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Dear Students, Families, and Staff Members of the Rochester City School District,

I am thrilled that we are just a few short weeks away from having some of our students return to **Phase 1** of our hybrid/in-person learning on January 5! We are welcoming back students in grades K – 12 in Specialized Services. Please note the January 5th start date for students is new. We are allowing staff access to visit classrooms in these buildings between now and January 4th for any needed classroom set up or care. During Phase 1, students in General and Special Education in grades Pre-K -12 will remain in remote learning.

This week, families of students in Phase 1 received a letter with your child's school, teacher's name, and information about the return to school for hybrid/in-person learning. Schools in Phase 1 will revert to the bell schedules published prior to the 2020-21 school year. Please check the school page on our [website](#). These families also received a back-to-school guide that can be found online at www.rcsdk12.org/familyguide, as well as a [consent form](#) allowing the District to test your child for COVID-19. In addition, you will receive information regarding your child's transportation arrangements.

Update on Phases 2 and 3

In November, I presented a reopening plan to the Board of Education, who approved a model that returns more students to hybrid/in-person learning. Two weeks ago, schools contacted families about their preferred choice of learning for the remainder of the school year. Families chose to continue with either fully remote learning or a hybrid/in-person model with two days of in-person instruction for their child(ren).

Overwhelmingly, a majority of our families supported the remote learning model we have been using since the beginning of this school year. The results are below:

	Students	Hybrid/in-person	% Hybrid/in-person	Remote*	% Remote
District Totals	24,630	7,359	30%	17,271	70%
Pre-K - 6 Totals	13,521	4,423	33%	9,098	67%
7 - 12 Totals	11,109	2,936	26%	8,173	74%

**Remote numbers reflect those who selected remote, those who were undecided, and those who did not respond.*

Those families who did not respond with a selection or were undecided will remain remote and continue to receive four days of virtual learning. Wednesdays will continue to be an asynchronous/independent day of learning.

Phase 2 - February 8, 2021: Hybrid/in-person and Remote Learning

Phase 2 for grades Pre-K - 6 will begin on Monday, February 8, 2021 for our general and special education students who chose hybrid/in-person learning. These students will receive four days of instruction: two consecutive days will be hybrid/in-person and two days will be fully remote. Wednesdays will be completely asynchronous/independent learning. In most circumstances, students will keep their existing teachers.

While our hybrid students attend class in-person, remote students will join using zoom for a part of the school day. Teachers will teach remote and in-person students at the same time using Seesaw and Google classrooms as our primary learning platforms. Hybrid/in-person learning will also include asynchronous/independent learning opportunities for all students. Teachers will utilize a variety of methods to ensure that our students are engaged and have access to high-quality experiences every day.

In January, our families of students in Pre-K - 6 will receive a letter with your child's school, teacher's name, and information about the return to school for hybrid/in-person learning, as well as transportation. Families will also receive the back-to-school guide that can be found online at www.rcsdk12.org/familyguide, as well as a consent form allowing the District to test your child for COVID-19.

During Phase 2 - Students in General and Special Education in grades 7 – 12 will remain in remote learning.

Phase 3 – March 1, 2021: Remote Virtual Instruction with Learning Pod Supports

All of our students in grades 7-12 will remain completely virtual. While primary instruction will be delivered in a remote setting, students will have the opportunity to have in-person support in learning pods. Learning pods are small-groups of students with similar needs who are brought together to receive tailored and individual support. Where possible, teachers will schedule in-person weekly visits with students followed by consistent virtual visits and touch points through the week. This in-person time will consist of small-group learning and opportunities for adults to check-in with each student individually. All of our students in grades 7-12 are eligible to participate in in-person learning pods. Learning pods will include instructional and social emotional support, including resources needed for graduating seniors. For additional information on the Learning Pods available, please contact your child's school.

Bell Times

Beginning February 8, 2021, all of our students in Phases 2 and 3 will revert to the bell schedules published prior to the 2020-21 school year. Please visit our [website](#) for more information.

Health and Safety for Hybrid/in-Person Learning

In order to continue having our students attend school for hybrid/in-person instruction, schools will need to test a percentage of students and staff every month for COVID-19. If we are unable to meet this New York State requirement, the school will have to close and students will return to fully remote instruction. The District is keeping a close eye on COVID-19 in our community and the latest guidance from New York State, and we know circumstances can change at a moment's notice. There is a wealth of information provided in the back-to-school guide. Please make sure you read it!

I appreciate the flexibility, resiliency, and understanding everyone in our RCSD community has shown as we prepare to return to in-person learning, keeping everyone healthy and safe. I wish you Happy Holidays and a joyous New Year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lesli C. Myers-Small". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

Dr. Lesli Myers-Small
Superintendent of Schools