



Michael Schmidt  
Chief of Operations  
Rochester City School District  
131 West Broad Street  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Dr. Lesli Myers-Small, Superintendent of Schools

**From:** Michael Schmidt, Chief of Operations

**Date:** February 17, 2021

**Re:** Operations Ventilation Update

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The Rochester City School District made the decision to increase district ventilation standards in our HVAC system to Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) 13 level filters where feasible throughout the district. In an effort to operate at high safety levels, the District has complied with and implemented all Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations outlined in the bullets below, with the exception of using Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI). UVGI is not approved for use in NYS schools.

Below are the recommendations from the CDC and the NYS Department of Health (DOH). The only requirements prescribed by NYSED are already in place in RCSD. Since the onset of COVID-19, no new ventilation regulations have been imposed on schools in NYS.

### Center for Disease Control Guidance

Schools should determine, in collaboration with state and local health officials to the extent possible, whether and how to implement each of these considerations while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community. It is also critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission in the school and throughout the community, as this may change rapidly.

### Ventilation

Consider ventilation system upgrades or improvements and other steps to increase the delivery of clean air and dilute potential contaminants in the school. Obtain consultation from experienced Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) professionals when considering changes to HVAC systems and equipment. Some of the recommendations below are based on the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) [Guidance for Building Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic external icon](#). Review additional [ASHRAE guidelines for schools and universities pdf icon external icon](#) for further information on ventilation recommendations for different types of buildings and building readiness for occupancy. Not all steps are applicable for all scenarios.

Improvement steps may include some or all of the following activities:

- Increase outdoor air ventilation, using caution in highly polluted areas.
  - When weather conditions allow, increase fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
  - Use child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows. Position fans securely and carefully in or near windows so as not to induce potentially contaminated airflow directly from one person over another (strategic fan placement to help draw fresh air into the classroom from open windows or to blow air from the classroom out open windows).

- Decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor ventilation cannot be increased.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, when possible.
- Improve central air filtration
- Consider running the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after the school is occupied.
- Ensure restroom exhaust fans are functional and operating at full capacity when the school is occupied. Inspect and maintain local exhaust ventilation in areas such as restrooms, kitchens, cooking areas, etc.

**New York State Department of Health  
Ventilation**

Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols, particularly for younger students.

**Restart Operations**

Plans to safely reopen facilities and grounds, such as cleaning and disinfection, and restarting building ventilation, water systems, and other key facility components, as applicable;

Develop proper procedures for hand washing, cleaning and disinfection, ventilation, and appropriate use of PPE. [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools MasterGuidance.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K%20to%20Grade%2012%20Schools%20MasterGuidance.pdf)

**RCSD Filter Level Status Report (as of February 13, 2021)**

School	Filter Level	School	Filter Level
2	MERV 13	3	MERV 13
4	MERV 13	5	MERV 13
7	MERV 13	8	MERV 13
9	MERV 13	10	MERV 13
12	MERV 13	15	MERV 13
16	MERV 13	17	MERV 13
19	MERV 13	NorthSTAR	MERV 13
22	MERV 13	23	MERV 13
25 (Freddie Thomas)	MERV 13	28	MERV 13
29	MERV 13	33	MERV 13
34	MERV 13	35	MERV 13
39	MERV 13	42	MERV 13
45	MERV 13	46	MERV 13
50	MERV 13	52	MERV 13
53 (Freddie Thomas)	MERV 13	54	MERV 13
Wilson Foundation	MERV 13	Early College	MERV 13
RECEC	MERV 13	106	MERV 13
East	MERV 13	Franklin	MERV 13
Edison	MERV 13	RIA	MERV 13
NE/NW	MERV 13	Leadership Academy for Young Men	MERV 13
Wilson Commencement	MERV 13	World of Inquiry School	MERV 13

The RCSD Facilities department began this process several months ago and were approached by the Rochester Teachers Association (RTA) who wanted to have an independent review of the District ventilations systems. We

welcomed the partnership and have been working in collaboration with them to complete a review of the district ventilation systems. Unfortunately, the RTA canceled the consultant's second visit to Rochester. We are working with them to ensure that the visit takes place the week of February 22.

**Below is a status update of the items identified in the ventilation reports from the RTA consultant conducted for Phase 1 and Phase 2:**

- School 7: MERV 13 filters installed 2/10/21
- School 8: MERV 13 filters installed 2/10/21
- School 9: MERV 13 filters installed 2/11/21 and air handler identified from the review repaired during the week of the week of February 3, 2021. Air handlers that serve classrooms identified in the report addressed the week of February 3, 2021.
- School 10 - No issues identified from the report - MERV 8 pre-filters and MERV 13 filters installed in the fall of 2020.
- School 16 -No issues identified in the report - MERV 8 Pre-filters MERV 13 filters installed in the fall 2020.
- School 22 -MERV 13 Filters installed 2/12/21.
- School 23 - MERV 13 Filters were installed on 2/11/21
- RECEC - MERV 13 filters - (Special Order due to unique size installed on 2/12/21).
- OACES - MERV 13 Filters Installed 2/11/21
- School 50 - MERV 13 Filters installed on 2/11/21

**Phase 3:**

- SOTA - Phase 3 School -Their start date is 2/25/20 - MERV 13 Filters - Installed 2/11/21
- Phase 3 schools are scheduled to have MERV 13 filters received and installed prior to 2/25/21 opening

We are making every effort to ensure the safety of our students and staff in all of our buildings as we confront the ever-changing challenges a worldwide pandemic brings. Thank you for your support.