

RAVENA-COEYMANS-SELKIRK CSD • PO Box 100, 15 Mountain Rd, Ravana, NY 12143 • Phone: 518-756-5200 • Fax: 518-756-4561

Dear RCS Families,

March 5, 2021

Each school year, Ravana-Coeymans-Selkirk reviews its instructional resources. The pandemic required RCS and all schools to quickly transform much of their teaching and learning to a digital format. A recent issue on one of our digital platforms (Writing A-Z) has caused us to take inventory of our protocols for students and staff who are online. It is our responsibility to keep instruction safe, efficient and reliable, regardless of the method of delivery.

Inadequate password protection in Writing A-Z allowed for an individual or individuals to post inappropriate/threatening messages within some second-grade accounts. Throughout the ongoing investigation we have consulted with students, staff, families and the Board of Education. The cumulative feedback from stakeholders has led us to the following steps to ensure improved security in current and future platforms. Unless otherwise noted, each of the tasks below will be completed prior to April break. RCS will:

- Ensure that modules in **digital safety and digital citizenship** are included in our instructional plan (already begun in grades PK-6). This instruction will also include reminders from our RCS Code of Conduct about bullying, discrimination, or harassment.
- Schedule quarterly **password audits**, including a review of passwords and password complexity. In addition, the district is investigating single sign-on software to help manage passwords, especially for our younger learners.
- Require **refresher training** for all staff on cybersecurity and online safety practices; including the process and protocols for responding to threats and potential dangers.
- Implement **increased benchmarks** for security and accessibility when considering/adopting software platforms (i.e single sign-on, content filtering, online monitoring, IP tracing). Moving forward, similar to textbook evaluation and adoption, instructional software will be reviewed by our district Curriculum and Instruction Committee and be recognized by the Board of Education.
- Review and revise current **Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)** training and protocols to include procedures for responding to both in-person and online behaviors. DASA training is a required, annualized training for staff. These plans will also include protocols for communicating with students, staff and families.

The providers of Writing A-Z have been unable to provide needed information during our investigation into these messages. RCS has therefore decided to discontinue the use of this online resource for all students as of Friday, March 5, 2021. Teachers will instead utilize Google platforms to complete writing tasks with students.

Updates about these and other digital resources can be found within our [RCS Technology Information Page for Parents and Students](#). Please reach out to your child's teacher or principal anytime that you have questions or concerns about your child's safety, either in-person or while using technology. Our goal is to continue to provide high-quality tools for effective virtual and in-person learning while maintaining the utmost safety measures for our students and staff. We value your feedback as we revisit and revise our online practices.

Sincerely,



Brian Bailey, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools