



**Educating Every Student
for Success**

**BOARD AGENDA DETAIL
March 23, 2021**

AGENDA ITEM: **Preparing for the Full Return to In-Person Instruction**

PURPOSE: **Discussion**

DOCUMENTS: **Memo Pgs. 1-7**
**[Governor Inslee’s “Children & Youth Mental Health Crisis” Order:
Questions & Answers](#)**
[CDC: Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
[6 Feet or 3 Feet: How far apart Do Students Need to Be?](#)
[The Problem With the CDC’s 6 Foot Rule for Schools](#)

FROM: **Mike Hansen, Deputy Superintendent of K-12 Instruction**

Educating Every Student for Success

BOARD AGENDA DETAIL

March 23, 2021

AGENDA ITEM:

Preparing for the Full Return to In-Person Instruction

PURPOSE - Discussion:

To share information and discuss steps being taken to prepare the Richland School District (RSD) for the full return of PK-12 students once the recommendation for 6 foot distancing is reduced to 3 feet.

SUMMARY:

History:

It has now been more than one full year since the Richland School District (RSD) first shut down schools due to the Covid-19 outbreak and resulting pandemic. Immediately upon the shutdown last spring the district began problem solving and finding a means to deliver online instruction to all students. As a first step district staff created opportunities for in-person learning for our most vulnerable populations and in October of 2020 RSD began implementing a hybrid in-person learning model for grades PK-2. Table 1 provides the complete schedule for the start of in-person hybrid learning, including dates for the return of all students PK-12 in the hybrid model. In addition to the focus on starting as many students as possible, district staff began development of the Richland Virtual School (RVS). This included establishing enrollment, identifying staffing needs and securing staff, and in the fall of 2020 the hiring of the first RVS principal, Andre Hargunani.

Table 1: Schedule for the start of in-person hybrid learning

Grade Level(s)	Start date for hybrid model where all students were offered in-person instruction on a regular basis (but not full-time)
Pre-K - 3rd Grades	10/27/2020
4th & 5th Grades	11/12/2020
6th Grade	01/27/2021
7th & 8th Grades	02/01/2021
9th Grade	02/17/2021
10th - 12th Grades	02/22/2021

New Recommendations Under Consideration:

Currently the Center for Disease Control (CDC) continues to require 6 foot distancing between students returning to school which restricts schools in the RSD to the hybrid model for in-person instruction for most students.* However Governor Inslee has said that the state is considering changing the spacing requirements for schools to three feet and the World Health Organization and the American Academy of Pediatrics already recommend less than six feet of distancing in schools. When the recommendations for social distancing are modified and if the new modification allows for the full return of all students there will remain several challenges that must be addressed by district staff.

Preparing for a Change in Recommendations:

In anticipation for a change in the recommendations for social distancing district staff are addressing challenges now so that a transition to the full return of all students will occur as quickly as possible. It should be noted that the full return of students is not a full return to “normal school” that students, families and staff are accustomed to. There remains significant challenges that must be addressed and in many cases a new recommendation will require staff to review and update operating procedures (i.e., lunch will need to be scheduled at the elementary level with 3 foot distancing observed and recess activities and supervision will need to be addressed).

Below is a list of some of the challenges that have been identified within the listed departments. The summary is not intended to be exhaustive and additional items may be added as district staff continue to address the challenges to operating schools with full enrollments while maintaining 3 feet of distance between students. While some of these have already been resolved, others are being addressed ahead of any new recommendations from the Board. Additionally, district staff will review all new guidance that is provided from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Center for Disease Control (CDC)* and/or the Benton Franklin Health Department (BFHD) to ensure compliance with any new guidance.

** Note: At the time of this writing the CDC has announced a planned release of information on a recommendation to move from the 6 foot recommendation to a 3 foot recommendation for social distancing. The announcement is scheduled for Friday 3/19.*

Elementary Education

Elementary Lunches:

Based on any clarifying guidance from the health department RSD will explore the following options:

- Utilize outdoors as much as possible.
- Adjust lunch schedule and use current tables and both the cafeteria and gym spaces for lunch service
- Utilize classroom space and serve grab and go lunches in the classrooms (See Maintenance, Operations and Transportation (MOT) section below)

Recess Procedures and Schedules:

The schedule will need to be adjusted for recesses. Buildings will run more recesses with fewer students in each recess. In a traditional year, schools might have 3 grade levels and 250 kids out at once. To provide for appropriate social distancing during recess, we may need to schedule as many as 3 different recesses, each with under 100 students at a time. This will require the paraeducators to focus more of their time on supervision.

Schools will need to reexamine how recess looks with social distancing and safety protocols. Schools will define acceptable activities that will minimize risks to students and staff (i.e., wearing masks, minimizing crowded games, teaching new procedures for exiting and entering the building, etc.).

Paraeducators:

Adjustments to the lunch and recess schedules will significantly impact the duties of the building paraeducators. Buildings will need all paraeducator schedules to prioritize supervision of additional recesses and lunch in the classrooms. Currently, paraeducator time focuses on serving students for interventions, assisting with extra reading supports, minimizing learning loss thus helping close the income based achievement gap. Paraeducators are able to support learning needs because currently there is little recess or lunch supervision needed. Paraeducators are able to focus more of their time to support learning.

Specialists:

Elementary specialists will return to onsite instruction. Buildings will need to create schedules for specialist classrooms. Principals and school safety teams will need to develop safety procedures for shared materials inside specialist classrooms (i.e., shared art materials, musical instruments, physical education equipment, etc.). Some specialists may need to teach their classes in non-traditional locations (PE or Music outdoors for example).

Furniture Adjustments and Purchasing:

When all students return to in-person instruction, students will not be able to maintain 3' distancing at some locations because of the use of tables where four students sit together. Buildings will need to secure desks to replace tables in some locations. District staff will need to determine how many desks are needed, move desks where possible and purchase additional desks where necessary. If purchasing additional furniture is not an option, the district will add plexiglass partitions to the existing tables that meet safety guidelines. Returning to the use of tables will need to be reconsidered once all social distancing and safety protocols are lifted and RSD is able to return to normal operating protocols.

Secondary Education

Master schedules:

Considering the existing master schedule and 3 foot distancing, maximum occupancy will first need to be determined (see Human Resources section below). Schedules will then need to be adjusted accordingly so as to respect the maximum occupancy of each instructional space. The master schedule, as it is currently designed, will allow for students to maintain continuity with their current courses and teachers when a recommendation is made for a return to full in-person instruction. In addition, High School, Middle School and Alternative schools are creating master schedules for the 2021-22 school year with the intent of in-person learning for students five days per week. Considerations will be made for 3 feet and zero feet distancing with a fall back option to hybrid if needed.

Lunch schedules and potential off campus lunches:

District staff are currently working to resolve concerns regarding 6 foot distancing that may continue to be required even after a modified 3 foot recommendation is made. This continues to be a challenge staff are exploring.

Bell schedule and passing time:

With 3 feet or zero feet social distancing, the secondary schools will be able to operate using traditional daily bell schedules with passing time supervision.

Special Education

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Compliance:

When the District returns students to a 3-foot distancing model, Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams will review each students' IEPs to ensure service delivery schedules are compliant. When making changes to an IEP after the annual IEP meeting, the parent and the District may agree not to convene an IEP meeting for the purpose of making changes. If the team decides to amend the IEP without convening the team, the IEP case manager must discuss changes with the parents and team members. Additionally, in conjunction with the team, the case manager must amend the student's IEP, develop the Prior Written Notice, and provide a copy of all documents to parents and team members.

Planning Team:

The Special Education Administrative team is currently asking for a volunteer group of special education teachers to plan for additional student and staff needs when moving to a 3-foot distancing model.

Teaching and Learning

Instructional Materials:

A focus since students returned to school in a hybrid model has been ensuring students have their own materials. In anticipation of a full return of students to in-person instruction, additional elementary materials were ordered and will be arriving in early April. Materials will be distributed to elementary classrooms where a need is identified. The need for secondary materials has also been identified and Teaching and Learning is working to address this as quickly as possible.

Human Resources

Classroom Space:

Prior to a full return to in-person instruction the district has again contracted with an independent agency (NV5) to determine the capacity of classrooms throughout the district using the 3 foot distancing requirement versus the 6 foot distancing requirement. School visits with NV5 staff are taking place this week with a report expected early during the week of March 29th.

Staff Communications:

Like all other stages of the District's reopening, we will negotiate memorandums of understanding with our certificated and classified unions to address any concerns from our labor groups. Most District PPE and procedures are well established at this point. Any adjustments based on recommendations from NV5 will be addressed collaboratively.

Health and Safety

Infection control interventions:

When the District returns to full in person instruction using the 3-foot distancing model, it will be critical that all other mitigating measures are followed, including:

- Universal masking
- Enhanced cleaning and hand washing
- Maintaining cohorts to the extent possible (primarily in elementary settings)
- Symptom screening prior to building entry (i.e., attestations and temperature checks)
- Additional safety protocols as required by the DOH, such as occupancy limitations of lunchrooms, student bathrooms, locker rooms, music/choir rooms, etc.

Shared materials and supplies:

Staff will need to continue minimizing the use of shared materials and equipment, and clean in between users as much as possible. When materials are shared, students should wash hands before and after touching shared equipment such as computers, keyboards, art supplies, gym and/or playground equipment.

Post-exposure Quarantine Protocols:

The District will need to consider the “close contact” guidelines when a 3-foot protocol is enacted. The CDC, DOH and BFHD define close contact as “individuals within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 or more minutes over a 24-hour period to a confirmed case during the infectious period.” Reducing the physical distance between students to 3 feet without a change to the definition of “close contact” will greatly increase the number of students placed in quarantine when a confirmed case occurs in schools or during athletic activities. This will be more pronounced in secondary schools where students may have as many as seven class periods/day (including zero-hour) and a lunch period. See the [Ohio Department of Health Guidelines for Quarantine after Exposure in a K-12 Setting](#).

Staff (or students eligible for the COVID vaccine) who are completely [immunized](#) per the CDC guidelines would not have to quarantine or get tested. Staff would still have to follow all infection control interventions and the District would take steps to verify the fully immunized status of staff as a precautionary measure.

Monitoring for Outbreaks:

A reduced physical distancing, particularly in sports and activities, could result in increased risk of transmission. Adherence to and reinforcement of infection control interventions will be more critical than ever to prevent outbreaks among staff and students.

Volunteers and Activities:

Reducing the social distancing requirement could give the public an impression that schools are “back to normal” and request access to the schools to volunteer or bring in outside visitors and activities. However, the District should consider the impact of community transmission rates prior to increasing outside access as this increases the number of people entering the buildings infected with COVID-19.

Maintenance, Operations and Transportation

Transportation:

Protocols would remain in effect as with Hybrid models. Spacing when available and family members sitting together. Ventilation continues to be key and cleaning and sanitizing before, after, and between runs.

Food Service:

All Meals are free from now through September 30th, 2021 through the summer feeding program, (SFSP) All RSD sites are currently applied and approved as an “open site” with meals available to all community students ages 1-18 (or older if still enrolled).

Elementary Breakfast Monday-Friday:

- Hand out grab n go Breakfast as students enter the building for school at 2-3 designated entrance points. Making sure all students have the offer of a breakfast. We currently have 2-3 employees at each site at breakfast; more handout points would require more staff.
- Allow only “breakfast kids” in 10 minutes early to grab breakfast in the cafeteria and take it to the classroom to eat.
- Cafeteria service ½ hour before school starts with minimal options students would sit at the cafeteria table to eat. This will require cafeteria supervision.
- No breakfast service, kids are expected to arrive at school fed. We would hand out 7 breakfasts at curbside at designated sites if not at all.

Elementary Lunch Elementary Monday-Friday:

- Cafeteria Service. Students file by the service window meals will be boated as a full meal. Students eat in the cafeteria or possibly put some tables outside to spread them out.
- Lunch in the classroom. Students filing by a service window to grab lunch and return to the classroom to eat. At larger schools we could possibly add a service window in a hallway (more staff)

Secondary Lunch Monday-Friday:

- Keep the service the same as we are doing now. We will need to provide more seating. With better weather there could be outdoor seating.

Curbside and Community Lunch and Breakfast:

- To meet the community and distance learners Parents would need to sign up by student name to pick up at a designated location for 7 days of breakfast and lunch.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

Our protocols will not change. We will adjust our cleaning schedules to meet class schedules.

Communications

The district will communicate with stakeholders (families, staff, and community members) the transition timelines; safety requirements and measures; modifications to operations and other elements of implementing full-time in-person learning. This information will be shared via different channels, including direct email, district and school websites, social media and in partnership with local media. District staff will assist schools in making sure they are

communicating with their families and staff about their specific plans and procedures for full-time in-person learning.

Information will also be made available of alternatives for in-person learning for families wanting to continue with a remote learning model.

Technology

Challenges within the technology department are no different if 6,000 students are attending daily or 13,500 students are attending daily.