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Richmond Community Schools

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**Richmond Early Childhood Learning Center
& Will L. Lee Elementary School**
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David Kochan, Principal

Richmond Middle School
35250 Division
Richmond, Michigan 48062
Keith Bartels, Principal

Richmond High School
35320 Division
Richmond, Michigan 48062
Andrew Kastl, Principal

Monday, August 17, 2020

Dear parents and guardians,

Welcome Back! When students return to school on September 8th (September 9th for Preschool), it will have been almost six (6) months since students were last in the classroom. I am extremely proud of the staff and what they did in an effort to continue educating students in a non-traditional format, literally overnight, when the schools were ordered to shut down in March. Their commitment and dedication to our students is second to none.

The staff and I are excited about students returning to school and establishing some type of normalcy in a world that is very unpredictable. I would be remiss if I did not also express our hesitation and concern about the return. Collectively, the staff and I are preparing for “*when*” a COVID-19 case occurs, not “*if*” it occurs. We are confident in our procedures to respond and will need your support when we respond. COVID-19 has changed the way we look at the world and operate, and Richmond is no different. However, I know we will come together, each doing their part, for the collective good of the community and our students, and together we will get through this pandemic.

Richmond Community Schools was proactive in preparing our *Return to Learning* plan, even before the Governor’s official announcement on June 30, 2020. Reviewing the 650+ responses from our parent/guardian survey data and recognizing each family has unique needs, Richmond Community Schools developed a comprehensive ***Return to Learning*** plan, which can be found on the District’s website. The Plan includes cleaning & disinfecting procedures and instructional delivery models. For the 2020-21 school year, Richmond is proud to offer two (2) instructional options for families: (1) traditional in-person instruction model and (2) virtual/online option in which students will be a part of the in-class environment as much as feasibly possible.

IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION OPTION. Families choosing the in-person instruction option do **NOT** need to do **anything**. All students are automatically registered for in-person instruction. In-person learning will look a little different from what you may have experienced in the past. Student desks will be spread out in classrooms as much as possible to promote social distancing, but they will not be six feet apart as recommended. The physical layout of the classrooms prohibits the District from achieving this recommendation. Lunchroom tables will be spread out, and only two (2) students will be allowed to sit on each bench. The District has added blue lines in hallways to promote one-way traffic as well as signage around the building to promote social distancing and handwashing.

Guaranteed Learning for All Students!

Students are required to use hand sanitizer and have their temperature checked before they enter the bus or buildings. Any student with a temperature 100.4 degrees or higher will not be allowed on the bus or in the buildings. All students are also required to wear their facial covering (e.g. mask or shield) while riding the bus and in common areas such as hallways, restrooms, cafeterias (except when eating), gymnasiums, etc. PreK-5 students are not required to wear facial coverings in the classrooms. Students in grades 6-12 will be required to wear facial coverings in classrooms. For more information about “*What to Expect*” for in-person learning, visit the District’s website.

The District partnered with the County Executive’s Office in Macomb County and the Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) to procure over 4,700 face shields, almost 100,000 disposable face masks (child and older student/adult sizes), 2,000 cloth masks, and 3,100 disposable gloves, as well as the supply of hand sanitizers, wipes, and disinfectant machines and solutions needed to keep the facilities clean and sanitized.

VIRTUAL/ONLINE INSTRUCTION OPTION. Families choosing the virtual/online instruction option must complete and return the attached *Virtual/Online Learning Agreement Form*. While you have until September 11, 2020 to make your final decision, we are respectfully asking you to **RETURN THE FORM BY AUGUST 28, 2020**. If you do not return the attached form to the school, your child will be enrolled in the in-person instruction option. While virtual/online students are not required to wear facial coverings while at home, they are expected to log in as required and participate in the classroom activities and discussions, as if they were in the classroom. For more information about “*What to Expect*” for the virtual/online learning as well as picking up District-provided resources (e.g. laptops and textbooks), visit the District’s website.

BLUE DEVILS DAYS. Due to COVID-19 and the requirements of PHASE 4 of the *MI Safe Schools: Michigan’s 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap*, Richmond will NOT hold in-person *Blue Devil Days*. *Blue Devil Days* will be held virtually the week of September 14 after in-person and virtual/online students have been trained in *Schoology* and *Microsoft Teams*. More information about virtual *Blue Devil Days*, along with teacher assignments and schedules, will be provided in the principal’s welcome back letter that will be mailed the week of August 24.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY. I am elated to report that once again the **BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVED ANOTHER BALANCED BUDGET** with the approval of the *FY21 Fiscal Budget*. Board members are often required to make difficult decisions in the best interest of the entire district. The Board members are focused on providing quality programming and services for students, while being fiscally responsible stewards of taxpayers’ dollars.

Although the Richmond Board of Education has demonstrated outstanding fiscal responsibility, the State has not. It is important to realize that once again the **STATE LEGISLATURE HAS NOT APPROVED, NOR HAS THE GOVERNOR SIGNED INTO LAW, A SCHOOL AIDE BUDGET BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS**. As of today, schools do not know what they will receive in a ‘*per pupil allocation*.’ The fiscal year began July 1 for the School District. Recognizing the State is short \$1.4 billion dollars in the School Aid for Fiscal Year 2021, the budget approved by Richmond’s Board of Education is based on conservative assumptions and protects the classrooms and programs for students.

Finally, we have much to celebrate, and we should. I look forward to the journey we will take together for another productive and successful school year.

Sincerely,
Brian J. Walmsley, Ed.S.
Superintendent

Guaranteed Learning for All Students!