

Red Wing Public Schools
2451 Eagle Ridge Drive
Red Wing, MN 55066



Phone 651.385.4500

www.rwps.org

School Board Meeting Agenda Item

Topic: Return to School
Contact(s):
Presenter(s): Karsten Anderson, Superintendent

Nature of Action Requested by Board

Board action
Board information or scheduled report

Background Information

On December 21st, the School Board voted for the following changes in learning models:

Monday, January 11 th	No School for Students
Tuesday, January 12 th	In-Person for Grades K-2
Monday, January 18 th	No School for Students
Tuesday, January 19 th	In-Person for Colvill on Fridays In-Person for Grades 3-4 Hybrid for Grades 5-12
Monday, January 25 th	First-Semester Online-Only Students Returning to School (if students choose to do so).

The School Board discussed the need to have enough staff members and substitutes available and the need to be compliant with the Safe Learning Plan.

Staffing

Amy French will provide an update about staff and substitute availability. She will also discuss her work to advertise to fill available positions.

Compliance with the Safe Learning Plan

The State's Safe Learning Plan has changed repeatedly over the past few weeks, including versions dated December 16th, 21st and 24th. Due to the complicated nature of COVID and varying circumstances throughout the State, there have been questions about consistency within the Safe Learning Plan and multiple interpretations shared by individuals representing the Minnesota Department of Education and other education groups. The school board will review plans to determine if the approved plan is compliant with the Safe Learning Plan.

Return-to-School for Elementary Students

The December 24th version of the Safe Learning Plan states "early learning programs and elementary schools that are not currently in an in-person or hybrid learning model, or have not already announced their plans to implement their in-person or hybrid learning model prior to January 18, 2021 cannot move to in-person or hybrid before January 18, 2021" (p. 10). There have been multiple notifications to parents about students returning to school prior to December 24th when the updated Safe Learning Plan was issued:

1. On November 5th, the Superintendent emailed a copy of the E-Learning Plan to parents with the following provision:

Planning to Return to In-Person or Hybrid Learning

We want our students to return to in-person learning as soon as possible. Community COVID rates and trends will be regularly monitored while students are in Distance Learning, and the School Board reserves the right to make decisions about learning models at any time.

2. On December 7th, the Superintendent indicated that a return-to-school plan would be presented to the School Board on December 21st. Later in the meeting, the School Board approved a motion directing the Superintendent to provide a detailed plan to bring students back to school in January. Based on the discussion prior to the vote, it is presumed that the plan was to be brought to the School Board for consideration on December 21st.
3. On December 21st, the School Board approved a return-to-school plan during a public, live-streamed meeting.
4. On December 23rd, the Superintendent emailed a notice to parents outlining the return-to-school plan.

Rolling Start

The December 24th version of the Safe Learning Plan also indicates that "no more than three additional grade bands can be introduced into the building in a two-week time period when implementing an in-person or hybrid learning model for the entire school building...A rolling start does not need to be implemented if a school had already communicated a change in learning plan to their families prior to December 16, 2020, regardless of the plan's effective date (pp. 10-11).

As per bullet #2 in the previous section, an announcement to parents may have been made prior to the December 16th deadline because the school board and Superintendent announced plans on December 7th to make a decision about learning models on December 21st. This seems to be consistent with messaging shared by an official from the Minnesota Department of Education during a conference call on December 18th.

Consultation

As per the December 24th version of the Safe Learning Plan, the Superintendent requested a consultation with representatives of the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Health to discuss returning secondary students back to school. The consultation is currently scheduled for Tuesday, January 5th, but a consultation for the previous day has been requested so information can be shared with the school board.

The recommendation for a special board meeting later in the week (possibly on Thursday, January 7th) is being made in case the consultation is held after the board meeting.

Timeline

August 10 th	<p>During a special meeting, the School Board approved a Resolution entitled "Adoption of Base Learning Model for the 2020-21 School Year and Other COVID-10 Related Matters" based on a model resolution developed by the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA).</p> <p>The resolution included:</p> <p>"...a more restrictive Learning Model selected and implemented by the Superintendent shall continue in effect unless and until...the School Board, in consultation with the Superintendent and appropriate school district staff and public health officials, deems it in the best interest of the School District and its students to implement a different Learning Model."</p>
November 5 th	<p>The Superintendent emailed parents with an announcement moving all grades to Distance Learning. The E-12 Red Wing Learning Plan, which was attached to the email message, included the following:</p> <p><u>Planning to Return to In-Person or Hybrid Learning</u></p> <p>We want our students to return to in-person learning as soon as possible. Community COVID rates and trends will be regularly monitored while students are in Distance Learning, and the School Board reserves the right to make decisions about learning models at any time.</p>
December 7 th	<p>During the School Board meeting, the Superintendent indicated that a return-to-school plan would be presented to the School Board on December 21st. Later in the meeting, the School Board approved a motion directing the Superintendent to provide a detailed plan to bring students back to school in January. Based on the discussion prior to the vote, it is presumed that the plan was to be brought to the School Board for consideration on December 21st.</p>
December 21 st	<p>The School Board approved a plan for students to return to school in January.</p>
January 4 th	<p>The School Board will review the return to school plan in terms of staffing availability and compliance with the Safe Learning Plan.</p>
January 5 th	<p>The Superintendent requested a consultation to review plans for secondary students to return to school. This meeting is scheduled for January 5th.</p>
January 7 th	<p>Potential special School Board meeting to discuss latest plans after the consultation has been completed.</p>

Recommendation

I move to conduct a special School Board meeting on January 7th at 6:00 pm to review the school district's return to school plan.