

Reeths-Puffer Schools

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REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (& ANSWERS) REGARDING BACK TO SCHOOL

As you know, in the July 14, 2020 E-mail/Video, I released a “high-level” explanation that announced some Back-to-School information for the 2020-21 school year given Reeths-Puffer’s current Phase 4 COVID-19 status. The health and well-being of our students, staff and families, in addition to providing the best education possible are the District’s primary focus areas as we plan for our schools’ reopening. We understand student and teacher interactions are vital to the learning process and the need for parents/guardians to work outside the home and the role our schools play in that scenario. Below are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) we have received over the past week or so and the District’s responses. I hope you find the answers helpful.

What delivery of instruction models will Reeths-Puffer offer to student and parents in 2020-21 if Reeths-Puffer remains in Phase 4 of the Governor’s re-opening plan?

◆ 5-day week in-school, face-to-face traditional instruction model

For those who would like their child to attend school 5-days/week.

9th - 12th grades –7:55 AM –1:25 PM

7th - 8th grades—7:55 AM –1:15 PM

5th –6th grades - 7:45 am - 1:05 PM

K- 4th grades - 9:00 am -2:30 PM

◆ Rocket Virtual course selection model for Reeths-Puffer students

Reeths-Puffer students may choose from courses in the R-P virtual instruction model (some courses will be from Edmentum with an RP teacher mentor). The staffing and course catalogs are being developed and further details will be released later in August. (This delivery of instruction will be referred to as Rocket Virtual.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: **SEMESTER-LONG COMMITMENT (minimum)**

- * Whether your family chooses traditional 5-days/week face-to-face instruction, or the Rocket Virtual, the delivery of instruction method choice will be a **SEMESTER-LONG COMMITMENT** for your child.
- * Middle School and High School course selection for Rocket Virtual will be available beginning Aug. 20 - 26, 2020.

FAQ REGARDING IN-SCHOOL, FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION

What about students with Special Needs and students with IEP's?

- ◆ We will work closely with families of special needs students using their IEP team to determine the procedures and needs on an individual student-by-student basis.

If we have to transition from in-school, face-to-face instruction to remote learning, will it be different than last spring?

- ◆ Yes, by delivering courses and content in a more robust, organized and user-friendly format. We have provided initial staff professional development with follow-up help sessions to assist staff with the goal of lessons prepared for in-school and remote learning.
- ◆ The requirements for distant learning participation, rigor and grading will be the same as in-school learning. At this time, R-P attendance and reporting requirements remain as rigorous as in-school.

How will children and staff keep up with instruction if quarantined for a number of days?

- ◆ It is the District's plan to continue to provide instruction remotely if a teacher, student, classroom is quarantined but feeling well enough to participate. Each individual situation will require its own set of conditions.

Will students and staff who have a fever of 100.4 or higher be restricted from school activities?

- ◆ Yes. Students/Staff will be required to be symptom-free with their temperature below 100.4 for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school activities (per CDC guidance dated 07/20/2020)

What will social distancing in classrooms look like?

- ◆ Smaller class sizes (due to some families choosing R-P Virtual) and the re-deployment of staff members
- ◆ Non-essential classroom furniture may be moved out of classrooms
- ◆ Grade K-12 students will be required to wear a face covering.
- ◆ All staff members will be required to wear a face covering.
- ◆ To the best of our ability, student seating will be assigned, facing one direction and spaced as far apart as room dimension and furnishings/seating allows. It is our goal to achieve the 6-foot recommendation but knowing this will not be possible in all cases.

How will social distancing be accomplished in hallways, passing times, bathrooms, etc.

- ◆ Students will be sent directly to their classrooms when school entrances are opened at a set time determined by their school.
- ◆ Passing time in the secondary building may be staggered, time adjusted to avoid congestion in the hallways. Students may be released in the afternoon by classroom and must exit the building within minutes (# of minutes yet to be determined).
- ◆ Lockers will likely not be issued.
- ◆ Capacity limits will be posted at bathrooms, to assist with social distancing.
- ◆ Elementary students will enter school and go directly to classrooms.
- ◆ Elementary transitioning will be limited, however when necessary student will be supervised by staff members
- ◆ Elementary World Language, Art, Music and PE classes will be conducted in the classroom by the classroom teacher.
- ◆ Elementary lockers where located in corridors/hallways will not be used.

Will elementary students participate in recess?

- ◆ Yes. The playgrounds will be divided into sections and each classroom will have a staggered schedule and a restricted section in order to prevent co-mingling of classes or grade levels. Face coverings will be strongly encouraged to be worn outside on school property by all.

What will PE, Athletics, Band and Choir look like this school year? (These areas are still under consideration)

- ◆ We expect PE, Band and Choir classes will meet virtually or small group face to face. TBD
- ◆ There is a high likelihood that locker rooms will not be available
- ◆ At this time, MHSAA plans to proceed with fall athletics.

FAQ REGARDING IN-SCHOOL, FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION (continued)**Will R-P provide face coverings?**

- ◆ R-P will have back up face coverings for students who don't provide their own.

Can students/staff refuse to wear a face covering and/or have a medical exemption?

- ◆ When students/staff are in school, participating in face-to-face instruction, compliance with the Governor's Executive Order regarding face coverings is required.
- ◆ A medical exemption for a student will be determined through a formal IEP or 504 process.
- ◆ Staff medical exemption will be reviewed by the R-P Human Resources Department.

Will teachers be able to be heard clearly by students when wearing a face covering?

- ◆ R-P has installed classroom sound systems in most of our K-12 classrooms. Sound system use will be encouraged and will allow staff to speak at a lower volume and be heard more clearly.

When can students and staff have a break from wearing a face covering?

- ◆ R-P is attempting to plan for "mask free breaks." These would require a classroom to be outside with social distancing.

How will students be served breakfast & lunch during Phase 4?

- ◆ All elementary students may receive their breakfast and lunch in the classroom.
- ◆ R-P will be purchasing equipment to provide breakfast and lunch more efficiently in the classroom as well as an electronic purchase platform.
- ◆ Middle and High School students will likely receive meals in a grab & go style. Some seating allowing for social distancing in large spaces such as cafeterias, media centers, gyms or large open spaces will be available.
- ◆ Virtually enrolled students who participate in free/reduced meals will be required to pick up these meals at a location yet to be determined on the exterior of the building.

Will visitors be allowed at school?

- ◆ R-P will not allow visitors at schools. Parents who wish to come to our school offices will be required to call and setup an appointment prior to arriving.

Will before and after school care be available for the 2020-21 school year?

- ◆ Still working on opportunities and details.

Will student clubs and other after-school activities be allowed?

- ◆ R-P does not expect to allow after-school clubs and student activities to occur during Phase 4 in person.
- ◆ Clubs may meet virtually.

Will R-P be using signage and reminders to reinforce procedures?

- ◆ R-P has purchased signage/markings taping to assist students/staff with safety protocol messaging and reminders.
- ◆ Daily safety messages will be delivered to students and staff.

Are fans/individual window AC units allowed in the classroom?

- ◆ Fans can be used at the window to blow air "out" of the room. Fans must be placed near the window and positioned so air leaves the room, rather than blowing across the room.

FAQ REGARDING IN-SCHOOL, FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION (continued)**What will transportation look like this school year?**

- ◆ R-P is encouraging all **parents to strongly consider** providing their **own means** of transportation.
- ◆ Parents **will be required** to wait until their K-5 student has passed their temperature scan before being transported by an R-P bus in the morning.
- ◆ Parents are strongly encouraged to wait for their Grade 6-12 student until scanned and/or provide clear directions to their child to return home if a failed scan occurs. R-P will attempt to contact parents.
- ◆ All bus drivers and students will be required to wear face coverings at all times on the bus.
- ◆ All windows on the bus will remain open or partially open on the buses at all times.
- ◆ All students from the same family will ride in the same bus seat. (up to 3 students per seat)
- ◆ All other students will be assigned a seat with one student per seat being the goal if possible.

Does the school have to tell families which child tested positive for COVID-19? Isn't that a violation of HIPAA?

- ◆ The identity of the child or school personnel should be protected as much as possible. Close contacts will be contacted by the Health Department and only given information related to their exposure. The name of the COVID-19 student or school personnel will be shared on a need to know basis only.

Will children who are at the highest risk for complications, such as children with severe respiratory problems, be required to stay out of the school classroom until this pandemic is over?

- ◆ The decision to send a child to school or not will be made jointly by the parent and school with guidance from the child's medical provider.

What if a staff member/student goes out of state?

- ◆ There are no current restrictions for staff members or students who travel out of state. However, everyone should assume COVID-19 exposure and monitor for symptoms.

Are face shields acceptable alternatives to masks?

- ◆ No, the CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for clothing face coverings. However, a face shield that covers the eyes, nose and mouth can be worn in addition to a cloth mask if desired.

Does the Governor's Executive Order No. 2020-153 apply to schools?

- ◆ No, schools are not considered public spaces.

How will health screens occur?

- ◆ Employees will provide a daily health screening at home prior to leaving for school.
- ◆ All parents will be requested to perform health screening daily on their child(ren).
- ◆ When arriving at an R-P school or facility, temperature screening may occur at multiple entrances with temperature scanners.
- ◆ Staggered release and entrance times will be used as much as possible to reduce congregating.

FAQ REGARDING IN-SCHOOL, FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION (continued)

What does the Health Department recommend for the cleaning of desks in between class periods?

- ◆ As required in the Michigan 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap, student desks must be wiped down after each class period (page 27 of Michigan 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap). If the students are older (middle school and up) we recommend that the students themselves wipe down their desk using an EPA-approved agent and follow the labeled instructions. If the instructions do not require the use of gloves, then no gloves should be required. Each student can have one towel or wipe, do the wipe down, and throw the wipe or towel out on their way out of the room. With smaller children, an adult would have to rapidly do the cleaning in between classes.

How will disinfecting and sanitization be adjusted for COVID?

- ◆ The District has purchased machines that can sanitize with a fogging fluid and eliminate the COVID particles quickly.
- ◆ Hand sanitization stations are located in every classroom. Students will receive training in best sanitizing practices. Hand sanitization will occur on a schedule.
- ◆ Cleaning desks will occur hourly at the secondary level and at every transition in the elementary level.
- ◆ Water fountains will be shut off and water bottle filling locations have been purchased and installed.
- ◆ All buses will be treated so COVID cannot exist on its surfaces and will be sanitized after every bus run.
- ◆ Air sanitization and increased filtering will be added in large spaces.

ISOLATION VS QUARANTINE FAQ

What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

- ◆ **Isolation** is for people who are COVID positive. It separates people who are infected with the virus from people who are not infected. It usually lasts 10 days.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- ◆ **Quarantine** is for people who are well but are exposed to someone who is COVID positive. It keeps someone who might have been infected with the virus away from others. It lasts 14 days since the last possible exposure.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

If a teacher or staff member has a household member that tests positive but does not have symptoms, can the teacher or staff member come to work anyway and monitor for symptoms?

- ◆ No, asymptomatic people who test positive can still spread the virus. School personnel that are considered close contacts to a COVID-19 positive household member must quarantine during the household member's isolation period and 14 days after the isolation period ends.
- ◆ **If a COVID-19 positive case meets CDC isolation criteria, it is possible that the household members may not be considered close contacts. This will be up to the discretion of the contact tracer to determine if a COVID-19 positive case can meet isolation requirements. If a COVID-19 positive case can meet isolation requirements, close contacts within the household must quarantine for 14 days starting the day the individual started their in-home isolation.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

ISOLATION VS QUARANTINE FAQ's (continued)**How long must a teacher or staff person be out of if they test positive for COVID-19?**

- ◆ A teacher or staff person that tests positive for COVID-19 should isolate at home. The teacher or staff person may return to school after 24 hours with no fever **and** respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) **and** 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

How long must a student, teacher or staff person be out of school if they have a family member in the same house as them that tests positive for COVID-19?

- ◆ A student, teacher or staff person that lives in the same house as someone who tests positive for COVID-19 must remain out of school the entire time the family member is in isolation (typically 10 days) plus 14 additional days of quarantine. The total time out of school would be at least 24 days.
- ◆ **If a COVID-19 positive case meets CDC isolation criteria, household members may not be considered close contacts. This will be up to the discretion of the contact tracer to determine if a COVID-19 positive case can meet isolation requirements. If a COVID-19 positive case can meet isolation requirements, close contacts within the household must quarantine for 14 days starting the day the individual started their in-home isolation. If isolation criteria cannot be met, then close contacts must quarantine starting after isolation criteria has been met (at least 10 days.)*

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>

If a teacher or staff person was in a classroom full of children, and that teacher later finds out that they have COVID-19 while they were in the classroom, must all the class be quarantined, or only those children who were within 6 feet of the teacher for 15 minutes or more?

- ◆ Generally, the entire class must be quarantined and monitor for COVID-19-related symptoms, especially among younger children. Close contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a mask. It will be up to the discretion of the contact tracer to decide who is considered close contacts in a classroom setting. Contact tracers will consider age of students, length of exposure, social distancing, and other circumstances during time of exposure. Those who are identified as close contacts must quarantine (not leave the house unless necessary) for 14 days from last time of known exposure.

If the teacher was wearing a cloth mask in the classroom, and that teacher later finds out that they have COVID-19 while they were in the classroom, do the children still have to be quarantined?

- ◆ Yes, the fact that the teacher was wearing a mask does not change the need to quarantine. See answer above.

ISOLATION VS QUARANTINE FAQ's (continued)**Must we close a classroom if a person with COVID-19 attended class in that classroom? If so, for how long?**

- ◆ Yes, the classroom should be closed, cleaned and disinfected. It is recommended to close off the area for at least 24 hours and then clean the classroom. This allows any virus in the air to settle on surfaces. If that is not feasible, wait as long as possible and then clean and disinfect the classroom following CDC guidance.
- ◆ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>.

If a student has an illness that is not COVID-19, like a cold, does that child still have to be out of school until they are 72 hours fever free?

- ◆ If the student is experiencing any COVID-19-related symptoms, they might have COVID-19 and they should not attend school. They should contact their regular medical provider and get tested for COVID-19.
- ◆ If the student does not have COVID-19 but is still experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms, then they can return to school after they are feeling better and have been fever-free for 24 hours.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

How many children must be sick with COVID-19 before a school closes?

- ◆ The Health Department will work closely with School Administration recognizing there are many factors to be considered when closing a school.

Does a teacher, staff person, or student have to retest for COVID-19 after testing positive before they are allowed back to school?

- ◆ No, the teacher, staff person or student who tested positive can return to school after 24 hours with no fever **and** other symptoms have improved **and** 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- ◆ The Health Department does not recommend a retest. Sometimes a person will continue to test positive even though they are no longer infectious.

How can we know when a person is no longer infectious?

- ◆ The general timeline is 10 days since symptoms first appeared. If the person is asymptomatic, it is 10 days since they tested positive.

If a student changes classes and is with many different students during the day rather than just one classroom of students, and that student tests positive, do all those students have to quarantine?

- ◆ Close contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case is defined as being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for at least 15 minutes with or without a face covering. It will be up to the discretion of the contact tracer to decide who is considered close contacts in a classroom setting. Contact tracers will consider age of students, length of exposure, social distancing, and other circumstances during time of exposure. Those who are identified as close contacts must quarantine (not leave the house unless necessary) for 14 days from last time of known exposure.

ISOLATION VS QUARANTINE FAQ's (continued)

If a student or teacher already had a proven case of COVID-19 and then has an exposure in school, do they have to quarantine anyway?

- ◆ No, students or teachers with proven cases of COVID-19 will not need to quarantine if the positive test was within the last 3 months of the new exposure.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

Does a sibling of a child in quarantine have to be quarantined?

- ◆ No, if the sibling was not a direct contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19, then they should monitor for symptoms and can continue attending school.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

Will Open Houses and Parent/Teacher Conferences be held?

- ◆ We expect Open Houses and Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held virtually while we remain in Stage 4.

What will occur if we are moved to Stage 3 by the Governor, before school starts?

- ◆ All Students would start in distance learning. R-PS has been preparing procedures for technology hand-out and teachers using our new Learning Management System to provide a more robust, rigorous remote-learning model should the Governor return us to Phase 3.

R-PS STUDENTS/STAFF WELLBEING

What is R-PS doing to ensure the social emotional wellbeing of students this fall?

- ◆ R-PS is committed to creating supportive and responsive learning climates to ensure our students can thrive. We will be paying close attention to the social emotional needs of our students and intentionally setting up environments that foster belonging and community as well as emotional safety and support. Social Emotional Learning skills will be integrated into teaching practices. To supplement our internal counseling services and support, we will continue to enhance our community partnerships so we can provide mental health support to students. In addition, we will regularly share resources and tools for our students and families. Understanding the individual dynamics and needs of our students and families, it is essential that we keep open lines of communication between school and home as we work together to support our students.

What is R-PS doing to ensure the social emotional wellbeing of staff as they return to school?

- ◆ The social emotional well being of our staff and students is at the forefront of our planning. We will provide resources for our staff including self care, resilience, and wellbeing strategies and supports. Our district is implementing a wellness team to organize and support these efforts.

ROCKET VIRTUAL QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**Is there a deadline to enroll in the Rocket Virtual?**

- ◆ Aug. 24 - Aug. 31, 2020 Registration portal will be located on district website.

When does my Rocket Virtual decision become final?

- ◆ Sept. 4th, 2020

Will grades be issued in the Rocket Virtual?

- ◆ Yes, Grades will be issued just as they are in the 5-day face-to-face in-school model.

If we enroll in the Rocket Virtual, when can we transition back to in-school face-to-face learning?

- ◆ Enrolling in the Rocket Virtual will require a semester long commitment. This commitment is needed to provide a proper sequence for students to successfully transition as well as allow R-PS to provide appropriate staffing levels for in-school and distant learning in each semester as well as second semester.

How will Rocket Virtual students do their standardized testing (PSAT) in the fall and spring?

- ◆ Presently, these state/national tests are required to be taken in the school setting. (TBD) more information to come.

If a student chooses Rocket Virtual now, but schools never reopen for face-to-face in the fall, do the students automatically join their previously assigned teachers in the virtual zoom?

- ◆ Students will remain where they were enrolled for the remainder of the semester as staffing numbers are already set.

If we start the school year face to face, but then the District's face-to-face instruction shuts down, can students switch to Rocket Virtual?

- ◆ No. There will be at least a semester (preferably a year)commitment to the Rocket Virtual option. Staffing, pupil accounting and other factors do not permit us to be as fluid as families may desire but we will work hard to meet the needs of our students and families.

Can Rocket Virtual students participate in extracurricular activities and sports?

- ◆ Yes. Rocket Virtual students remain enrolled in their home school and have chosen to receive instruction virtually.

For Rocket Virtual students who are qualified to receive free/reduced breakfast/lunch how will they get their meals?

- ◆ Families will be able to pick up these meals at a set location yet to be determined on the exterior of the building.

ROCKET VIRTUAL QUESTIONS/ANSWERS (continued)

If my child participates in the Rocket Virtual, will he/she/they be considered an R-PS-enrolled student in their present school, including as a Schools of Choice student?

- ◆ Yes. Enrolling in the Rocket Virtual is simply choosing a delivery of instruction method. Your child will remain actively enrolled in their present school. All records, conferences and contacts remain with your currently-enrolled school.

Will the online course list offered by the Virtual match with current R-PS courses?

- ◆ We have a wide variety of online courses that align to most of the District courses. Our vendor courses also offer many courses we do not offer in our traditional classrooms, so options may be available!

Will there be meaningful progress assessments and testing?

- ◆ In all online courses, there will be meaningful assessments, quizzes, tests and exams. Depending on the course structure, some assessments will receive immediate feedback, while other assessments that need the teacher to grade it will receive feedback.

LETTER FROM SUPERINTENDENT

We know these are unprecedented, uncertain times and many are fearful with the beginning of the new school year looming. Do we have all of the answers, probably not. However, please know it is not for the lack of doing our utmost to give our families choices and information based on what we know today.

Please stay tuned. Your child's school will share information in the coming weeks and my office will continue to keep the lines of communication as open as possible. It is our pledge to you to be as transparent as possible as we embark on the 2020-21 school year together.

~Steve Edwards

