

Richland Parish School Board



2020-2021 School Reopening Plan

DISTRICT GOAL: To develop and implement a school reopening plan for the 2020-2021 school year that meets and aligns to the requirements and best practices of the Louisiana Department of Education Strong Start 2020 School Reopening Guidelines & Resources and promotes student and employee safety during Phase 1, 2, and 3 of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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| Elizabeth Gregorie | MJHS Principal |
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| Elycia Smith-Hill | RES Principal |
| Nettie Ranel | RJHS Principal |
| Dr. Rontez Williams | RHS Principal |
| Landon Sapp | SESPincipal |
| Susie Mullins | RCCA Lead Teacher |

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District 1

Richland Parish School Board Greater School Community,

As we anticipate the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year, the Richland Parish School Board has worked diligently to comply with guidance from the Resilient Louisiana Commission's K-12 Subgroup and the Louisiana Department of Health released on June 25, 2020 to plan for a safe return to school. Teachers and other 9 month employees are scheduled to return on August 10, 2020. The first day for students to return to school is scheduled for August 12, 2020. The RPSB 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan is tentative and contingent upon any future guidance released by the Governor's Office, Louisiana Department of Health, and Louisiana Department of Education.

Our country and greater school community has been affected by this pandemic known as COVID-19. Since school closure during the previous school year was announced, we have witnessed our community stakeholders band together. I am especially appreciative of our employees who have reported to work daily providing food, instruction, payroll, and maintenance services during the pandemic.

After gathering face-to-face and survey feedback from our Board, State of Louisiana officials, RPSB leadership team, employees, parents/guardians, we have developed a plan that meets students' needs based on our relative relationship to which phase the State is currently in. Our faculties want to move forward and pursue a learning environment that is above all safe and conducive for maximal student engagement.

As the beginning of school approaches, our first priority is to provide the safest possible environment for our faculty/staff and student body. We also want our students to be actively engaged in the learning process on a daily basis with their teachers.

Our plan for reopening is evolving and will be modified based on the future guidance given to us from Louisiana agencies. I am confident that over the next few weeks our school and district staff will work through these challenges to bring our greatest resource, our children, the education that they deserve in the safest possible setting.

Sincerely,

Sheldon Jones
Superintendent of Schools

INTRODUCTION

The Richland Parish School Board has created this phase dependent plan to aid in navigating the reestablishment of our schools where employees, students, and families feel safe upon returning and to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and World Health Organization (WHO). Regular updates will be made to this plan based on information provided to us by the LDOE, CDC, WHO, and applicable federal, state, and local agencies.

Richland Parish School Board Operations

Before implementation, information on the opening of school and appropriate phases will be sent to all employees, students, and parents. Additionally, the individual needs and circumstances of students with disabilities will be addressed. Please see below for a summary of each phase.

| Phase | Operations |
|---------|--|
| Phase 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School operations are limited to virtual learning only with select exceptions. (See below.)• Facilities are closed to the public.• All Richland Parish School Board employees are classified as essential and may be required to report to their assigned locations. |
| Phase 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools may offer limited on-site activities.• School operations will implement an A/B Schedule. (See below.) |
| Phase 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools will open for all students Monday through Friday based on guidance from Governor's Office, LDE, LDH and applicable local and state agencies• School operations will resume adhering to established guidelines. |

Phase 1

Phase 1 guidelines dictate a capacity of 25% on a school bus and 10 individuals in a classroom. In the event that the Governor's Office declares that we must enter Phase 1, the school system will virtually provide distance education opportunities for all students. This will be done using both a Google and Edgenuity platform. We piloted exclusive use of the Google platform during the Richland Summer Virtual Academy. We feel both platforms will meet our needs. Students will continue to have access to high quality instruction and will be required to log-in regularly, submit graded assignments, and complete assessments. In Phase 1, schools will function in a virtual

setting. In a virtual setting, students would receive instruction in the home setting rather than in the school building. Preference for inclusion in the group of 10 individuals will be considered for students with low speed or no home internet access and student with disabilities requiring select services. For those who have low speed or no home internet service, paper packet of assigned student work will be made available.

Phase 2

Phase 2 guidelines dictate a capacity of 50% on a school bus and 25 individuals in a classroom. To the extent possible, school will be offered to all students in a traditional face-to-face setting similar to the one that took place during the 2019-2020 school year. However, if safe operations will not allow, schools will function in a hybrid setting. A hybrid setting is a combination of virtual setting similar to the one listed in Phase 1 and the traditional face-to-face setting. Preference for inclusion in the group of 25 individuals will be considered for students with low speed or no home internet access and student with disabilities requiring select services. In this phase, we will implement an A/B model to provide in person instruction to half of our students on alternating days. Group (A) will attend school on Mondays and Wednesdays. Group (B) will attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays. For those who have low speed or no home internet service, paper packet of assigned student work will be made available.

To the extent possible, family groups and students sharing a household will all attend school on the same days. On days that students are not physically on campus, teachers will provide assignments to be completed online using the Google and Edgenuity platform.

Phase 3

Phase 3 guidelines dictate a capacity of 75% on a school bus and 50 individuals in a classroom. The school district will provide all students the opportunity to be in school every day. To accomplish this, each of our schools will be modifying practices to include daily temperature checks, masks or shields for all students in Grade 3 and above, amended cafeteria operations, and additional enhanced safety protocols.

PARENT INSTRUCTIONAL OPTIONS

Richland Parish School Board Virtual Learning Academy

In Phases 1, 2, and 3, all families will have the option to learn exclusively from home through enrollment in the Richland Parish School Board Virtual Learning Academy. The academy will be offered as an option to the traditional face-to-face school setting during the 2020-2021 school year. Virtual courses will be offered for students enrolled in the academy through the Google and Edgenuity platforms. Each student will be assigned a technology device or Chromebook to facilitate virtual learning as well as in class instruction. Additionally, RPSB is working to give students enrolled in the academy access to internet connectivity through a mobile wireless device from either Verizon or AT&T.

Parent Selection of Instructional Options

- Parents will select a virtual or in-person attendance option through a district created survey.
- Families who do not complete the district survey are choosing the in-person attendance option.
- Students must be committed to the selected option for at least semester period.
- Students who opt out of the academy will not be eligible for re-enrollment into the academy during the 2020-2021 school year.
- Parent requests to change from in-person to virtual learning before the end of the six weeks marking period will only be considered in extenuating circumstances that are confirmed by a doctor's medical excuse and approved by the school principal and the Assigned Supervisor.

Students enrolled in the Academy will be eligible to participate in school related extracurricular activities at their assigned school site such as sports, clubs, and graduation ceremonies. Talent Pipeline Lead Rebecca Freeland will oversee operations of the RPSB Virtual Learning Academy. More detailed information concerning the academy will be provided prior to the beginning of school.

Student Attendance

School attendance aligned to the Compulsory School Attendance Law (R.S. 17:221) and the 60,120 minimum instructional minutes requirement of Bulletin 741 will be mandatory for this school year. For students who attend in-person, attendance will be recorded using Web-JPAMS. For students in a virtual setting, attendance will be recorded through student on-line participation. To receive credit and attendance for courses, students are expected to complete student work assigned by the teacher.

Phase 1

- For credit purposes, teachers will maintain attendance records to determine satisfactory completion of course requirements. (These records are not for truancy purposes.)
- Students are required to log-in to the Google and Edgenuity platforms to complete daily course assignments.

Phase 2

Regular Attendance:

- Attendance regulations are enforced.
- Teachers take attendance.
- Teachers are required to document completion of the minimum number of instructional minutes per year.
- Students must be in attendance a minimum of 60,120 minutes.
- Students not attending school regularly will be referred to Child Welfare and Attendance Officer Mildred Davis for further review.

Virtual Attendance:

- For credit purposes, teachers will maintain attendance records to determine satisfactory completion of course requirements. (These records are not for truancy purposes.)
- Students are required to log-in to Google and Edgenuity platforms to complete daily course assignments.

Phase 3

- Attendance regulations are the same as outlined in Phase 2.

Transportation and Bus Protocols

Phase 1

In Phase 1, the school system will provide distance learning opportunities for all students. Richland Parish School Board will not provide school bus transportation for students to and from school. The exceptions to transportation during Phase 1 will be for student living in areas with low speed internet access or no connectivity as well as certain sectors of the students with disabilities population. These populations will be transported at 25% bus capacity and constitute the 10 individuals in a classroom allowed under LDE guidelines. Bus operators and students in Grade 3 or higher will be required to wear a face mask or shield while on the bus. School buses will be required to travel with the windows open to facilitate air flow as permitted by weather. Each school bus operator will be required to sanitize their school bus after each individual route.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, Richland Parish School Board buses will operate at 50% capacity to maintain appropriate spacing. Bus operators and students in Grade 3 or higher will be required to wear a face mask or shield while on bus. School buses will be required to travel with the windows open to facilitate air flow as permitted by weather. Each school bus operator will be required to sanitize their school bus after each individual route.

Phase 3

In Phase 3, Richland Parish School Board buses will operate at 75% capacity and maintain appropriate spacing. Bus operators and students in Grade 3 or higher will be required to wear a face mask or shield while on the bus. School buses will be required to travel with the windows open to facilitate air flow as permitted by weather. Each school bus operator will be required to sanitize their school bus after each individual route.

EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT SAFETY

Student Protocols and Screening Overview

- Parents are encouraged to complete a student health screening at home before sending students to school. (See below for symptoms.)
- All students will have their temperatures taken upon arrival at school. Students with a temperature reading of 100.4 or above will be required to return home.
- For younger students, classroom groups will remain static or fixed with the understanding that individual students may come into close contact with one another during the school day.
- To practice social distancing, all individuals will maintain a physical distance of six feet to the maximum extent possible.
- Students in Grade 3 and above will be required to wear a mask or shield, as able and to the maximum extent possible. If your child has been diagnosed with severe breathing difficulties, please make the school's principal aware. Students with diagnosed severe breathing difficulties should not wear masks or shields.
- Students may consume meals in designated areas other than the school cafeteria to maintain social distancing.
- Buses will be required to have the windows open while students are on board when weather permits.
- Schools will be authorized to amend any necessary procedures in order to comply with recommended State safety guidelines.

When completing a student self-screening, parents should look for the following symptoms. If students exhibit any of these symptoms, the parent should take the student to their family medical physician, and the student should remain at home. If the student presents one or more of the following symptoms at school, school personnel will follow established protocols and contact parents/guardians.

1. Symptoms that may require a student to stay home and/or leave school:
 - a. Any **one** of the symptoms below:
 - i. Fever of 100.4F or greater
 - ii. Persistent cough
 - iii. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - iv. Active vomiting or diarrhea
 - b. Emergency warning signs; get medical attention as soon as possible
 - i. Trouble breathing
 - ii. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - iii. New confusion or inability to arouse
 - iv. Bluish lips or face
 - v. Or, at least **two** of these symptoms
 - vi. Fever (100.4F)
 - vii. Chills
 - viii. Repeated shaking with chills
 - ix. Muscle pain
 - x. Headache
 - xi. Sore throat
 - xii. New loss of taste or smell
 - xiii. Unexplained rash
2. All students with the above symptoms will be isolated and provided with the proper adult supervision until the student is able to return home.
3. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to promptly pick up the student from school.
4. In the case of a student who tests positive for COVID-19, parents are required to notify and update the school principal of the student's health status.

Employee Screening and Protocols

The following guidelines are **mandatory** for RPSB employees.

1. All employees must follow established return-to-work guidelines. Symptoms that require an absence, or exclusion, from work include: **(If any of the following symptoms exists you should visit your family medical physician and remain home using the appropriate leave.)**
 - a. Fever of 100.4F or greater
 - b. Persistent cough
 - c. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - d. Active vomiting or diarrhea
2. Emergency warning signs get medical attention as soon as possible:
 - a. Trouble breathing
 - b. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - c. New confusion or inability to arouse
 - d. Bluish lips or face
3. Any employee having at least **two** of the following symptoms
 - a. Fever (100.4F)
 - b. Chills
 - c. Repeated shaking with chills
 - d. Muscle pain
 - e. Headache
 - f. Sore throat
 - g. New loss of taste or smell
 - h. Unexplained rash
4. All employees will be required to notify their immediate supervisor if there is a change in their health status.
5. Affected person(s) must follow up with a medical provider to obtain a clearance note prior to returning to work/school.
6. Employees will be required to complete a SafeSchools Online Training to include:
 - a. Coronavirus Awareness
 - b. Coronavirus: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Workplace
 - c. Coronavirus: Managing Stress and Anxiety
7. RPSB employees will practice social distancing at all times.
8. RPSB employees will wear a mask or shield when having face-to-face interaction with the public on school board property. School based employees will be required to wear a mask or shield when interacting with students, the public, and all other employees to the maximum extent possible.
9. All common areas/breakrooms will adhere to State capacity guidelines. Only necessary use of the microwave, refrigerator, and office equipment will be allowed.

Employee Health Protocol

- If an employee becomes ill at work, or if another person is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at work, he or she may be asked to visit the nearest health center for guidance in returning to work.
- Employees returning to work from an approved medical leave should contact Personnel Director Robyne Crow. Before returning to work, employees may be asked to submit a healthcare provider's note.
- If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, he or she may return to work when **all 4** criteria have been met:
 1. At least 3 days (72 hours) without symptoms (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications).
 2. Improved respiratory symptoms (persistent cough, shortness of breath, etc.).
 3. A minimum of 7 days have passed since first presenting symptoms.
 4. Written clearance from a medical provider to return to work.
- If an employee has symptoms that could be related to COVID-19, the employee should assume that he or she has COVID-19 and should not return to work until the four criteria listed above have been met.

Employee or Student Exposure

In the event of a Coronavirus confirmed positive case of a student or employee, the school's administration will first contact Superintendent Jones to report. The Principal and Superintendent will then contact Regional Medical Director to report. A Contract Tracer from the Louisiana Department of Health may make contact with parents and/or employees to identify those potentially infected. A form letter will be sent to parents making them aware of any positive cases reported for their child's school. *It is important to note that a confirmed positive case is not an automatic trigger to close school.* The RPSB will be in close contact with the Louisiana Department of Health. The regional administrator's office will give guidance for all incidents related to employee and student exposure to COVID-19 and/or COVID-19 related symptoms. While we all hope to avoid exposure to illness from COVID-19, we need to be prepared for that possibility. If a RPSB employee or student, or someone he or she has been in contact with, has been directly exposed to the virus, our first concern is for the health and safety of those who may be at risk for additional exposure. In this rapidly changing situation, health care providers should have the most up-to-date information from the CDC.

Employee exposure protocols may include the following:

1. Self-quarantine in a specific room away from others in the home.
2. Contact the following to notify them of potential exposure to COVID-19 and follow their instructions:
 - a. The employee's immediate supervisor
 - b. The employee's personal healthcare provider
 - c. RPSB Personnel Director Robyne Crow
2. The supervisor will work with Mrs. Crow to determine appropriate next steps.
3. In case of an emergency, the employee should call 911 to notify them of potential exposure to COVID-19 and follow provided instructions.

Student exposure protocols may include the following:

1. Self-quarantine may be required.
2. Parents should monitor students for symptoms and consider contacting a healthcare provider.
3. In the case of a student who tests positive for COVID-19, parents are required to notify and update the school principal.

Social Distancing

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. RPSB employees, students, parents, and visitors should practice maintaining a 6 feet distance and eliminating physical contact with others.

- Traffic Flow – Taped lines on the floor will mark the walking direction throughout the office and hallways in order to maintain the social distancing requirement of 6 feet.
- Interactions or Gatherings – Non-essential or informal meetups and visiting should be avoided.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Employees and Students

In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19, PPE may be needed to prevent certain exposures. PPE can include:

- **Masks or Shields (Required):** Face masks or shields are an important part of our protection against the spread of COVID-19, as well as in personal hygiene, social distancing, and enhanced cleaning efforts. As such, masks or shields are mandated for ALL RPSB employees. Students in Grade 3 and above will be required to wear a mask or shield, as able and to the maximum extent possible.
- **Gloves (Optional):** Wearing gloves does not diminish the need to wash our hands, and whether gloved or not, touching our faces, noses, and eyes is a significant risk to the spread of infection.

Please note that social distancing to the extent possible should still be practiced even with the use of gloves and masks or shields.

In addition to using PPE, all employees and students are reminded to:

- Wash hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When necessary, cover one's mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Travel Restrictions

- **Employees**
 - RPSB will discontinue staff travel to conferences and workshops until further notice, unless pre-approved by the Office of the Superintendent.
- **Students**
 - During Phase 3, school related travel may be allowed with approval from the Superintendent.

ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES

Maintenance Supervisor Stephen Dupont will be responsible for developing and overseeing cleaning and personal hygiene protocols. School administrators and custodial staff will be responsible for oversight at the building level.

CAFETERIA PROTOCOLS

Phase 1

During Phase 1, grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches for our eligible students will be available for pick up. To better promote social distancing, School Meal Sites will serve students on Mondays (4 meals) and Wednesdays (6 meals) only. Hours of operation on Mondays and Wednesdays will be from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the following schools: Delhi High School, Rayville High School, and Mangham Elementary School. Meals may be transported to sites that do not have operating school cafeterias.

Phase 2

To the extent possible, meals will be offered in a traditional face-to-face setting similar to the one that took place during the 2019-2020 school year. However, if safe operations will not allow, cafeteria sites will function in a hybrid setting. All students on campus will be offered breakfast upon entering school. Students will be allowed to eat in the dining hall, or in other areas of the school as determined by the principal. In all circumstances, students will maintain recommended social distancing (6 feet) while eating.

In the hybrid model, students will receive meals to take home on the days they are not at school. For example: Molly is on the “A” schedule and will attend school Monday and Wednesday. She will be fed Monday at school and will take her “Tuesday” meal home with her. Molly will be fed Wednesday at school and will take 2 meals home for Thursday and Friday. Marcus is on the “B” schedule and will attend school on Tuesday and Thursday. He will be fed Tuesday and will take his Wednesday meal home. He will be fed Thursday at school and will take his Friday and Monday meal home with him.

Phase 3

The Child Nutrition Department will provide meals utilizing the same Phase 2 guidelines, increasing the size of student groups from 25 to 50.

Important Information pertaining to all meal phases:

- All regulations and guidelines (from the CDC, USDA, LDOE, CNP, and LDHH) will continue to be followed in all processes of meal service, including delivery, storage, preparation, serving, and cleaning.
- Students will wash their hands upon entering school, before meals, after meals, and before dismissal. Students should wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer every 2 hours.
- In Phase 1, 2, or 3, all meals will be served in disposable containers.
- All meals will be packed and served by the cafeteria staff.
- Students and faculty members will not be allowed to share any food or beverages.
- Richland Parish participates in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP); all students in Richland Parish eat at no cost. Monies will only be exchanged for food or beverages above and beyond those on the menu.

COMMUNICATION

Point of contact: Aleasha Waller

Phone number: (318) 728-5964 extension 232

Email address: covid19support@richland.k12.la.us

Web address: <http://richland.k12.la.us/covid19resources.html>

Other Resources: School Facebook Pages

As a result of the grant collaboration with The New Teacher Project (TNTP), Richland Parish will form a Community Engagement Advisory Panel. This panel will be made up of community leaders, pastors, and parents from each community, as well as employees of the School Board. This panel will be used to help spread information about the reopening of schools as well as COVID-19 updates.

If parents/guardians have any specific questions pertaining to school reopening, please contact your child's assigned school.

OTHER SCHOOL CONSIDERATIONS

Restroom/Water Fountain Usage during the School Day

Schools will establish maximum capacity for the facility that allows for social distancing and post the maximum capacity sign on the door. School will also provide supplies for employees to clean up after themselves in staff only restrooms. To reduce the possibility of transmission, avoid use of water fountains.

Locker Rooms

Locker rooms will be closed for PE until further notice. Athletic competitions will be allowed only during Phase 3. While in locker rooms, students are to stay 6 feet from others as a normal practice. Eliminate contact with others, such as handshakes. Avoid touching surfaces touched by others to the extent possible. Avoid anyone who is persistently coughing, sneezing or appears to be sick.

Visitors on Campus

The safety of our staff and students remains the district's primary concern. Therefore, visitors are encouraged to make an appointment to visit RPSB schools and offices. To help prevent the spread of the virus and reduce the risk of exposure to our staff and students, visitors should be prepared to wear a mask or shield, use hand sanitizer, and have their temperature taken. As a precautionary measure, visitors requiring access beyond the lobby or main office will be required to complete the COVID-19 Building Entry Screening Questionnaire. Compliance is important to help us take precautionary measures to protect our visitors, students, and staff in the building.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will virtual learning consist of in Richland Parish?

Richland Parish teachers will deliver daily lessons to students using the Google and Edgenuity platforms. Under this model, the district will provide devices (Chromebooks) and, to the extent possible, internet access. Further information on the application process for technology will follow.

How will parents communicate their choice of options for their child's learning?

Unless given notification, your child's school will plan for their participation in the phased learning outlined in the plan. Prior to the beginning of the school year, the district will open a registration link on the website for parents to access the choice of registering their student(s) in the RPSB Virtual Learning Academy. Please contact your child's principal or Talent Pipeline Lead Rebecca Freeland for more information.

What will hybrid learning (Phase 2) consist of in Richland Parish?

On the days that students attend school, they should expect a mostly traditional school day. On the days they remain at home, students are expected to complete virtual learning assignments through their Google and Edgenuity platforms.

What required precautions will be in place for students who attend school in-person?

- All employees of Richland Parish Schools, as well as students in Grades 3-12, will be required to wear a mask or shield.
- Students' temperatures will be taken upon their arrival. Any student with a temperature at or above 100.4 will be isolated, and parents will be contacted to arrange for transportation home.
- Students will be required to wash their hands often; including upon arrival, before and after lunch, and at dismissal.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures will be in place.
- Social distancing practices will be implemented to the greatest possible extent.

How will transportation be provided?

In order to reduce the number of students on the bus, parents are encouraged to drive their children to and from school when possible. In Phase 2, bus capacity is limited to 50%. In Phase 3, bus capacity is limited to 75%. Our transportation department is currently adjusting bus routes to accommodate this mandate. Due to these limitations, bus routes may be changed.

Will athletics be allowed to resume?

The Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) has indicated that athletic competitions for contact sports such as football, basketball, soccer, and wrestling will not be allowed to resume until the Louisiana reaches Phase 4. Phase 4 is based on a combination of guidelines from the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Federation of High Schools.

How will the school district communicate with parents?

Parents should continue to monitor our district website at <http://richland.k12.la.us/covid19resources.html> . Information will also be shared through school Facebook pages, JCalls/JTexts, and other resources.