



TO: Coalition of Parent Groups of RCSD Students

FROM: Van Henri White, President of the Rochester City School District Board of Education
Dr. Lesli C. Myers-Small, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: November 15, 2021

RE: Response to Correspondence from November 3, 2021

Thank you for your correspondence regarding safety in our schools. We value parent/family input and appreciate the opportunity for dialogue around this very important issue. Outlined below are responses to your questions:

1. Supports to students

- a. Code of Conduct Protocols-The Code of Conduct was revisited to lessen punitive and exclusionary responses in favor of restorative practices and teachable opportunities. In many parts of the disciplinary matrix:

- minor behaviors have been eliminated as examples
- higher level disciplines have been eliminated
- lower level support interventions have been added

Additionally, the student rights section now contains additional protected categories, consistent with the Dignity for All Students Act.

- b. Communication Protocols- The Communications Department has developed an emergency communications protocol for staff which includes the standard operating procedures for emergency situations and includes templates for robocalls and letters for schools to use to notify families.
- c. Social Emotional Supports - We are excited to announce that our Coronavirus Response and Relief Application has been approved in full by NYSED, and with that, we may begin to implement initiatives from that grant to support provision of intense, additional supports directly to schools and students.

Highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Provision of Social-Emotional, Mental Health and Safety Supports:
- 52.0 FTE COVID Response Paraprofessionals
- Expansion of Second Step social-emotional curriculum provision – curricular materials and related professional development
- Personal Protective Equipment supplies and materials
- Overtime pay for custodians to conduct deep cleanings of physical spaces
- 12.0 FTE Community School Site Coordinators

Additionally, the District's American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) application is under NYSED review. This grant also contains initiatives focused on provision of intense, additional supports directly to schools and students.

Highlights include, but are not limited to:

- Provision of Social-Emotional, Mental Health and Safety Supports:
- 17.5 FTE additional School Counselors
- 5.0 FTE additional ROC Restorative Teachers on Assignment
- 4.0 FTE bilingual additional Teachers on Assignment to support Restorative Practices (contracted services)
- 1.0 FTE TCOSE – NorthSTAR
- 3.0 FTE additional Social Workers
- 19.0 FTE additional School Safety Officers
- 1.0 FTE Coordinator of Social-Emotional Learning
- 2.0 FTE Social-Emotional Learning Coaches
- 9.0 FTE additional, varied TOA focused on provision of SEL, by school need and request
- Provision of Therapeutic Crisis and Intervention Training, District-wide
- Provision of Trauma, Illness and Grief training, District-wide
- 11.0 FTE Intervention Aides from Pathways to Peace (contracted services)
- 4.0 FTE additional Help Zone staff from Center for Youth (contracted services)
- Provision of professional learning focused on providing social-emotional supports to highest-need students
- 0.5 FTE Community Organizer
- 2.0 FTE Bilingual Counselors

2. Dr. Morris, Deputy Superintendent of Operations and Systems Innovation is working with the Chief of Operations and Director of Safety and Security to develop an evaluation system relative to outside police presence on campuses. They were charged with this task after last Tuesday’s Board of Education Meeting. The methodology of this analysis will be structured as follows:
 - A. Count the daily incidents of negative behavior occurring on school grounds, but outside of the school building, per campus that RCSD has elected to place Rochester City Police Officers at (for the period of the 2021-22 school year in which officers were not present).
 - B. Bracket the instances of negative behavior into two categories; the first being “Incidents of Violence or Intent to Cause Violence” and later being “Other Negative Behavior Incidents”.
 - C. Count the daily incidents for each category of negative behavior per campus that RCSD has elected to place Rochester City Police Officers at (for the period of the 2021-22 school year in which officers were not present).
 - D. Continue to collect information on daily incidents of negative behavior per category occurring on school grounds, outside of the school building, per campus that RCSD has selected to place Rochester City Police Officers at (for the period of the 2021-22 school year in which officers were present).
 - E. Create three sets of data, each of which should have information from the first day of the 2021-22 school year, to the last applicable day of this study (post-police placement). The first data set should be daily counts of incidents that occur (regardless of category), the second should be daily counts of “Incidents of Violence or Intent to Cause Violence” that occur; the third should be daily counts of “Other Negative Behavior Incidents”.
 - F. For each of these datasets, calculate the standard deviation and mean of the daily incidents that occurred before police officers were placed outside of schools, and the standard

deviation and mean of the daily incidents that occurred after police officers were placed outside of schools.

- G. Use the means and standard deviation to calculate the difference in means for each data set. This should show the true impact of police presence on the frequency of different incidents of negative behavior at applicable RCSD campuses.

- 3. A working agreement between the Rochester Police Department (“RPD”) and the Rochester City School District (“RCSD”) have been developed to ensure a shared understanding of the role and responsibilities in maintaining safe schools, improving school climate, and supporting educational opportunities for all students.

Additionally, a group of administrators developed a transition plan which involved communications and partnership with RPD. Listed below is the framework used by RCSD in relation to RPD:

Communication and Planning with the Rochester Police Department		
Recommendation	Action	Person Responsible
<p>Work with RPD and RCSD to establish procedures for communication coordination/collaboration with the school building leadership.</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer will reach out to RPD to determine section leaders for each school.</p> <p>Schedule introduction meetings with RPD section leaders and school principals.</p> <p>Quarterly follow up with building administration, district administration and the Rochester Police Department.</p> <p>Coordinate a meeting with the Chief of Police and the Superintendent to work on collaborative practices.</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Office of Safety & Security; building principals</p> <p>Director of Security</p>
<p>Communicate with the RCSD and RPD of situations involving a RCSD student.</p>	<p>Communication from RPD to Jim Sheppard each morning. Jim will put pertinent information into CrisisGo.</p> <p>School Chiefs will communicate with building principals pertinent information.</p>	<p>Director of Security; Chief Operating Officer; School Chiefs</p> <p>School Chiefs; Principals</p>

RPD connections with RCSD schools and students	Continue to seek opportunities for positive engagement between RCSD and the Rochester Police Department.	Director of Security; Chief Operations Officer; Principals
RPD involvement when responding to a call from a school	RCSD and RPD will work collaboratively to establish protocols for responding to a 911 call from a school building. Presentation of agreed protocols to principals.	Director of Security; Chief Operations Officer; School Chiefs Director of Security; Chief Operations Officer; School Chiefs
Professional Learning and Training	RCSD to work with RPD for opportunities to provide professional learning on school-wide approaches and strategies. RPD to provide professional learning to schools on data and trends in school zones and the City.	Director of Security; Chief Operations Officer; School Chiefs; Director of Support Services Director of Security; Chief Operations Officer; School Chiefs

4. Operation *Fathers Initiating Restorative Engagement (FIRE)* - The Operation FIRE initiative has been developed to get more male role models in schools beginning with Edison Tech and Franklin. The group will meet on Saturday, November 20, 2021 to receive volunteer and restorative practices training. School visits will begin on Monday, November 22nd.

Parents in Action - The goal of the Parent Action Initiative is to collaborate with all RCSD and community parent groups along with other District parents and staff to address safety issues that are affecting our schools. During the Community Action Initiative meeting on Saturday, November 6th, the team identified some solutions. Parents indicated the need to continue meetings in a setting where all groups are together to have further solution-based discussions on safety issues.

Community Action Initiative - Parents in Action Meeting Initiative
(December 2021 - June 2022)

Recommendation	Action	Person Responsible
Market the Parent Portal	Offer professional learning for parents on how to use Parent Portal throughout the school year	Office of Parent Engagement; IM&T
Code of Conduct	Offer parents training on the conduct (2-part sessions)	OPE; Executive Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Curriculum Program Audit
Restorative Practices and TIG for Parents	Train parents on restorative practices, trauma, illness, and grief (TIG) (3-part sessions)	OPE; Executive Director of Equity, Inclusion, & Social-Emotional Support
Connecting and Engaging with Parents	Ongoing professional learning on strategies on how to effectively communicate, connect, and engage with parents	OPE; Parent Liaisons/Home School Assistants; parent groups
	Increase parent participation on School Based Planning Teams	OPE; Parent Liaisons/Home School Assistants; parent groups
	Increase parent participation on all District-Level parent groups	OPE; Parent Liaisons/Home School Assistants; parent groups
	Increase parent participation on all RCSD Strategic Task Forces	OPE; Strategic Task Forces
Mental Health embedded into curriculum	<p>Mental Health Monday that's unrelated to instruction with a class period that is geared toward mental health</p> <p>Bring in Community Partners that specialize in Mental Health</p>	OPE; Executive Director of Equity, Inclusion, & Social-Emotional Support for a discussion around mental health; Strategic and Community Partnerships

Parent help during school arrival and dismissal times	Give parent volunteers gas cards of \$25 - \$50 for assisting schools <i>Note: Requires further discussion</i>	OPE; Chief Financial Officer <i>(Discuss possible funding for parent volunteers)</i> ; Volunteer Coordinator
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5. Currently, we contract with the City of Rochester for the Pathways to Peace (PTP) Program as part of a comprehensive effort to safeguard the lives of these youth, defuse potentially violent situations, and help them get on a track to a better life. The PTP team reaches out into targeted neighborhoods to assess the needs of youth, network with all available resources and link at-risk youth to appropriate services. Pathways to Peace offers prevention, intervention and direct monitoring of youth receiving the services needed to support their positive progress. We submitted in our application for ARP Federal funds an additional 11 FTEs from Pathways to Peace.

We have had a series of meetings with the City of Rochester. The Mayor shares our concerns relative to safety and Security in our schools and has committed to connecting our staff with hers as it relates to health and safety. Elizabeth Reyes, Executive Director of Social Emotional Learning and the Superintendent have a series of meetings with Commissioner Danielle Lyman Torres to further develop partnerships. Further, Vice President Elliott and Superintendent Myers-Small also will be meeting with Dr. April Aycock from Monroe County.

6. Class sizes are already on average at a lower range than normal. Even if the District sought to reduce the number of students further, the District would need to hire more teachers and there is a significant teacher shortage locally, regionally, and nationally.
 - a. As of 10.27.2021, class averages were:
 - i. K-6: 20.82 students
 - ii. 7-8: 21 students
 - iii. 9-12: 21.56 students
7. The District submitted several recruitment, retention and talent development proposals as part of our CRRSA and ARP applications. Embedded within these proposals are intentional strategic efforts to recruit, develop, support, and retain teachers and leaders of color.

We look forward to our continued conversations on ways we can work together to ensure the success of our scholars. Open communication is key to a successful District. We are grateful for your participation and support. Thank you.

c: Board of Education Commissioners
Dr. Shelley Jallow, State Appointed Monitor
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