



RENSSELAER CENTRAL SCHOOLS CORPORATION

Mr. Curtis D. Craig
Superintendent

July 2, 2020

Rensselaer Employees and Community,

The last few months of uncertainty have been challenging for all of us. Students have missed months of education and social activities. Educators have not been able to interact with their students and engage in the profession they are passionate about. Most people agree that students should be in school and this letter will explain what reentry in the fall is expected to look like at RCSC. **As always, addressing COVID-19 is a fluid situation and plans may change.**

As we have stated before, our goal for the fall is to provide a safe environment for our staff and students in an environment that is as normal as possible. To accomplish this goal, we have worked with a team of teachers, administrators, coaches, parents, health department officials and our school attorney.

Community and staff input from the surveys sent out last week was very helpful in gauging opinions on reopening. The results of the survey can be found on the RCSC Corporation web site. We have tried to implement a plan that is supported by the majority of those who responded to the survey while addressing the concerns of all our community members.

On the RCSC web site, you will find an overall plan for the corporation that addresses different options for conducting school based on the level of community transmission of infection. Each school in the corporation will have plans specific to that building posted on their respective web sites.

We ask that parents with students, who do not wish to attend school due to concerns about COVID-19, contact their building principal. RCSC is committed to working with parents and students to find ways to meet all our students' educational needs.

Below you will find a summary of RCSC's approach to entering school in the fall. More details are provided in the corporation and specific building plans but the information below will give you the basics of RCSC's reentry plans.

Should you have any concerns do not hesitate to contact me.

Curtis Craig, EdS.
Superintendent
Rensselaer Central School Corporation

RCSC's Plan for Re-Opening School for the Fall of the 2020-2021 School Year

In Jasper and surrounding counties, the community spread of COVID-19 is currently low. The RCSC plan reflects this low risk of infection. Should that level of risk change, RCSC will adapt the plan to account for an increased level of risk.

Start of School

- RCSC will begin school with a traditional schedule with the published calendar
- Students first day will be August 13, 2020
- Teachers will begin on August 11, 2020
- New Teacher meeting is on August 10, 2020

Corporation Practices to be followed throughout RCSC

- Masks are recommended but not required except for high school and middle school art.
- The requirement to wear masks in art is based on the recommendation of the Jasper County Health Department to reduce the risk to staff and students. In art, students sit at tables facing each other and social distancing is not possible. Students not wishing to wear a mask will be assigned to another class. Cloth masks will be provided to students.
- Restrooms will be disinfected more frequently.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at the entrance of each building. Supervision will be provided to encourage students to use the sanitizer.
- All classrooms will be disinfected every day.
- Water fountains will be turned off and no-touch water bottle fill stations will be provided.
- All teachers and students will be trained to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Singing and the use of wind and brass instruments will only be allowed outside when appropriate social distancing can be implemented until further information is provided on the risks involved.
- Students at the elementary schools will sit with the same students for all activities to the greatest extent possible.
- Keyboards and mice will be removed from computer labs and students will use personal computing devices.
- Signs will be placed throughout the buildings promoting good hygiene and alerting people to the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Proper handwashing will be taught and encouraged.

Cleaning

Improved cleaning and hygiene practices comprise a major part of RCSC's plan for fall reopening. We anticipate many of the practices to continue after the pandemic passes since the procedures should help us reduce illness during cold and flu season.

- Electrostatic sprayers have been purchased for each building. These sprayers increase the efficiency and effectiveness of disinfecting classrooms and other building facilities.
- Custodians will document after-school disinfecting of classrooms, restrooms, gyms and lunch areas.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

- RCSC has followed the guidance of the Indiana Department of Education and Franciscan to develop a phased reentry plan. That plan is posted on the RCSC web page.

Transportation

Providing social distancing on our buses is not feasible for RCSC. We do not have the drivers, buses or time to run the multiple routes needed to have students sit in every other seat. Our plan involves promoting good hygiene practices on our buses.

- Students will be assigned a seat. This is already common practice on most buses.
- Buses will be disinfected after every route.
- Masks are recommended but not required for students and drivers.

Front Office

- Shields will be provided for front office desks to reduce the risk of transmission.

Food Service

- Two additional lunch periods will be created at the HS to provide greater social distancing.
- One additional lunch period will be created at the MS.
- Social distancing will be practiced at our elementary cafeterias to the greatest extent possible.
- Items will be placed on students' trays. The only thing a student will pick up is their tray.
- Microwaves will remain in lunch rooms. Sanitizing wipes will be provided and students will be required to wipe the microwave before and after use.
- The lunch areas will be disinfected after every lunch period.

High School/Middle School

- Vending machines will not be available.
- Students coming from other schools to take Career/Technical classes will be highly recommended to wear masks.
- Art students will work at tables facing each other and face coverings will be required based on the recommendation of the Jasper County Health Department.
- The weight room will be disinfected frequently and students will have sanitizing wipes to use before and after using weights.

Classrooms

- Furniture without a hard surface that can be cleaned will be removed from classrooms.
- Desks, chairs and high-touch areas will be disinfected more frequently.
- Elementary students will sit with the same group of students each day to the greatest extent possible and rooms will be disinfected daily.
- Keeping the same class of students together at recess will be practiced as much as practical.
- When a student leaves the classroom during class they will be required to use hand sanitizer before they return to class.
- Social distance in the classroom will be practiced to the greatest extent possible.

Ill students

- If a student becomes ill in the classroom, the student will be given a mask before being sent to the office.
- There will be a designated area in each building for students with COVID-19 symptoms.

Visitors to Buildings

- Visitation to the buildings will be restricted to essential business only.
- Visitors will be required to wear masks where social distancing is not possible.

Elementary Specials Classes

- These classes are held to provide enrichment to students and provide preparation time for teachers. These activities are very important for our students. High touch areas will be disinfected several times a day.
 - **Library**
 - Students will go to the library from their classroom and be seated with social distancing to the greatest extent feasible.
 - Students will use hand sanitizer when entering the library.
 - A shield will be provided for the librarian for protection when students are checking out books.
 - Returned books will not be shelved until the following day.
 - **Computers**
 - Students will go to computer lab and sit in the same order they sit in class.
 - Keyboards and mice will be removed. Students will use their personal computing devices.
 - **Physical Education**
 - Equipment will be disinfected at the end of each class period.
 - Activities will be selected that allow social distancing to the greatest extent possible.
 - **Art**
 - Students will go to the art room and use individual materials.
 - Students will sit at tables with the same students they sit with in their regular class.
 - **Music**
 - Students will go to the music room or the teacher will go to the students' classroom based on which arrangement will maximize social distancing.
 - Students will not sing or use wind instruments until more information is known about transmission of the virus.

Students and staff who are at high risk or are unable to attend a regular schedule for some reason.

- At RCSC, it is important to meet the needs of all our students and staff and reduce risk in the school environment.
- We understand it may not be possible for some of our students or staff to attend with the school schedule as planned.
- Please contact your building principal to develop a solution to address individual needs.
- For health concerns, it would be good to contact your health professional to get an opinion on accommodations that may be needed to return to school.

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