

Richmond Community Schools

35276 Division * Richmond, Michigan 48062 * (586) 727-3565 * www.richmond.k12.mi.us

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Richmond, Michigan 48062
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Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Community Members,

The last couple of months of the 2019-20 school year were extraordinary and unprecedented. Literally, within a matter of days, the educational system as we know it had to change. I would like to publicly thank the dedicated teaching and support staff for making that happen. Without them, we could not have done what we did in such a short time frame.

While we know and recognize it was not perfect, I can assure you that every staff member had the best interest of our students, and their families, at heart when making decisions about how we would educate students virtually. I am extremely proud of the staff and what they were able to do in a very short time.

To the moms, dads, grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, and anyone else that helped educate students during the shutdown, the Board of Education, administration, teachers, support staff and I say, "Thank you!" Thank you for your patience and partnership. In the world of education, we often stress the importance of a strong family and school partnership. This has truly been exemplified over the past couple of months.

We all can agree, the 2019-20 school year was an historic and remarkable school year, and I know we are all hoping for a more "normal" 2020-21 school year.

MI SAFE SCHOOLS" MICHIGAN'S 2020-21 RETURN TO SCHOOL ROADMAP

Governor Whitmer implemented a six-phase approach to reopening the State in order to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and to protect the well-being of all Michiganders. On May 15, 2020, Governor Whitmer, through Executive Order 2020-88, established the *Return to School Advisory*

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Council to develop recommendations for a safe return to in-person instruction. The Advisory Council included educators, administrators, elected officials, parents, students, and public health experts from across the State. Additionally, representatives from departments across Michigan's State government assembled a *COVID-19 Task Force on Education* to support the development of the *Roadmap*. Ultimately, Governor Whitmer considered recommendations from the Advisory Council and Task Force to make final decisions about required safety protocols.

On June 30, 2020, Governor Whitmer released *MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap*, based on the work and recommendations from the *COVID-19 Task Force on Education* and the *Return to School Advisory Council*. The *Roadmap* provides required, strongly recommended and recommended safety protocols to keep school communities safe based on the status of the coronavirus. The *Roadmap* provides recommendations across the mental and social-emotional health, instruction, and operation within each phase of the *MI Safe Start Plan*, to support all schools as we continue the return to school planning and move towards implementation.

"We will continue to put safety first, leveraging science, data and public health evidence to inform the decisions we make to serve each and every student in Michigan well."

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer

I would strongly encourage all parents/guardians to read the *MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap* and the Governor's Executive Order 2020-142. For your convenience, a link to these documents is located on the District's webpage. Just scanning and reading the social media posts that I have seen, there is a lot of inaccurate information being spread. Please get the facts.

At the time of this letter, the State of Michigan is in "PHASE 4" of the Governor's six-phase re-opening plan. The *MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap* document

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**Brian J. Walmsley
Superintendent**

outlines what schools will be required to do in each phase of the re-opening plan. Like all school districts, Richmond Community Schools will implement the "required" components of the *MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap* for each phase. In fact, the District will try to implement as many of the "strongly recommended" and "recommended" aspects of the plan as it can, within the limits of the resources provided by the State. However, logistically, many of those "strongly recommended" and "recommended" aspects are not possible given the scope of operating a district with over 1,500 students.

Make no mistake, the District's priority is to provide a safe learning environment for all of our students and staff. We all must work together, putting our differences aside, to ensure an educational environment is physically and mentally safe for all students and staff based on the known scientific information available.

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WHAT ARE SCHOOL OPENING SCENARIOS FOR FALL 2020?

Depending on the status of *MI Safe Schools*, there are three scenarios for school opening for in-person instruction in the fall 2020:

1. *MI Safe Start PHASE 6* - Schools open for in-person instruction with **MINIMAL** required safety protocols
2. *MI Safe Start PHASE 5* - Schools open for in-person instruction with **MODERATE** required safety protocols
3. *MI Safe Start PHASE 4* - Schools open for in-person instruction with **MORE STRINGENT** required safety protocols

In *MI Safe Start PHASE 1-3*, schools do not open for in-person instruction and instruction is provided remotely (e.g. virtual learning). Again, at the time of this letter, the State of Michigan is in **PHASE 4**. While implementing the requirements of the State, Richmond Community Schools is planning for in-person learning as well as providing families a virtual learning option.

You are invited to participate in a conversation about how Richmond Community Schools will implement the “required” guidelines in the *MI Safe Schools: Michigan’s 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap*. The District is seeking your input as it finalizes its *Return to School* plan and determines the best way to implement the “strongly recommended” and “recommended” guidelines. Below you will find the link for each of the parent meetings. It is my hope that one of those meetings will work for you.

Session 1: Parent Meeting regarding MI Safe Start: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap

July 27, 2020 at 9:00 AM

Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83937201312>

Meeting ID: 839 3720 1312

Password: 292697

By telephone: (213) 338-8477

Meeting ID: 839 3720 1312

Session 2: Parent Meeting regarding MI Safe Start: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap

July 27, 2020 at 2:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83542754374>

Meeting ID: 835 4275 4374

Password: 793951

By telephone: (213) 338-8477

Meeting ID: 835 4275 4374

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Session 3: Parent Meeting regarding MI Safe Start: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap

July 27, 2020 at 7:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81948012926>

Meeting ID: 819 4801 2926

Password: 910953

By telephone: (213) 338-8477

Meeting ID: 819 4801 2926

REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF "PHASE 4" OF THE ROADMAP

All preK-12 schools will be required to follow the safety protocols outlined in the *MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap*, which are noted as "required." Many schools, including Richmond, may also choose to implement some or all of the "strongly recommended" or "recommended" practices, thus going beyond what is required.

Richmond Community Schools' *Return to School* plan, which will be presented and approved by the Board of Education on August 10, 2020, will include the following "**required**" components of "PHASE 4" re-opening:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Required Components

- Facial coverings must always be worn by staff, except for meals.
- Facial coverings must be worn by preK-12 students, staff and bus drivers during school transportation
- Facial coverings must be always worn in hallways and common areas by preK-12 students in the building, except during meals.
- Facial coverings must be worn in classrooms by all students grade 6-12.
- Students in grades preK-5 must wear facial coverings unless students remain with their classes throughout the school day and do not come into close contact with students in another class.

Hygiene – Required Components

- Schools must provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and students, paper towels, tissues, and signs reinforcing proper handwashing techniques).
- Schools must teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

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Screening Students and Staff – Required Component

- Schools will cooperate with the Macomb County Public Health department regarding implementing protocols for screening students and staff.

Testing Protocols for Students and Staff and Responding to Positive Cases – Required Component

- Schools will cooperate with the Macomb County Public Health Department regarding implementing protocols for screening students and staff.

Responding to Positive Tests among Staff and Students – Required Component

- Schools will cooperate with the Macomb County Public Health Department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, and in particular, must collect the contact information for any close contacts of the affected individual from two days before he or she showed symptoms to the time when he or she was last present at the school.

Food Service, Gatherings, and Extracurricular Activities – Required Component

- Schools will prohibit indoor assemblies that bring together students from more than one classroom.

Athletics – Required Components

- Schools will comply with all guidance published by Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA)
- Students, teachers, and staff must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after every practice, event, or other gathering.
- All equipment must be disinfected before and after use
- Inter-school competitions may be held provided that, facial coverings are worn if school transportation is provided,
- Spectators are allowed provided that facial coverings are used by observers and six feet of social distancing can be maintained at all times
- Each participant must use a clearly marked water bottle for individual use.
- Handshakes, fist bumps, and other unnecessary contact must not occur.
- Indoor weight rooms and physical conditioning activities that require shared equipment are suspended.
- Large scale indoor spectator events are suspended.

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Cleaning – Required Components

- Frequently touched surfaces including light switches, doors, benches, and bathrooms, must undergo cleaning at least every four hours with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution
- Libraries, computer labs, arts, and other hands-on classrooms must undergo cleaning after every class period with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.
- Student desks must be wiped down with normal routine cleaning, but using an EPA-approved solution after every class period.
- Playground structure must continue to undergo normal routine cleaning, but using an EPA-approved disinfectant is unnecessary.
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children, and with adequate ventilation when staff use products.
- Staff must wear gloves, surgical mask, and face shields when performing all cleaning activities.

Busing and Student Transportation – Required Components

- Require the use of hand sanitizer before entering the bus.
- The bus driver, staff, and all students in grades preK-12, if medically feasible, must wear facial coverings while on the bus.
- Clean and disinfect transportation vehicles before and after every transit route.
- Clean and disinfect touched surfaces in the vehicle (e.g. surface in the driver’s cockpit, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and guard handles) prior to morning routes and prior to afternoon routes.
- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect equipment including items such as car seats, wheelchairs, walkers, and adaptive equipment being transported to schools daily.
- Create a plan for getting students home safely if they are not allowed to board the vehicle.
- If a student becomes sick during the day, they must not use group transportation to return home and must follow protocols outlined above.
- Weather permitting, keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicles and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.
- Weather permitting, consider keeping windows open while the vehicle is in motion to help reduce spread of the virus by increasing air circulation, if appropriate and safe.

The District has every intention to implement the *Roadmap’s* “strongly recommended” and “recommended” guidelines within the resources provided by the State.

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VIRTUAL OPTION FOR PARENTS

Based on the survey results, which are located on the District's website, we acknowledge there are some families that will choose not to send their students for in-person learning and select a virtual option. The District is excited to announce, in partnership with the Richmond Education Association (REA), it will have a PreK-12 virtual option for students beginning this fall. While the details are still being finalized, I can share that the virtual teachers will be Richmond teachers. Your child will still be part of a classroom, as if they are attending in-person instruction.

If you are interested in registering your child for virtual instruction, please go to the District's website and complete the *Virtual Learning Request Form*. A District representative will contact you.

FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCHES



Since the school closure and through August 27, 2020, Richmond Community Schools is proud to participate in *Meet-up and Eat-up* breakfast and lunch programs in the community. To date, we have served over 65,000 meals to families in our community. You can still participate by picking up meals every Monday and Thursday from 10:00am-12:00pm by the concession building near the football field. The two pick-up days provide breakfast and lunch for all seven days of the week.

BLUE DEVIL DAYS

Based on the "Required" guidelines of PHASE 4 outlined in the *MI Safe Start: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap*, Blue Devil Days will not occur as it has in the past. Once details are finalized, more information will be provided in the school's Welcome Back packets, which are scheduled to be mailed the week of August 24, 2020.

These are unprecedented times, but I am confident through the collective partnership Richmond Community Schools has with its staff, parents, guardians and community, we will be successful in providing an environment conducive to learning for our students in these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Walmsley', is written over a white background.

Brian J. Walmsley, Ed.S.
Superintendent

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