has been replaced by distance learning activities. A hybrid class is designed to integrate face-to-face and distance learning activities so that

they reinforce, complement, and elaborate on one another, instead of treating the online component as an add-on or duplicate of what is taught in the classroom.

### ***Distance learning only***

This scenario may be implemented if local, regional, or statewide COVID-19 metrics worsen significantly enough to require the suspension of in-person learning.

Distance Learning defined – Students engaging in distance learning have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s). It is important to note that distance learning does not always mean e-learning or online learning.

## **IN-PERSON SCENARIO OVERVIEW**

### **Safety**

- The District and each building has a designated COVID-19 program coordinator. These will be listed on the District website.
- Each building will have updated crisis plans (fire, lockdown, tornado drills, etc.) which follows fire marshal and CDC guidelines.
- Each school will allow additional hand-washing time for students.
- All classrooms will have hand sanitizer dispensers.
- Each school will provide students lessons regarding hand washing hygiene, proper mask wearing, and other preventative measures.
- The District will continue to follow the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and CDC guidelines for air quality.
- Distance learning will be available to students who may be medically vulnerable or unwilling to return to in-person or hybrid learning.

### **Masks**

- All individuals, staff and students, two years of age and older are required to wear a mask at school, including playgrounds, and on RPS transportation.
- School supply lists now include masks. A limited supply of masks will be available if students forget theirs.
- Exceptions to mask use will be determined on an individual basis, based on medical, developmental, or behavioral health needs. Documentation may be required.
- Breakfast/Lunch - masks may be removed for eating and drinking once students are seated.
- Indoor/Outdoor Physical Education - masks will not be required as long as social distancing is maintained, which is six feet in most situations. When cardio activity is occurring, social distancing must increase to 12 feet.

## Cleaning

- There will be frequent cleaning of high-touch areas (such as desks, door handles, water fountains, computer keyboards, cafeteria tables, locker door handles, handle rails, etc.)
- We will increase the frequency of restroom cleaning.
- Buses and vans will receive additional, frequent cleaning.
- Playgrounds will receive additional, frequent cleaning.
- The District will follow guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding safe and effective chemicals.
- Returned library books and lost and found items will be isolated in an area not accessible to students for a quarantine period.

## Transportation

- Eligible families who will use District transportation are required to [register to ride](#) the school bus this year.
- When possible, we will create as much space between riders as possible, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have six feet of social distancing.
- Planning continues regarding transportation for after-school activities; this information will be shared when available.

## Arrival and Departure

- Students and staff will use the [MDH screening tool](#) at home prior to arrival. Individuals with symptoms or exposure should stay home from school and contact their health care provider.
- Families will receive a COVID-19 family/student agreement to complete and sign.
- Buildings will identify specific entrance and exit procedures to encourage social distancing.
- Signage will identify traffic flow and social distancing requirements.

## Classrooms

- Wherever possible, students will avoid sharing learning materials.
- We are currently awaiting further guidance on playing wind instruments and choral singing in classrooms.

## Shared Items

- Shared items such as PE equipment, library books, and other learning materials will be sanitized in between use or quarantined for 24 - 72 hours depending on the equipment.
- Hand washing will be required before and after use of shared equipment.
- Where possible, lockers will not be shared among students.

## Hallways and Passing Time

- There will be staggered dismissals from classrooms, cafeterias, etc.

- Restrooms - number of students utilizing restrooms at once will be limited.
- Building staff will discourage congregating at lockers during passing time.

#### Learning

- Learning will be in-person following the school district calendar.
- Distance learning will be available to students who may be medically vulnerable or unwilling to return to in-person or hybrid learning.

#### Mental Health and Emotional Wellness

- Counselors, social workers, and other mental health providers will provide support to address students' mental and emotional wellness.
- The District has published [hotline phone numbers](#) to better assist with response to crisis for students.
- The District will provide consistent messaging through a dedicated web page addressing student and staff mental health and emotional wellness.
- The District Mental Health and Emotional Wellness team will clearly identify and communicate which staff are available to support students, staff, and families and the types of support they can provide.
- The District will provide forums and/or topic sessions on mental health and emotional wellness for families. These sessions will be provided in person, in multiple languages, following current social distancing guidelines.
- The District will communicate with families about the availability of services and resources in multiple languages and in multiple formats (Skyward, Skylert, Google, social media, and in print).

#### Social Emotional Learning and Relationships

- Staff will build time into the schedule to allow for students to connect socially with one another.
- Staff will provide students with instruction and support around successful practices such as time management, organization, mindset, and self-regulation.
- Students will be provided with instruction and resources for self-advocacy.
- Social workers and Counselors will continue to partner with teachers to support 2nd Step implementation at the classroom level.
- Advisory, Homeroom, or Classroom teachers will develop an initial relationship with students and families to provide a sense of belonging and support through activities such as classroom circles, letters/postcards, introduction videos, phone calls and emails home, interest surveys, calendar of activities, front yard home visits, and virtual games and activities.

#### Attendance

- We will be taking daily student attendance.



- Families will be notified via Olmsted County Public Health Services (OCPHS) of a confirmed case in close contact with their child.

#### Meal Service

- Tables and chairs will be cleaned in between use.
- Self-serve items (e.g., condiments) will be minimized.
- We will continue to work with families on documented special dietary needs.

#### Personal Items

- Students should bring personal water bottles to refill, in order to avoid drinking from a fountain.
- Students will not be allowed to share food or drinks.
- Birthday treats are not allowed.
- Students are discouraged from bringing extra personal items to school.

#### Technology

- Families will be asked to complete a “needs assessment” to discover their device and connectivity needs.
- Communication to families will still be delivered through the Skylert Messaging Center (email, phone, text messaging) and Skyward. For more information on Skylert and Skyward, visit our [Families page online](#).
- Devices including keyboards, printers, and other high touch surfaces will be cleaned in between users.

#### Screening and Exclusion

- We will follow Minnesota Department of Health exclusion guidance.
- Students and employees must complete a [self-screening questionnaire](#) each day prior to reporting to school. The screening checklist will also be posted at all building entry points, and on RPS transportation.
- Each building will have a designated, isolated space for suspected cases of COVID-19.
- OCPHS determines the communication of confirmed COVID-19 cases. Families will be notified if their child was in close contact with a positive COVID-19 case.

#### Family Connections

- Schools will ask families to update their contact information (phone, email, address) in Skyward.
- School community resource rooms (food, toiletries, clothing, etc.) will be open during regular hours.
- The District will offer support for students transitioning to a new school level (Kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade).

### Special Facilities

- School pools will be closed for programming during the school day.
- Locker rooms will not be in use during the school day.
- Playgrounds will be disinfected before school each day and open for recess on a limited basis with social distancing guidelines in place.
- Outdoor fields will be used as much as possible for physical education and recess (elementary school) while following social distancing guidelines.

### Other activities

- Facility rentals: All individuals or groups who wish to rent a district facility are required to prepare and submit for review a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, following the specifications provided by the State of Minnesota for the type of event being held. Approval for rentals will depend on several factors, including the amount of additional labor required of school district staff to prepare the site under COVID-19 requirements for district use again, following a rental event.
- Youth sports activities are required to follow MDH and Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) guidelines on COVID-19 preparedness in youth sports.

### Professional Development for Staff

- The District will provide professional development for all teachers on effective online learning, restorative justice, and instruction for equity, including but not limited to white fragility, micro-messaging, implicit bias, and systemic racism, throughout the year.

### Visitors

- Buildings will restrict non-essential visitors and volunteers.
- Parents will be asked to make appointments for in-person meetings or participate in meetings online.

### School Age Child Care (SACC)

- Before and after school child care will be available at all elementary schools.
- Registration will occur through Community Education's registration system.
- Number of spaces available will be limited by staffing and social distancing capacity.
- Programming will follow the same CDC guidelines as the school day.
- Fees will apply for child care. SACC accepts Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) payments.

## **HYBRID PLAN OVERVIEW**

**Under current transportation restrictions, RPS students will attend school in-person one day per week.**

## Safety

- The District and each building has a designated COVID-19 program coordinator. These will be listed on the District website.
- Each building will have updated crisis plans (fire, lockdown, tornado drills, etc.) which follows fire marshal and CDC guidelines.
- Each school will allow additional hand-washing time for students.
- All classrooms will have hand sanitizer dispensers.
- Each school will provide students lessons regarding hand washing hygiene, proper mask wearing, and other preventative measures.
- The District will continue to follow the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and CDC guidelines for air quality.
- Distance learning will be available to students who may be medically vulnerable or unwilling to return to in-person or hybrid learning.
- We will use a contactless check-in and check-out system for the use of library books.

## Masks

- All individuals, staff and students, two years of age and older are required to wear a mask at school, including playgrounds, and on RPS transportation.
- School supply lists now include masks. A limited supply of masks will be available if students forget theirs.
- Exceptions to mask use will be determined on an individual basis, based on medical, developmental, or behavioral health needs. Documentation may be required.
- Breakfast/Lunch - masks may be removed for eating and drinking once students are seated.
- Indoor/Outdoor Physical Education - masks will not be required as long as social distancing is maintained, which is six feet in most situations. When cardio activity is occurring, social distancing must increase to 12 feet.

## Cleaning

- There will be frequent cleaning of high-touch areas (such as desks, door handles, water fountains, computer keyboards, cafeteria tables, locker door handles, handle rails, etc.)
- We will increase the frequency of restroom cleaning.
- Buses and vans will receive additional, frequent cleaning.
- Playgrounds will receive additional, frequent cleaning.
- The District will follow guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding safe and effective chemicals.
- Returned library books and lost and found items will be isolated in an area not accessible to students for a quarantine period.

## Transportation

- Eligible families who will use District transportation are required to [register to ride](#) the school bus this year.
- We will continue to use buses and vans to transport students with limited capacity.
- Social distancing requirements will apply on buses with one student/family per seat, every other seat, loading back to front.
- Where possible, students from the same household will attend on the same days.
- Planning continues regarding transportation for after-school activities; this information will be shared when available.

## Arrival and Departure

- Students and staff will use the [MDH screening tool](#) at home prior to arrival. Individuals with symptoms or exposure should stay home from school and contact their health care provider.
- Families will receive a COVID-19 family/student agreement to complete and sign.
- Buildings will identify specific entrance and exit procedures to encourage social distancing.
- Signage will identify traffic flow and social distancing requirements.
- All students will remain in school during school hours; campuses will be closed except for students that need to leave for CTECH, Incubatoredu, post-secondary, and personal appointments (doctor, dentist, etc.).

## Classrooms

- We will limit the number of students attending school each day.
- We will limit the number of students in each classroom at a time.
- We will create at least six-foot spacing between students.
- Classes will avoid mixing with other student groups.
- Wherever possible, students will avoid sharing learning materials.
- We are currently awaiting further guidance on playing wind instruments and choral singing in classrooms.

## Shared Items

- Shared items such as PE equipment, library books, and other learning materials will be sanitized in between use or quarantined for 24 - 72 hours depending on the equipment.
- Hand washing will be required before and after use of shared equipment.
- Where possible, lockers will not be shared among students.
- Where possible, buildings will assign lockers according to attendance day, to maintain space between students.

## Hallways and Passing Time

- We will limit the number of students attending school each day and stagger passing time

- There will be staggered dismissals from classrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Restrooms - number of students utilizing restrooms at once will be limited
- Building staff will discourage congregating at lockers during passing time.

### Learning

- Students will receive instruction in-person one day a week and through distance learning four days a week.
- Teachers will provide daily direct instruction, including a possible mix of live learning and recorded lessons.
  - In the elementary schools, this will include Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and special areas.
- Staff will address instructional needs for students with IEPs, 504s, and health plans on an individual basis.
- Specialists in reading, math, English Learning, gifted and talented education, and other areas will support students in their in-person and distance learning.
- Student support will also be provided through the work of paraprofessionals, equity specialists, resilience specialists, and others.
- Teachers will post weekly schedules on Friday or Monday each week in Google Classroom.
- Staff will focus on building positive relationships with students and families.
- Teachers will embed Social Emotional Learning into lessons.
- The Student Behavior Handbook applies to all students during distance and in-person learning, on transportation, and during other District activities.
- The District will develop grading guidelines, to be shared prior to the start of the school year.
- Field trips will not occur until further notice.
- The District will develop a plan for offering instruction in special areas, such as art, music, media, physical education, and secondary electives.
- The District will provide professional development for all teachers on effective online learning, restorative justice, and instruction for equity, including but not limited to white fragility, micro-messaging, implicit bias, and systemic racism, throughout the year.
- See *Shared Items* section for additional information.

### Mental Health and Emotional Wellness

- Counselors, social workers, and other mental health providers will provide support to address students' mental and emotional wellness. This may occur face-to-face, virtual, or a combination of both.
- The District has published [hotline phone numbers](#) to better assist with response to crisis for students.
- The District will provide consistent messaging through a dedicated web page addressing student and staff mental health and emotional wellness.

- The District Mental Health and Emotional Wellness team will clearly identify and communicate which staff are available to support students, staff, and families and the types of support they can provide.
- The District will provide forums and/or topic sessions on mental health and emotional wellness for families. These sessions will be provided in person, in multiple languages, following current social distancing guidelines.
- The District will communicate with families about the availability of services and resources in multiple languages and in multiple formats (Skyward, Skylert, Google, social media, and in print).

#### Social Emotional Learning and Relationships

- Staff will build time into the schedule to allow for students to connect socially with one another.
- Staff will provide students with instruction and support around successful practices such as time management, organization, mindset, and self-regulation.
- Students will be provided with instruction and resources for self-advocacy.
- Social workers and Counselors will continue to partner with teachers to support 2nd Step implementation at the classroom level.
- Advisory, Homeroom, or Classroom teachers will develop an initial relationship with students and families to provide a sense of belonging and support through activities such as classroom circles, letters/postcards, introduction videos, phone calls and emails home, interest surveys, calendar of activities, front yard home visits, and virtual games and activities.

#### Attendance

- We will be taking daily student attendance.
- Families will be notified via Olmsted County Public Health of a confirmed case in close contact with their child.

#### Meal Service

- Seating and lunch lines will follow social distancing guidelines.
- Tables and chairs will be cleaned in between use.
- Self-serve items (e.g., condiments) will be minimized.
- We will implement a no-contact payment process.
- Grab and Go meals will be provided on distance learning days.
- We will continue to work with families on documented special dietary needs.
- Meals will be fee-based unless students qualify for free meals. If the USDA waives this requirement, as it did in spring/summer, we will adjust our process.

#### Personal Items

- Students should bring personal water bottles to refill, in order to avoid drinking from a fountain.

- Students will not be allowed to share food or drinks.
- Birthday treats are not allowed.
- Students are discouraged from bringing extra personal items to school.

#### Technology

- Families will be asked to complete a “needs assessment” to discover their device and connectivity needs.
- Schools will prioritize device distribution (iPads, Chromebooks) based on family needs, including 1:1 sites.
- Resources and training will be made available to families to familiarize themselves with technology.
- All grade levels and schools will be using Google Education Suite for our learning management system.
- Communication to families will still be delivered through the Skylert Messaging Center (email, phone, text messaging) and Skyward. For more information on Skylert and Skyward, visit our [Families page online](#).
- Devices including keyboards, printers, and other high touch surfaces will be cleaned in between users.

#### Screening and Exclusion

- We will follow Minnesota Department of Health exclusion guidance.
- Students and employees must complete a [self-screening questionnaire](#) each day prior to reporting to school. The screening checklist will also be posted at all building entry points, and on RPS transportation.
- Each building will have a designated, isolated space for suspected cases of COVID-19.
- OCPHS determines the communication of confirmed COVID-19 cases. Families will be notified if their child was in close contact with a positive COVID-19 case.

#### Nurses

- Health Office Nurses will provide for daily student health needs.

#### Family Connections

- Schools will ask families to update their contact information (phone, email, address) in Skyward.
- Family Engagement meetings and events will be held online or via phone whenever possible.
- Bilingual support will be available for families.
- School community resource rooms (food, toiletries, clothing, etc.) will be limited to allow social distancing.
- The District will offer additional support for students transitioning to a new school level (Kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade).

### Special Facilities

- School pools will be closed for programming during the school day.
- Locker rooms will not be in use during the school day.
- Playgrounds will be disinfected before school each day and open for recess on a limited basis with social distancing guidelines in place.
- Outdoor fields will be used as much as possible for physical education and recess (elementary school) while following social distancing guidelines.
- Auditoriums will be allowed for use in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

### Other activities

- Facility rentals: All individuals or groups who wish to rent a district facility are required to prepare and submit for review a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, following the specifications provided by the State of Minnesota for the type of event being held. Approval for rentals will depend on several factors, including the amount of additional labor required of school district staff to prepare the site under COVID-19 requirements for district use again, following a rental event.
- Youth sports activities are required to follow MDH and Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) guidelines on COVID-19 preparedness in youth sports.

### Visitors

- Buildings will restrict non-essential visitors and volunteers.
- Parents will be asked to make appointments for in-person meetings or participate in meetings online.

### School Age Child Care (SACC)

- Before and after school child care will be available on in-person learning days at all elementary schools.
- Child care for the children of Tier 1 critical workers will be available on distance learning days.
- Registration will occur through Community Education's registration system.
- Number of spaces available will be limited by staffing and social distancing capacity.
- Programming will follow the same CDC guidelines as the school day.
- Fees will apply for child care. SACC accepts Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) payments.



## DISTANCE LEARNING ONLY SCENARIO OVERVIEW

In the Distance Learning Only scenario, the following areas will not be a consideration: masks, transportation, arrival and departure, classroom, shared items, hallways and passing time, personal items, screening and exclusion, and visitors.

### Safety

- The District and each building has a designated COVID-19 program coordinator. These will be listed on the District website.
- Each building will have updated crisis plans (fire, lockdown, tornado drills, etc.) which follows fire marshal and CDC guidelines.
- All classrooms will have hand sanitizer dispensers.
- The District will continue to follow the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and CDC guidelines for air quality.

### Cleaning

- There will be frequent cleaning of high-touch areas (such as door handles, water fountains, computer keyboards, handle rails, etc.)
- We will increase the frequency of restroom cleaning.
- The District will follow guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding safe and effective chemicals.

### Learning

- Teachers will provide daily direct instruction, including a possible mix of live learning and recorded lessons.
  - In the elementary schools, this will include Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and special areas.
- Staff will address instructional needs for students with IEPs, 504s, and health plans on an individual basis.
- Specialists in reading, math, English Learning, gifted and talented education, and other areas will support students in their in-person and distance learning.
- Student support will also be provided through the work of paraprofessionals, equity specialists, resilience specialists, and others.
- Teachers will post weekly schedules on Friday or Monday each week in Google Classroom.
- Staff will focus on building positive relationships with students and families.
- Teachers will embed Social Emotional Learning into lessons.
- The Student Behavior Handbook applies to all students during distance and in-person learning, on transportation, and during other District activities.

- The District will develop grading guidelines, to be shared prior to the start of the school year.
- Field trips will not occur until further notice.
- The District will develop a plan for offering instruction in special areas, such as art, music, media and library book checkout, physical education, and secondary electives.
- The District will provide professional development for all teachers on effective online learning, restorative justice, and instruction for equity, including but not limited to white fragility, micro-messaging, implicit bias, and systemic racism, throughout the year.

#### Mental Health and Emotional Wellness

- Counselors, social workers and other mental health providers will provide support to address students' mental and emotional wellness. This may occur virtually, or face-to-face (if possible).
- The District has published [hotline phone numbers](#) to better assist with response to crisis for students.
- The District will provide a drop-in location for in-person support in the event of a crisis.
- The District will provide consistent messaging through a dedicated web page addressing student and staff mental health and emotional wellness.
- The District Mental Health and Emotional Wellness team will clearly identify and communicate which staff are available to support students, staff, and families and the types of support they can provide.
- The District will provide forums and/or topic sessions on mental health and emotional wellness for families. These sessions will be provided in person, in multiple languages, following current social distancing guidelines.
- The District will communicate with families about the availability of services and resources in multiple languages and in multiple formats (Skyward, Skylert, Google, social media, and in print).

#### Social Emotional Learning and Relationships

- Staff will build time into the schedule to allow for students to connect socially with one another.
- Staff will provide students with instruction and support around successful practices such as time management, organization, mindset, and self-regulation.
- Students will be provided with instruction and resources for self-advocacy.
- Social workers and Counselors will continue to partner with teachers to support 2nd Step implementation at the classroom level.
- Advisory, Homeroom, or Classroom teachers will develop an initial relationship with students and families to provide a sense of belonging and support through activities such as classroom circles, letters/postcards, introduction videos, phone calls and emails home, interest surveys, calendar of activities, front yard home visits, and virtual games and activities.

## Attendance

- We will be taking daily student attendance.

## Meal Service

- Grab and Go meals will be provided on distance learning days.
- We will continue to work with families on documented special dietary needs.
- Meals will be fee-based unless students qualify for free meals. If the USDA waives this requirement, as it did in spring/summer, we will adjust our process.
- We will implement a no-contact payment process.

## Technology

- Families will be asked to complete a “needs assessment” to discover their device and connectivity needs.
- Schools will prioritize device distribution (iPads, Chromebooks) based on family needs, including 1:1 sites.
- Resources and training will be made available to families to familiarize themselves with technology.
- All grade levels and schools will be using Google Education Suite for our learning management system.
- Communication to families will still be delivered through the Skylert Messaging Center (email, phone, text messaging) and Skyward. For more information on Skylert and Skyward, visit our [Families page online](#).
- Devices including keyboards, printers, and other high touch surfaces will be cleaned in between users.

## Nurses

- Health Office Nurses will provide for student health needs virtually.

## Family Connections

- Schools will ask families to update their contact information (phone, email, address) in Skyward.
- Family Engagement meetings and events will be held online or via phone whenever possible.
- Bilingual support will be available for families virtually.
- School community resource rooms (food, toiletries, clothing, etc.) may be available for limited hours, based on MDH/MDE guidelines.
- The District will offer additional support for students transitioning to a new school level (Kindergarten, 6th grade, 9th grade).

### Other activities

- Facility rentals: All individuals or groups who wish to rent a district facility are required to prepare and submit for review a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, following the specifications provided by the State of Minnesota for the type of event being held. Approval for rentals will depend on several factors, including the amount of additional labor required of school district staff to prepare the site under COVID-19 requirements for district use again, following a rental event.
- Youth sports activities are required to follow MDH and Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) guidelines on COVID-19 preparedness in youth sports.

### Visitors

- Buildings will restrict non-essential visitors and volunteers.
- Parents will be asked to make appointments for in-person meetings or participate in meetings online.

### School Age Child Care (SACC)

- Child care for the children of Tier 1 critical workers will be available weekdays.
- Registration will occur through Community Education's registration system.
- Number of spaces available will be limited by staffing and social distancing capacity.
- Programming will follow CDC guidelines.
- Fees will apply for child care. SACC accepts Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) payments.

## CONCLUSION

Your feedback on these options is important to us. Please provide your feedback using our [Survey Monkey tool](#) between now and July 27 at 11:59 AM.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools: Health Considerations for Navigating COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#) Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) - 7/22/2020
- [MDE 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools](#) Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) - 7/22/2020
- [COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs \(PDF\)](#) Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) - 7/22/2020
- [Decision Tree for People with COVID-19 Symptoms in Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs \(PDF\)](#) Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) - 6/2/2020
- [Quarantine If You Might Be Sick](#) - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - 7/16/2020

- [Playground Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs \(PDF\)](#) *Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) - 5/28/2020*
- [Guidance for Families – Planning for the 2020-21 School Year](#) *Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) - 6/26/2020*
  - [Guidance for Families – Planning for the 2020-21 School Year - Hmong](#)
  - [Guidance for Families – Planning for the 2020-21 School Year - Somali](#)
  - [Guidance for Families – Planning for the 2020-21 School Year - Spanish](#)