

ReopenWithLove 2.0

Fall Reopening Update for the Richmond City School Board

Presented by: Dr. Tracy Epp, Chief Academic Officer

Michelle Hudacsko, Chief of Staff

Dr. Shadae Harris, Chief Engagement Officer

Venue: Richmond City School Board Meeting

Date: April 12, 2021

ReopenWithLove 2.0 – 5 Key Priorities

- Extend grace and love to all students, staff, and families as we transition back to in-person instruction.
- Protect the health and safety of all students and staff – including their mental health.
- Provide a 5-day/week in-person learning option for ALL RPS students.
- Provide a 5-day/week virtual option for ALL RPS students.
- Communicate extensively with our families and staff to ensure they have all the information they need to make the best possible decisions.

Part I

Academics

In-Person Option 1: 5 Days/Week (Preferred Option)

Who	Available to all PK-12 students
What	5 days a week of in-person instruction
Flexibilities	PK-8 families who select this option would only be able to change to virtual at the end of a quarter; 9-12 families would only be able to do so at the end of the first semester.
Other Key Information	If physical distancing guidelines ultimately preclude us from implementing this approach (due to space constraints), we are preparing two hybrid options (alternating days and alternating weeks) for the Board to consider. That said, the Administration feels strongly that we should explore all possible avenues of implementing 5 days/week of in-person instruction for both academic and social/emotional reasons. In addition, recent action by the General Assembly requires 5 days of in-person instruction, though it is unclear how divisions are to respond if physical distancing requirements preclude this as a possibility.

In-Person Option 2A: Alternating Days (Only If Needed)

Who	Available to all PK-12 students (only if needed)
What	<p>Each RPS class would be divided into 2 cohorts: A and B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cohort A would attend school in-person on T/Th• Cohort B would attend school in-person on W/F• Cohort A would have asynchronous virtual learning on M/W/F• Cohort B would have asynchronous virtual learning M/T/Th <p>(The choice of Monday, as opposed to Friday, for the all-virtual day stems from the fact that many holidays – and thus, days off – are celebrated on Mondays.)</p>
Flexibilities	PK-8 families who select this option would only be able to change to virtual at the end of a quarter; 9-12 families would only be able to do so at the end of the first semester.
Other Key Information	If circumstances changed during the year (e.g., a child vaccine becomes available and distancing is no longer needed), we would shift to Option 1 as soon as practical.

In-Person Option 2B: Alternating Weeks (Only If Needed)

Who	Available to all PK-12 students (only if needed)
What	<p>Each RPS class would be divided into 2 cohorts: A and B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cohort A would attend school in-person 5 days/week for the first week and have asynchronous virtual instruction during the second week.• Cohort B would have the exact opposite schedule.• The two cohorts would alternate like this for the duration of this model.
Flexibilities	PK-8 families who select this option would only be able to change to virtual at the end of a quarter; 9-12 families would only be able to do so at the end of the first semester.
Other Key Information	If circumstances changed during the year (e.g., a child vaccine becomes available and distancing is no longer needed), we would shift to Option 1 as soon as practical.

Virtual Option

Who	Available to all PK-12 students
What	PK-5: RPS Virtual Academy (RVA) – First day would be September 8 6-12: VDOE Virtual Virginia – First day would be August 24
Flexibilities	PK-8 families who select this option would only be able to change to in-person at the end of a quarter; 9-12 families would only be able to do so at the end of the first semester.
Other Key Information	<p>RPS Virtual Academy (RVA) – To avoid significant disruption to our schools, the Administration is proposing that we temporarily add new elementary positions to our budget (using federal dollars) to staff our PK-5 virtual academy. While the positions would be new, current RPS teachers could apply to teach in the virtual academy, much as they would apply to teach at another school within the division.</p> <p>Virtual Virginia – This is a public, online program run by the Virginia Department of Education. Students enrolled in this program count towards a division's official ADM, meaning there is no loss of per-pupil funding. There is a tuition fee, however, which the division pays on a sliding scale based on its LCI. For RPS, the cost would be \$350/course for high school and middle school students.</p>

Part II

Health and Safety

Overview

This section provides guidance on the implementation of key mitigation strategies as a way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission for students in staff during in-person learning in the 2021-22 school year. The recommendations are based on current guidelines and information available from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Virginia Department of Health, and therefore are subject to change.

The recommendations below are for all RPS schools. Each school will also create a health/safety plan that reflects the unique context of their building (layout, grade level, etc.) and this will be shared with families prior to the start of school.

Key mitigation strategies include:

- Daily symptom checking
- Masks
- Hand washing/sanitizing
- Social/physical distancing
- HVAC/air quality
- Cleaning protocols

Daily Symptom Screening

Daily Symptom Check (Prior to Leaving Home)

- Before leaving home, all staff and students will answer the CDC screening questions about how they feel/assessment of possible COVID-19 symptoms.
- Students or staff who answer yes to any of the screening questions should not attend school in-person.
- If staff/families have a thermometer at home, they should also take their temperature prior to coming to school and stay home should they have a temperature at or above 100.4 degrees. Temperature checks will also occur at the school (although only required for students and visitors).
- RPS will begin a comprehensive awareness campaign about the health questions/symptoms of COVID-19.

Daily Temperature Check

- Each morning upon arrival, students and visitors will receive a temperature check via a walk-through scanner.
- Each scanner will have assigned staff to monitor to ensure all individuals are scanned and to address anyone with an elevated temperature. Any individual with an elevated temperature will be escorted to the school clinic for further evaluation by the school nurse.
- While the temperature checker can assess 70 individuals a minute, student arrival times will be staggered in order to ensure no/limited wait times during arrival procedures as well as appropriate social distancing.
- Students who are dropped off at school by a parent/caregiver will have their temperature taken by a hand-held thermometer in the car such that if there is an elevated temperature, the parent/caregiver can take the child home prior to entry in the building.

Daily Symptom Screening (continued)

Symptom Screening (for Staff and Visitors via “Raptor”)

- Raptor is RPS’s daily login system in each school’s main office (for staff and visitors). RPS has upgraded Raptor to include COVID symptom screening questions (see Appendix).
- Visitors and staff who enter the main office to sign in will maintain social distancing guidelines.
- Hand sanitizer (and gloves, if desired), will be available near the computer, given frequent use.
- Plexiglass has been installed in all front offices to minimize direct contact between office staff and visitors.

Supportive Care Spaces

Students that present with signs/symptoms of infectious illness (including COVID-19) will be isolated from other students in staff in an effort to minimize transmission.

- The school nurse will evaluate the student in the school’s clinic using COVID-19 Health Assessment form; all assessments will be charted in the student’s electronic health chart.
- After initial assessment the student will be referred to the supportive care room if they are displaying additional COVID-19 symptoms. School nurses will continue to follow RPS school exclusion guidelines for students and staff while being cognizant of COVID-19 signs/symptoms.
- Parents/caregivers will be notified of a student’s illness to make arrangements for pick up; time in the supportive care room should be as brief as possible.
- If a student/staff member is exhibiting signs of severe illness, emergency services will be called.
- Supportive care rooms will be cleaned/disinfected after use.

Masks

Each day, all students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear a face mask while in an RPS building (school or central office). Face shields, gators or bandanas alone are not allowed. Masks should completely cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of the face without gaps.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

- Masks must be worn, even if an individual is alone in a room and/or more than the required distance from another person.
- If a staff member, student, or visitor does not have a face mask, RPS will provide one.
- Specialized face coverings (face shields, clear masks) will be available/used in unique instructional instances (for example, for speech pathologists, students with hearing loss, or during phonics instruction - all where seeing the mouth is key) and for students/staff with special health circumstances. Wearing a face shield in addition to a mask may be considered, but wearing a face shield alone is not a substitute for a mask.

Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing

Hand hygiene remains one of the most important practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- Every classroom as well as common areas (entry, office, library, etc.) has a wall mounted hand sanitizing station.
- Students will sanitize and/or wash hands every two hours and prior to meal consumption.
- Bathroom/classroom sink supplies will be monitored throughout the day to ensure appropriate supplies are available.
- Touchless paper towel and soap dispensers will be installed in all bathrooms.
- Signage for proper hand washing will be displayed in every bathroom (as well as and social distancing signs).
- All RPS bathrooms will have applicable plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and general contractor work completed. Please see the RPS Reopening Dashboard for completion status by school/division.

Social/Physical Distancing

Current CDC guidance related to distancing (April 2021) is listed below. As of April 2021, Richmond is an area of “substantial” community transmission.

Elementary schools students’ desks should be at least 3 feet apart. Middle and high school students' desks should be at least 3 feet apart in areas of low, moderate or substantial community transmission. In areas of high community transmission, adults, middle and high school students should be 6 feet apart.

Classrooms and other school protocols will be set up to ensure appropriate distancing guidelines are followed.

Preschool

- Given there are not individual desks in preschool, markings will be made on group tables and on the floor to ensure distancing.
- Student use of centers may be limited.
- Cots used during naptime will be appropriately distanced. Cots will be labeled with student names and cleaned after each use.
- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom.
- Whenever possible, students will have their own instructional materials.
- Tables and other high touch classroom surfaces will be cleaned after school each day.

Social/Physical Distancing (continued)

Elementary School

- Student desks should face forward in the same direction to minimize face-to-face contact.
- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom.
- Whenever possible, students will have their own instructional materials.
- If classes have group bathroom breaks, social distancing guidelines will be in place.
- Desks and other high touch classroom surfaces will be cleaned after school each day.

Middle/High School

- Student desks should face forward in the same direction to minimize face-to-face contact.
- Hand sanitizer is available in every classroom.
- Whenever possible, students will have their own instructional materials.
- Desks and other high touch classroom surfaces will be cleaned after school each day.

Student Grouping

- Group desks, when used, will be marked to ensure distancing.
- Use of communal spaces (cafeteria, playground, etc.) will be staggered to ensure social distancing (based on group size).

Social/Physical Distancing (continued)

Outdoor Recess

- Students must continue to wear a mask during recess.
- Hand hygiene should occur before and after recess.
- The nature of recess can make social distancing more challenging. Activities should avoid close contact and encourage independent play when possible.
- Outdoor playground equipment and natural play areas are not easily wiped down after each use.

Student Meals

- Students will sanitize and/or wash their hands every two hours and prior to meal consumption.
- Students must only remove their mask while eating and then put it back on immediately after and while moving about.
- Students should be aware of a safe place to put their mask while eating.
- Per normal Student Nutrition Services protocol, staff should wear gloves when assisting students with meals.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at all cafeteria entrances and food distribution areas.
- Children will eat in a combination of the classroom and cafeteria to ensure proper distancing; plans will be created for each individual school and may require additional lunch monitors.
- Large waste receptacles will be placed outside of the classrooms along the hallway for discarding trash.

Social/Physical Distancing (continued)

Dismissal

- Schools will develop dismissal procedures that ensure distancing based on school size/layout and modes of transportation.

RPS Buses

- RPS will provide transportation to all students who need it. Families maintain the option, however, to transport their child to school, if preferred.
- Social distancing guidelines should be followed at the bus stop area.
- Air filtration will be installed in all school buses.
- Any individual riding the bus must wear a face mask.
- Buses will be loaded from back to front (and unloaded from front to back) with consideration to placement of younger children.
- Social distancing guidelines will be followed, with the exception of children from the same house who can sit more closely; seats that need to remain unoccupied to ensure social distancing will be marked.
- Windows should be opened (weather permitting) to allow for additional airflow
- Staggered arrival and departure times will be established to accommodate for smaller bus loads and accounting for time to follow building entry protocols.
- Before and after care may be required to allow for established staggered arrival and departure times.
- Buses will be cleaned with a specified cleaning protocol after each use.

Social/Physical Distancing (continued)

Car Riders, Vans, and Student Drivers

- Each school will have a designated drop off area to ensure traffic safety and efficiency.
- Students who are dropped off at school by a parent/caregiver will have their temperature taken by a hand-held thermometer in the car such that if there is an elevated temperature, the parent/caregiver can take the child home prior to entry in the building.
- Student drivers/riders in student driven cars will enter the building through designated areas for temperature checks.
- Social distancing guidelines will be practiced on sidewalks and in waiting areas.

Walkers

- Students who are walking to school with a parent/caregiver will have their temperature taken by a hand-held thermometer prior to drop off such that if there is an elevated temperature, the parent/caregiver can take the child home prior to entry in the building.
- Schools will use designated entrances with walk through temperature scanners.

HVAC/Air Quality

All RPS buildings will have air quality levels that meet ASHRAE's guidelines for safety.

- Note: [After further discussion with additional air quality experts, the Administration is recommending that we shift from bipolar ionization to in-room HEPA filtration units.](#) The Administration would like to thank Board Member Doerr for her advocacy and assistance on this topic.
- Assuming Board approval for this change (which will also be cheaper), the Administration will install Carrier Opticlean HEPA Filtration Air Scrubber units in all classrooms and common areas. (Of note, this unit was highlighted by [Time Magazine](#) as one of the top inventions of 2020.)
- In addition, HVAC preventative maintenance is being performed at all schools, including upgrading air filters and completing any repair work identified. Please see the RPS Reopening Dashboard for completion status by school/division.
- We are assessing the state of classroom windows and what adjustments are possible, but want to clarify that division-wide window replacement is not feasible, either financially or in terms of the time such an effort would take.

Part III

Engagement

Engagement Plan Goals

As we prepare to welcome students and staff back into school buildings this fall, RPS is committed to engaging all stakeholders so every RPS family feels informed and supported for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

Our goals are to ensure that all RPS families:

- Understand the in-person and virtual options for instruction and feel informed to make the decision that is best for their children;
- Feel confident in knowing that the health and well-being of our students, staff and families is our number one priority; and
- Receive relevant and timely information that is accessible and family-friendly.

Division Engagement & Outreach Strategies

Strategy	Description
Welcome Back Letter & Family Checklist	Families will receive a Welcome Back Letter that includes a reopening checklist and outlines key information for the start of the school year so that families have a step-by-step guide to use as they prepare to return to school for both virtual and in-person options.
Video and One Pagers	The division will create a series of instructional videos and flyers that will explain health and safety protocols for reopening.
Community Walks	Family Liaisons will ensure that all families have access to information and resources through home visits and strategic community walks.
Mobile Community Conversations	Family Liaisons will be present at various community locations to share reopening information and hear from families.
Regional Community Conversations	In partnership with members of the Richmond health community, RCCs will be held virtually for each region. All RCCs will include language interpretation services.

Division Engagement & Outreach Strategies (continued)

Strategy	Description
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>A variety of community stakeholders will be included in the reopening process to help provide information to families. These groups will work with the hub teams to participate in collaborative neighborhood-based events: They include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Advisory Council • Parent Advisory Council • Student Advisory Council • Interfaith Advisory Council • Community Partner Advisory Council • Latino Identity Task Force • Reopening Committee
Division Outreach Platforms	<p>The RPS division outreach platforms, including the divisions website, social media, and RPS Direct will be updated daily to include the most current information for reopening. Mass notifications with important updates and announcements will also be sent through Remind.</p>
Family Support Line	<p>The Family Support Hotline will continue to be a resource for all families to call if they have questions or need information about reopening. Bilingual operators will be available.</p>

School-Based Engagement & Outreach Strategies

Strategy	Description
School Community Conversations	Opportunities for families to join virtual meetings to ask questions and to hear information from school leaders that is specific and relevant to each school community.
Walk-Up or Drive-Through Summer Welcome Back	Low-contact opportunities for families who are able to walk or drive-by to meet staff and pick up back-to-school materials.
Principal Welcome Letter	Principals will develop a welcome letter and message that provides families with a high-level overview of reopening and school-specific resources.
School-Based Community Walks	School staff will have the opportunity to join Family Liaisons on Community Walks to ensure that all families have access to information and resources.
School-Based Outreach Platforms	School-based outreach platforms, including school websites and social media will be updated regularly to include the most current information for reopening.
School Marquee	The school marquee will be updated with key back-to-school messages.
Mass Notifications	Schools will use Remind to send mass notifications to their school community about key reopening updates.

Neighborhood Connections

Each Family Liaison will become embedded in a specific neighborhood where they will serve as an expert on resources that build upon existing assets of each community to support families. Each morning, Family Liaisons will be present at various meal distributions locations in our neighborhoods to connect, engage, and share information with families.

Southside	Northside/West End	East End
Hillside Court	Gilpin Court	Oakwood
Southwood	Chamberlayne Avenue	Creighton Court
Elkhardt	Highland Park	Fairfield Court
Broad Rock	Jackson Ward	Mosby Court
Belt Center	Old Brook Road	Church Hill
Blackwell	Museum District	Whitcomb Court
Afton		Fulton
Westover Hills		

Community Walks

Family Liaisons will ensure that all families have access to information and resources through home visits and strategic community walks. The Community Walks will concentrate on specific neighborhoods each month to allow us to build meaningful relationships with families. Additional neighborhoods will continue to be added each month.

Southside	Northside/West End	East End
Hillside Court 1504 Harwood St April 14, 9am-10:30am	Gilpin Court Charity & Baker Streets April 13, 9am-10:30am	Woodville Elementary 2000 N 28th St April 15, 2:30pm-4pm
Hillside Court Rosecrest Ave & Southlawn April 20, 2pm-3:30pm	Gilpin Court Calhoun & Hickory Streets April 20, 3pm-4:30pm	Creighton Court Creighton Rd & Walcott Pl April 22, 9am-10:30am
Southwood 1200 Southwood Pkwy April 28, 9am-10:30am	Gilpin Court Hill & St. Paul Streets April 27, 9am-10:30am	Woodville Elementary 2000 N. 28th St. April 29, 3:00pm-4:30pm
Southwood 1200 Southwood Pkwy May 6, 4pm-5:30pm	Gilpin Court St. James & 1st Streets May 4, 3pm-4:30pm	Creighton Court Nine Mile Rd & Bunche Pl May 6, 9a-10:30am
The Belt Atlantic 4000 Midlothian Turnpike April 17, 9am-12pm	Randolph 1415 Grayland Ave April 24, 9am-12pm	Oakwood 1665 N 31st St May 1, 9am-12pm

Mobile Community Conversations

Family Liaisons will be present at various community locations to share reopening information and hear from families.

Southside	Northside/West End	East End
Parkway Shopping Center 6335 Jahnke Rd April 15, 3:30pm-5:00pm	6 Points Innovation Center 3001 Meadowbridge Rd April 16, 10:30am-12pm	Market at 25th 1330 N 25th St April 16, 11am-2pm
Southside Plaza 441 E Belt Blvd April 21, 12:30pm-2:30pm	Calhoun Center 436 Calhoun St April 22, 9am-12pm	Creighton Court Rec Center 2101 Creighton Rd 9am-12pm
Mi Pais Mart 5347 Hull Street Road April 27, 5:00pm-6:30pm	YMCA 4207 Old Brook Rd April 29, 8:00am-11:00am	Mt Olivet Baptist Church 1223 N 25th St April 30, 8:30am-10am
Southside Plaza 441 E Belt Blvd May 3, 11:30pm-1:30pm	YMCA 4207 Old Brook Rd May 7, 3pm-5pm	Market at 25th 1330 N 25th St May 7, 2:00pm-5:00pm

Regional Community Conversations

In partnership with members of the Richmond health community, RCCs will be held virtually for each region. Spanish interpretation will be provided via Zoom for all RCCs.

Region	Date & Time
Southside	Tuesday, April 27 6pm-7:30pm
Northside	Tuesday, May 4 6pm-7:30pm
West End	Thursday, May 6 6pm-7:30pm
East End	Thursday, May 13 6pm-7:30pm