



A note from Dr. Lesli Myers-Small



February 20, 2021

Good afternoon RCSD students, families, and staff,

As we move into Phase 3 of our reopening plan this coming week, I want to share several updates relative to reopening and provide clarity on the safety of our facilities.

Ventilation Reports

Attached is a memo prepared by Chief Operations Officer Mike Schmidt outlining the CDC and NYDOH guidelines. Further, included is a table that details the MERV filter levels for each school. MERV-13 filters are effective for eliminating contaminants including bacteria, and are ideal for use in environments where contaminant control is important. They are especially helpful for those who suffer from allergies, asthma or any other respiratory ailments. All of our school buildings, with the exception of Leadership Academy for Young Men and Rochester International Academy, are equipped with MERV-13 filters. Those schools will have the filters installed before their opening day on Thursday. I shared this information with the Union leadership on Friday, and I want ensure that you receive this information directly from me. The table is also available for review on [our website](#).

Vaccinations Survey

The office of Human Capital launched a survey relative to staff vaccinations. The results are as follows:

- 1,724 staff responded
 - 1,287 or 74.7% RTA
 - 149 or 8.6% BENTE
 - 139 or 8.1% ASAR
 - 108 or 6.3% RAP
 - 41 or 2.3% other
- 1,156 or 67.1% had not yet been vaccinated
- 568 or 33% have received a vaccine
 - 439 or 25.5% had received first dose
 - 129 or 7.5% have received second dose
- 1,209 or 83.3% plan to be vaccinated (of those who responded to this question)
 - 159 or 11% are unsure about being vaccinated
 - 83 or 5.7% do not want to be vaccinated
- 829 or 57.1% do not yet have an appointment to be vaccinated (of those who responded to this question)

- 922 or 64.5% would like to be vaccinated through District coordination, even though they may already have an appointment at a later date (of those who responded to this question)

My team and I are continuing to work with various entities to try and secure more vaccination opportunities.

Teacher Forums

The Office of Teaching and Learning will be conducting a series of teacher forums to gather feedback on the reopening process. We want to hear from our teachers on how to improve supports and ensure that every student has a strong experience. We can only do this by getting insights from those who are on the front line. The Teaching and Learning team will utilize this information to establish the next layer of supports, troubleshoot significant areas, and aim towards continuous improvement. In order to ensure each voice is heard, T&L is limiting the number of participants to 25 teachers per session.

Summary of New CDC Guidelines

For schools that implement expanded screening testing, those should be offered during moderate (yellow), substantial (orange), and high (red) levels of community transmission, to students, teachers, and staff. When the community transmission level is low (blue), testing should be offered to teachers and staff who have no symptoms and no known exposures. Levels of community transmission are defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate, 10-49; substantial, 50-99; high, ≥ 100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, $< 5\%$; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, $\geq 10\%$).

Public health officials and school administrators may consider placing a higher priority for access to testing in schools that serve populations experiencing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases or severe disease. These may include:

- Schools in communities that have experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 cases relative to population size, including communities with moderate or large proportions of racial and ethnic groups such as American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic persons.
- Schools in geographic areas with limited access to testing due to distance or lack of availability of testing - There is ample free testing in the Rochester community.

Testing should be offered on a voluntary basis. We cannot test someone who does not want to be tested, including students whose parents or guardians do not want them to be tested. School-based testing should never be conducted without consent from a parent or legal guardian (for minor students) or from the individual (for adults, including adult students and teachers and staff). This information has been [updated on the website](#) as well.

I look forward to seeing our Phase 3 students next week and hope you have a great weekend!

Lesli

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