



ROCK PORT R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT

"To Be a Source of Inspiration and Knowledge for All"

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Dear Blue Jay Family,

I hope this letter finds you safe, happy and healthy! While I wish things were back to "normal" as we get excited about the upcoming school year, it is better to prepare for the unknown. At this time, I wanted to reach out and share our plans for the upcoming school year. Please keep in mind these guidelines/restrictions may change, but what we plan for beginning school on August 26th. I also ask you to keep in mind that every school district in our nation will be handling these issues in different ways this year. Our decision making is based on what is believed to be best for Rock Port R-II, our students and staff, and our community. I apologize for the lengthy letter, but wanted to cover as many areas as possible.

A key component in these plans, and in us being able to keep our building open this year, will fall on you. Prevention is the key, and you are the first layer of prevention in this battle. Your efforts are vital in keeping our students and staff healthy this upcoming year. Please make sure your child does not have a fever and is symptom free of any illness before sending them to school. We ask you stay on the side of caution, and when unsure whether your child may be sick, we ask you to keep them home. While we will continue to monitor attendance in a different capacity this year, our focus is on keeping everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

Another critical component for your family is having a plan in case of school closure or a quarantine situation this year. A closure will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and may be for any length of time, depending on what is happening in our community, county, and state. Unfortunately, the notice of closure may be "at a moment's notice." As is the case with our weather sometimes, we may not know we need to close our doors until a couple hours before the school day starts. Data from the health department, as well as from our local areas and state, will be utilized in making many of our decisions this year. As with anything, I promise to provide as much lead time as possible in notifying you when our school may be closed.

There is also a possibility that we will need to educate in rotating "shifts" this year, with the thought of having a "A" Group one day and "B" Group the next day. We would keep families together on the same day, but it would mean your child attends school in our building 2-3 days a week, and then has virtual instruction at home 2-3 days a week. Those plans will certainly be shared as we get closer to the beginning of school, but once again would only be used if necessary.

While this letter cannot touch on every moment of the school day, we wanted to share our expectations so you could feel safe about your child(ren) returning to school. We are working hard in creating and maintaining a safe environment for everyone in our school family this year. Please realize, your beliefs may not match the guidelines being implemented. Honestly, I have mixed feelings about different aspects of our school year as well. However, our job is to provide a safe educational environment for all of our students and staff, including those with high risk health conditions. When you have 430 people in a building at one time, those decisions are cautious in preparing for this upcoming year.

Our staff is preparing for virtual learning this year as well...with the hopes it won't be, or sparingly, necessary. However, if school must be closed, or you child must be at home, we will continue educating our students. This varies by grade level, but will include utilizing technology. If you do not have a device or internet access, please let your child's principal know, so they can work on strategies or adaptations for your child.

Currently, there has been minimal guidance from our Department of Elementary and Secondary Education about calendar waiver hours for the upcoming school year. We have an approved Alternative Methods of Instruction plan in place, so we know 36 hours can be counted if we must educate outside the classroom setting. There is an "extra" addition to this plan that will be used to allow more than 36 hours to be completed virtually, but that plan/form has not been completed at this time. We will do our best to keep you updated on how those decisions may affect our school calendar.

With all that being said, here is what we are preparing for as we start our new year...

Confirmed Case of COVID-19 in the School Building

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was in a school building, communication between our district and local health department will begin immediately. Closure of the school building is possible and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If necessary, this closure could last anywhere from 1-5 days, or perhaps longer. The district will work with the health department to assess factors such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine when the building should reopen.

We will contact parents/students and employees and notify them that a person who tested positive for COVID-19 was in the building and encourage cooperation with the district and the local health department to trace contacts with the individual. The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications to the school community at large, but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the health department.

If the health department determines that a student or staff member has been in close contact with a positive case of COVID, current guidance requires that person to be quarantined for 14 days. This is another case when having a family plan is extremely necessary, as this may cause hardship for a family for that two week period. Our hope is that we will have minimal cases that require individuals to be quarantined, but once again this information will be based on a case-by-case basis, and provided by guidance from our health department.

While the school building is closed, all school activities will be cancelled or rescheduled, regardless of whether the activity was to take place in the building or another location, including extracurricular activities, before and after-school programs, and field trips. Parents/students and employees may be encouraged to stay at home until more information is provided by the district or the health department.

Transportation

- Masks/PPE are required for drivers and students- this includes bus routes, van routes, Vo-Tech transportation, athletic/activity trips, etc. The school has purchased a cloth mask for each student to wear on the bus; however you may want to obtain/create additional masks.
- No temperature check will be taken before riding in the bus/van; parents must check temperatures and symptoms at home before boarding.
- Assigned seats will be required on all bus/van routes- please discuss with your student the importance of remaining in their seat. We will use the same assigned seat daily, so that contact tracing can be completed if necessary.
- Seating will have space between rows whenever possible; only family members will be sitting together in the same seat.
- Busses/vans will be sanitized after AM and PM routes, as well as after trips.

Entering the Building/Screening

- All students/staff should wear their mask when entering the building, and keep them on until they report to their Homeroom/First Period class. This may change due to guidance from health officials or based on the needs of our school district.
- Screenings for students will take place in their Homeroom/First Period class. Screenings will be completed by asking screening questions, and may include temperature checks.
- Staff will be screened daily when entering the building by answering the screening questions, and may also include temperature checks.
- Visitors to our building are by appointment only (examples- IEP meeting, college recruiter, military recruiter, etc.), unless in case of medical emergency. If possible, a staff member can meet you outside the door if you are dropping off items for your student. Visitors entering the building must be screened by asking screening questions, and may also include temperature checks.

Classroom

- Desks will be placed approximately 6 feet apart for social distancing in as many classrooms as possible- when this occurs, masks are currently optional for students and teachers. This may change due to guidance from health officials or based on the needs of our school district.
- Assigned seats will be required in all classrooms.
- During passing times in the hallways, masks will be required. Hopefully this is a minimal amount of time for students during the school day.
- During registration, please let the office know whether your child may be at high risk if not wearing a mask. That way staff can do their best to ensure your child uses it.
- If you have medical reasons why you child cannot wear a mask, please bring that documentation during registration as well. This must be formal documentation from a medical physician.
- The school has purchased at least two cloth masks for each student to have at school and use on the bus; however you may want to obtain/create additional masks. At various times masks may be sent home to be laundered. Please return masks with your student as soon as possible.
- Mask usage may be required due to class size or under certain circumstances in specific classrooms. Changes may be made if necessary throughout the school year.

Cafeteria

- Our students/staff will wear masks when traveling to/from and going through the line in the cafeteria.
- Breakfast carts will be available at both ends of the building, and students will eat breakfast either in the hallways or their classrooms.
- Lunch- small groups will eat in the cafeteria on a rotating basis, while other groups will eat in their classrooms.

Cleaning/Sanitizer

- Hand sanitizer stations will be available by entrances in our building, and in high traffic areas. Sanitizer bottles or hand washing stations are available in each classroom. Hand washing will be the first choice for cleaning hands, but sanitizer helps in instances where hand washing is not accessible.
- Our entire staff will continue to be responsible for helping to clean/sanitize areas of our building. This isn't a new thing, but focus will be shifted in different areas this year.

Bathrooms/Water Fountains

- Limited numbers of students are allowed at one time to utilize bathrooms throughout our building, so numbers should not cause issues. As always, these areas will be sanitized on a regular schedule.
- Water fountains will not be available for a single drink basis; however, we do have bottle filling stations on each end of the building where students can fill their water bottles. We strongly encourage your student have a water bottle for this upcoming year.

Athletics/Activities

- Current MSHSAA guidance states everything will start as originally scheduled, with High School Fall Athletic and Activity practices beginning August 10. As long as a school offers in-person classes they are able to participate; virtual only school districts are ineligible.
- It is highly likely at sporting events that screening will take place for spectators when they enter the facility. This may include screening questions and/or temperature checks. Screening may be required more at indoor events than outdoor events, but possible at all events. Limitations may be required for the amount of spectators. Masks may also be suggested, or perhaps even required. Please keep in mind, these decisions may be different at each school we travel to. We will do our best to communicate those expectations to our families and fans.
- Just like with a positive case in our school district, if an athlete from another district tests positive and comes into close contact with our athlete(s), quarantining may be required of your child. If this happens to multiple team members, games will be rescheduled or cancelled. Please realize our team may be healthy, but games still cancelled due to the restrictions of another school.

Hopefully this provides some guidance on what school will look like this upcoming year. We may know more and adjust guidelines in the next few weeks as we get closer to the start of school, and will certainly keep you updated. Please check our website www.rockport.k12.mo.us frequently for updates. We will also send out text casters when possible to update information. While it won't be the perfect education scenario this year, we look forward to making the best of it and educating our Blue Jays just like any other year. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me, or your child's principal, if you have any specific needs to address for your child(ren).

Take care, stay healthy, and we look forward to a great 2020-21 school year!

Ethan

