

**Red Wing Public Schools**  
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### **School Board Meeting Agenda Item**

Topic: COVID-Related Topics  
Contact(s):  
Presenter(s): Karsten Anderson, Superintendent

#### Nature of Action Requested

Board Action   
Board Information or Report

#### Background Information

### **COVID Data**

Joni Gorman and Lisa Steggerda update COVID data on a weekly basis after Goodhue County shares its data. Generally, this occurs on Mondays so the report will often be updated shortly before board meetings. The latest version is posted for your review.

Maggie Cichosz explained that “projected” data rates are based on actual data, not estimates based on trends. Cases move on or off county reports and sometimes there are reporting delays, so the word “projected” is used. Numbers on the county reports do not match the CDC website exactly due to reporting delays and the rolling nature of CDC’s data reporting. The Minnesota Department of Health no longer reports two-week case rates, but they do provide data of cases by county.

The COVID Data report now reflects adjustments to include the latest numbers. Even the latest figures may change as data is entered into county, state and federal tracking programs.

### **Learning Plan for 2021-22**

The latest board-approved Learning Plan is included as a reference. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, recommendations may be forthcoming to establish criteria for shifting individual classrooms to Distance Learning.

### **COVID Face Coverings**

The latest version of Policy 808: Face Coverings is included as an attachment. There are no recommended changes at this time.

## Potential Mitigation Strategies

At a recent board meeting, there was a request to consider additional mitigation strategies to minimize risk of moving to Distance Learning. These are some of the potential mitigation strategies that were brainstormed but not necessarily recommended by anyone.

Strategy	Pros	Cons	Supt. Reaction
<b>Community Mitigation Strategies</b>			
Stress importance of mitigation strategies to parents and community members	Addresses significant sources of spread.	Numerous messages already in community.	Recommended.
<b>Quarantining</b>			
Eliminate shortened quarantining for students in E-6	Keeps potentially infectious people out of the building.	Students miss more school.	Not recommended.
Implement quarantining for students in 7-12	Keeps potentially infectious people out of the building.	Students miss more school.	Under consideration.  Students who do not wear masks could be quarantined if in close contact.
<b>Universal Face Coverings</b>			
Enforce policy more strictly for employees.	Further reduce spread.  Sets example.		Recommended.
Enforce policy more strictly for students.	Further reduce spread.	Challenging to implement  Consequences may result in students missing more school.	Recommended.  Building leaders will develop plans to implement policy more effectively.
Announce expectations at every event.	Further reduce spread.	Must follow through. How is it enforced? Must provide masks	Recommended.
No removal of masks for group photos.	Further reduce spread. Sets example.		Under consideration.

Attendance Monitoring and Contact Tracing			
Provide more resources to make attendance calls and complete contact tracing	Reduces spread.	Availability of staff.	Recommended.  Temporary positions were posted to make attendance calls and complete contact tracing. Pay is \$25/hour.  Shanda will provide training.
Testing			
Implement weekly screening for all	Reduces spread.	Prohibitively expensive (about \$240,000 per week plus staff time).  Difficult to implement.	Not recommended.
Vaccinations			
Offer more clinics			Recommended.
Encourage students and community members to vaccinate.			Recommended.
Physical Distancing			
Check spaces between desks	Cost effective. Simple.	Must be enforced and monitored.	Recommended.
No large indoor events without 3-foot physical distancing.			Under consideration.
Meals			
Ensure elementary students are spread out during lunch in their classrooms.	Simple. No cost.		Recommended.

Reduce number of students in RWHS cafeteria at a given time.			Some progress made by adding tables out of the cafeteria and allowing students to be in locker bay.
Assign seating at RWHS.	Helps with contact tracing.	Difficult to enforce.	Not recommended.
Require masks immediately after eating.	Reduces spread.	Difficult to enforce.	Under consideration.
Rotate by week having some kids eat in classrooms.	Increases physical distancing.	Impact on custodians. Difficult to implement.	Not recommended.
Add an additional lunch period for second semester.	Increases physical distancing.	Difficult to implement with current schedule.	Recommended if possible.
Increase physical distancing while in line.		Long lines with little space.	Recommended if possible.
<b>Activities</b>			
Require weekly testing of student-athletes	Reduces spread.		Not recommended.
Limit number of spectators at athletic events.	Reduces spread.	Other Big 9 schools are not doing this. Impact on visitors from other schools.	Not recommended.
<b>Other</b>			
COVID pay of 10 days for employees	Encourages staff to stay home when sick and get tested.	Difficult to monitor. Need for more substitutes when not needed.	Not recommended but could consider access to employee sick leave banks.
Bring specialists to regular elementary classrooms.	Fewer interactions while passing each other.	Access to materials. Elementary teachers lose space for prep. Minimal impact.	Not recommended
Implement one-way hallways at RWHS	Reduces spread.	Minimal impact.	Not recommended.
Reopen Jefferson to space out elementary students and lower class sizes.	Increases physical distancing.	Expensive. Difficult to hire additional teachers. Significant time to implement.	Not recommended.

Implement 4-day week	Reduces interactions	Significant impact on younger children, families and local businesses.  The district would not meet minimum state requirements.	Not recommended.
Two-week pause in school after Winter Break	Ceiling to floor sanitation.  Reduces spread after family gatherings.	Significant impact on younger children, families and local businesses.  Reduces in-person learning.  Eliminates sports, musical, etc. or sends inconsistent message.	Not recommended.
Further restrict access to RWPS during the school day.	Further reduce spread from the community into the schools.	No recruiting visits. No visiting scholars and speakers. Disconnect from community.	Not recommended.
Eliminate all field trips.			Not recommended.  Strong mitigation strategies must be in place.

### **Treatment of Vaccinated / Unvaccinated Individuals**

A board member expressed concerns about differential treatment for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals when quarantining. Our current plan does require quarantining at the high school and our intent is to treat vaccinated and unvaccinated students in the same way at the high school. However, there may have been some miscommunication with students and/or parents in some cases. This concern has been addressed.

### **Employee Masking Expectations**

Individuals should contact an employee's supervisor if there are concerns about the employee's compliance with Policy 808.

## Staff Morale / Health

The following list of possibilities were brainstormed options from numerous sources.

Possibility	Advantages	Superintendent's Reaction
Community-Building	Providing more opportunities for team or community building will help boost staff morale and mental health.	Recommended.  Some schools are implementing efforts.
Change expectations for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	Reducing the number of PLC meeting each month will provide some additional time for teachers.	Recommended.  The change to 2 PLC meetings each month was recently implemented.
Volunteers	This would provide needed assistance for teachers in their classrooms.	Recommended.  Plans to bring back volunteers could begin as early as February 1 <sup>st</sup> if case numbers are lower.
Employee Assistance Program	Changing vendors could provide stronger service for those who need the assistance.	Recommended.  Human Resources made this change this past fall.
Mental health support	Staff members also need access to mental health support.	Recommended.  This service could be provided in the Well@Work Clinic if the ESSER application is approved and Health Partners can find a provider.
Address student behavior	Throughout the state and country, there are reports of poor student behavior this year. Addressing this issue would significantly reduce stress on staff members.	Recommended.  Procedures are being reviewed to ensure appropriate placement in special education and alternative education settings
Substitutes	More external substitutes are needed. Relying on internal substitutes burdens staff members.	Recommended.  Hiring additional permanent substitutes was authorized.
Lunch supervision at elementary schools	If classrooms could eat in cafeterias, teachers could share supervision responsibilities.	Under Consideration  A teacher will discuss this possibility with a building leader.

<p>Extension of Winter Break for E-12 or 7-12.</p>	<p>This would provide additional days off to address concerns about</p>	<p>Not recommended.</p> <p>Extended winter break shifts burden onto students, families, and local businesses.</p> <p>Providing additional days off before Winter Break does not reduce risk of COVID transmission over Christmas and New Years.</p> <p>There are many days left in the school year with potential school closures due to weather and long stretches without breaks this spring.</p>
<p>Distance learning one day each week at RWHS</p>	<p>This would provide additional time for teachers to plan for the rest of the week.</p>	<p>Not recommended.</p> <p>This possibility shifts burn onto students, families, and local businesses. It also reduces in-person contact between staff and students.</p> <p>Variations could be considered, including organized efforts for career presentations.</p>
<p>Shorten each school day at RWHS</p>	<p>This would eliminate the need for lunch in cafeterias, lessen supervision expectations, and give more time for classroom preparation.</p>	<p>Not recommended.</p> <p>Shortening classes impacts students, complicates transportation, and risks meeting minimum instructional minutes required by the state.</p>
<p>Financial incentives to encourage staff members not to miss work</p>	<p>This could lead to fewer absences and, therefore, reduce the need for substitutes. As a result, fewer staff members would need to cover for absences.</p>	<p>Not recommended.</p> <p>This is a negotiations issue.</p>

## **Community Mitigation Strategies**

The COVID Response Team suggested providing communications to community members urging the public's help in keeping kids in school. For students to remain in school, we need everyone to implement mitigation strategies in the workplace, in their homes, and throughout their communities. In particular:

- Wear masks
- Social distance at least 3 feet from non-household members
- Wash your hands
- Stay home when you are sick
- Get tested
- Get vaccinated

### Recommendation

There is no action needed at this time.