



A Path Forward - Rye City School District Reopening Plan

Rye City School District
Dr. Eric Byrne
February 2, 2021

New Information

- On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, the CDC released a report in support of schools reopening with proper mitigation efforts in place
- On Wednesday, January 27, Governor Cuomo stated in an interview on CNN that NYS schools may reopen and that localities have the authority to make the decision to do so. He further stated that teacher's unions will have a voice in the decision. He spoke of rapid testing and mitigation efforts as necessary components in reopening schools
- On January 5, the American Academy of Pediatrics updated their school guidance based on data and the latest research, recommending 3-6 foot social distancing
- Research from the T.H. Chan School of Public Health at Harvard University has led to updated recommendations for schools with a focus on air quality rather than surface cleaning as the latest research clearly shows that surface transmission of COVID-19 is minimal

Impact on Rye Schools

- The Rye City School District launched surveillance testing with rapid tests that will continue through the end of the school year. Each week, 5% of the total in-school population will be tested. Testing will be voluntary
- Proposed Phased Reopening - Beginning on March 1, 2021, we will propose a phased full reopening according to the following schedule:
 - March 1 - Kindergarten and first grade
 - March 8 - Second, third, fourth, and fifth grade
 - Sixth, seventh, eighth grade, and all RMS special education students
 - March 15 - Ninth and tenth grade and all RHS special education students
 - March 22 - Eleventh and twelfth grade

Fully-Remote Option

- We will continue to offer a fully-remote option for families who do not wish to send their children to school full-time
- A sign-up to remain in or move to the fully-remote option will be sent out to all families on February 3 with a deadline for completion of February 8
- The fully-remote option at RHS and RMS will remain in its current format with students live streaming into their classes
- The fully-remote option at elementary schools will remain the same with dedicated teachers for the remote classes. The schedule will be modified slightly
- If more students are in need of the fully-remote option at elementary schools, the District will create new remote classes with dedicated class teachers

Safety Measures

- Face masks must be worn on campus at all times except during supervised, safe mask breaks
- Social distancing will be modified to a range of 3-6 feet depending on the available space in a particular room
- Polycarbonate desk shields will be used at every desk for every student
- Lunch will remain the same at RMS
- Elementary students will eat lunch with their class cohort either in their classroom or in a larger space with 3-6 feet of social distancing
- Elementary school recess will be organized with cohort groups having designated recreational areas
- Morning arrival procedures will remain the same, including required health screenings
- Air purification units and MERV-13 filters are installed and operating in all spaces in the schools

Why This Proposed Timeline?

- We need to collect information from families about those students who will be switching to fully-remote learning
- New elementary teaching staff may need to be hired to support additional remote classes for students who are not returning to in-person school
- Allows time for more teachers/staff to receive vaccine
- Furniture must be removed from storage and placed back in classrooms
- Desk shields need to be assembled and installed on all desks
- Cafeterias must be opened at the 3 elementary schools and operations must be ramped up at MS and HS
- Mid-Winter break is February 15-19. We know that many in the community will be traveling. In order to limit potential exposures, mass quarantines, and the possibility of having to go fully remote, we will begin the proposed phased reopening starting March 1

Important Considerations

- Fully reopened school will be different from what it was pre-COVID
- In order to ensure social distancing, there will be less movement due to more individuals in each classroom
- Lunch will be highly-organized, with students in their classroom cohort groups in classrooms and in larger spaces
- Food service will provide grab-n-go options for school lunch, not hot food options
- Recess will be highly-organized, with students in their classroom cohorts in designated areas
- Greater density and numbers of students may lead to more students being quarantined
- This can only work if the community helps. A low positivity rate within the community will enable us to stay open. We need to be more vigilant than ever!

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