

Rim of the World Unified School District

2020-2021 Elementary Waiver

In response to reopening guidelines



Prepared in collaboration with all ROWUSD Administration, the Board of Education, and Union Leaders.

Waiver Introduction:

In March of 2020, schools transitioned to distance learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year due to COVID-19. In response to stay-at-home orders, districts across the nation had to provide supplemental work via distance learning. There were many decisions faced by districts: bandwidth, device deployment, curriculum, platforms, grading, graduation, food distribution, essential employees, professional development, and safety guidelines. Rim of the World Unified School District (ROWUSD) staff responded with flexibility, collaboration, and determination to provide our families and students with support, optional learning activities, and caring.

On July 17, 2020, Governor Newsom required all schools located in a county deemed “at-risk” to start the 2020-2021 school through a district learning model. San Bernardino County has been identified as one of the “at-risk” counties. Based on the Governor’s executive orders, Rim of the World Unified School District began the school year through distance learning. The ideas presented in this document were initiated in collaboration with district office personnel, site leadership, and union leaders.

ROWUSD has conducted various stakeholder surveys since March of 2020 to identify the needs of staff and parents/guardians. The most recent survey, conducted in September 2020, reflects the desire of parents for the district to apply for the waiver. (70% of the 1,510 respondents). Our stakeholders prefer that the district implement a hybrid/cohort model, in which 50% of the students would be on campus on a given day, while the other half participate in distance learning.

The plans presented are subject to revisions as federal and state guidelines and executive orders are often revised in a weekly, if not daily, manner. Should current orders change to mandates this will not be possible. ROWUSD is taking a proactive approach to planning for all future scenarios. We are also assuming that the California Department of Education (CDE) will follow through with our request for 3,000 Chromebooks and 300 hotspots. So far, we have received 10 Chromebooks. The state and federal governments have provided school districts with additional funding to assist with plans for education during the pandemic.

This specific copy of our strategic plan was rewritten to be our application for the elementary waiver for grades K-5 in the Rim of the World Unified School District for Charles Hoffman Elementary, Lake Arrowhead Elementary and Valley of Enchantment Elementary.

Topics addressed in the Elementary Waiver must include the following per CDPH guidelines dated 8/3/2020: cleaning and disinfecting, cohorts, movement within the school, face coverings, health screening, hygiene practices, tracing of contacts, physical distancing, training, testing, triggers for distance learning, and communication plans.

In our elementary waiver we are requesting to open on November 2, 2020.

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Custodians have added to their daily, cleaning procedures of bathrooms, classrooms, and common areas the cleaning of all door handles on each campus nightly. Custodians have had training on best practices for cleaning and disinfecting as well as specifics on Coronavirus precautions through Target Solutions. All sites are implementing disinfecting protocols as outlined by CASBO. Cleaning solutions, new sprayer backpacks, and bathroom sanitizing equipment will disinfect for COVID-19 daily. Over \$40,000 was spent on new cleaning and disinfecting backpacks and machines for each school site's custodial staff. Two training sessions have been provided to custodians on the use of the equipment. Priority will be placed on disinfecting common areas once school resumes. Playground equipment will be wiped down on a scheduled routine established at each school site.
- All buses have added daily wipe-down procedures for seats with disinfectant. Students will be asked to practice social distancing at bus stops, wear face masks, both at the stops and on the bus, and follow bus spacing guidelines. If we need to reduce bus capacity to 1 per seat, the district will have to reduce the number of bus stops and move to a satellite stop routine where there is one bus stop per geographic region. Bus passes will be purchased online to reduce contact between parents and employees when possible. With the waiver, buses will be at 50% capacity. Based on the September survey, less than 30% of our families want to ride the bus (normally we have 60% ridership).
- Student belongings will be labeled with first and last name and not be shared with other students. Classroom supplies will be labeled with either names or using a numbering system to reduce the sharing of supplies when possible.

Small, Stable, Cohorts:

- Students with their last names beginning with the letters A-M will attend school on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students with their last names beginning with N-Z will attend school on Thursdays and Fridays All students will participate in distance learning on Wednesdays. The reason for this delineation is to keep families together. Single student families and multiple student families may be moved to opposite days as we attempt to balance numbers district-wide for over 3,000 students, at the district's discretion. This will allow cohorts of students to remain together in the event of a positive COVID case and allow site custodians to deep clean thoroughly between cohorts on Wednesdays. Interaction between cohorts for lunch and recess will be minimized with a district unified schedule created by site teachers and their principal.
- Distance learning will take place on days students are not physically on campus in their cohort and for all students on Wednesday. Attendance will be taken daily, and assignments will be graded. Google Classroom will be required for all students in all grades. Virtual instruction will be required (homeroom idea next bullet). The Zoom platform or Google Meets will be utilized by all teachers and students, and attendance will be recorded in Aeries.
- All students will be "present" the first part of each day for attendance whether the student is at home or on campus for announcements and whole group instruction; similar to a

homeroom. Students at home will be dismissed after assignments are given and attendance is complete with a check in later in the afternoon.

- A Chromebook has been handed out to each student who submitted the technology request form for at-home learning, supplemental work, and homework in the event of future school closures (per assumptions above). District Chromebooks have been barcoded this summer in preparation for distribution to students. Wipes and/or gloves will be available as an option for students using technology in secondary classrooms. Grades TK-5 will have an assigned Chromebooks/iPad if available in each classroom using a number/labeling system. Parents and students will need to sign both a Responsible Use and Acceptable Use Agreement to take technology home. Device internet activity will be filtered by our firewall even if at home. Every request for a Chromebook has been honored at this time. Seven hundred and fifty more have been ordered.
- Once they arrive, a limited number of hotspots may be provided to families if they completed the technology request form in July. The hotspots are expected to arrive at the end of September. Priority to hotspot devices will be given to families currently utilizing school WiFi rooms, homeless and foster youth, and other unduplicated populations. Parents will have to sign an Acceptable Use Policy and return the device to the school prior to the end of the school year. Parents would pay a \$60 fee if the hotspot is lost. Hotspots will only work with the district-issued Chromebook and will not replace internet service in their home.
- Professional development has been provided for classroom teachers on the use of Google Classroom in May 2020. Starting the first week of school, students have been trained to use Google Classroom in preparation for possible future closures.
- Teachers are encouraged to move outside daily for teaching and activities and to open windows/doors when the weather allows. Fans have been installed in each classroom and common areas to circulate air as recommended per CDC protocol.
- Our district has opened a K-6 Home Choice Program for the 2020-2021 school year with oversight provided by our Coordinator of Alternative Programs. Spots for students are filled in the order of the date and time applications were received. As of September 25, the district has hired four teachers assigned to the Home Choice program. A waiting list has been established as the class size maximum for each teacher is at capacity.

Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School:

- Visitors and volunteers will need to follow all site protocols and check-in procedures. All visitors must wear masks when entering campus. They will have their temperature checked, and complete a questionnaire to determine if they have been exposed, or could have possibly been exposed to COVID1-9. If the visitor has a temperature of 100.4, or answers yes to the COVID-19 questionnaire, they will not be allowed on campus. Signs are posted at each entrance to inform visitors of the school requirements. The number of visitors on campus will be limited and adhere to procedures dictated by state executive orders at that time. Volunteers must attend site volunteer training to learn about any new routines prior to serving on campus.

- Hallway traffic patterns have been established at each school by site staff, which will be highlighted on the ground with stickers. Student training will take place on the first day of on-campus instruction.
- Entrance, egress, and movement within the school will be reduced by 50% daily following the hybrid model for this elementary waiver.

Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear:

- As of July 17, 2020, masks are required for all staff and students in grades 2-12. Two washable masks will be provided to all students and staff. Teachers will have both face shields and masks. Staff or students choosing to bring their own masks must follow the dress code policy and shall cover their nose and mouth (costume type masks will not be permitted). Guidelines currently state that students can be excluded from campus for not wearing an appropriate face-covering/mask. All students will receive training on wearing their masks, social distancing, hand washing, and traffic patterns.
- Plexiglass barriers have been installed for desk positions that greet the public. Desk shields will be on all desks for all students, administrators, and teachers.

Health Screening for Staff and Students:

- Digital, no contact thermometers are at each school site for when temperature checks are needed. An additional purchase was made for each school site to have multiple standing temperature check machines at all entrances for the start of the school day, in large spaces, and for any events. Counts for the standing, wrist machines are as follows: two for district office, one for transportation, one for maintenance and operations, four for Charles Hoffman Elementary, six each for Valley of Enchantment and Lake Arrowhead Elementary, eight for Mary Putnam Henck Intermediate School, ten for Rim of the World High School and two for Mountain High School. Having the mobile thermometers will allow us to monitor staff and students should any symptoms occur during the school day.
- Passive wellness self-checks will be in place for both students and staff. Banners at each school site display passive wellness check guidelines. (See definitions on the last page)
- Anyone having symptoms will be put in an isolation room established at each school site and returning to campus will follow Department of Health guidelines. Students will remain in this room until picked up by a parent or guardian.

Healthy Hygiene Practices:

- Hand sanitizing stations are located in all multi-purpose rooms/cafeterias, classrooms, and libraries for students at each school site. These stations are mobile and can be positioned throughout the campus for entrance and egress. Every classroom has hand sanitizer.
- Students at school that have signs of a fever or COVID-19 symptoms will be isolated with supervision/care and required to wear a mask until a parent or guardian can pick them up at the school site. This isolation room will be cleaned by custodial staff after each student uses it. Any person displaying a fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home and excluded from campus activities.

- Signage is available at all sites reminding stakeholders of signs for COVID, social distancing, and handwashing protocols.
- Water bottle filling stations have been installed at all school sites and at the district office. Staff and students are encouraged to bring a water bottle as drinking fountains will be turned off during this time. All staff were given a water bottle that had a place to label with their name in May of 2020.

Identification and Tracing of Contacts:

- ROWUSD will limit the number of visitors and volunteers on campus. All visitors will be screened through our Raptor Visitor Management system utilizing CDC guideline questions. The Raptor Visitor Management system retains the name and time a visitor was permitted to enter campus. Anyone passing this screening will be issued a visitor's pass. All visitors must wear a mask and have a temperature check. Additional information is provided in the attached *COVID-19 Employee Guidelines*.
- Students will be tracked by cohorts in each grade level. Staff is traced by their classroom or work station location. Both groups are to complete passive wellness checks prior to coming on campus. School staff noticing any student displaying signs of illness will be sent to the office for further evaluation.
- ROWUSD will follow guidelines given to all employees by the Associate Superintendent of Personnel Services. The Associate Superintendent or the Superintendent will be the point of contact for tracing and have been given the direct phone number to call to report at the San Bernardino County Department of Health.

Physical Distancing:

- Plexiglass barriers were installed during the summer of 2020, for all front office staff and security desks.
- Cash/checks will not be an option for our lunch program, parents will be asked to pay for meals using the Titan online system. Student lunch numbers will now be scanned at lunchtime, so students must carry their ID to avoid using a keypad. Elementary students will sit by class in the multipurpose rooms at 50% capacity. Outside eating options will be given to students, weather permitting. Parents must use the Titan system to add money for their student(s). Parents can submit an application to the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.
- Classroom configuration: all "extra" furniture was removed from each classroom. All desks/tables/two-person desks will face forward and spaced apart as square footage will allow. Desk shields for each student, administrator, and teacher are in place.
- Field trips, large events, and assemblies will follow state executive orders for locations and crowd sizes.
- All students and staff will be encouraged to follow social distancing protocols of 6 feet when possible during recess and additional breaks.
- Stickers have been placed in all indoor hallways to show traffic patterns for student and cohort movement.

Staff Training and Family Education:

- Parents will sign an acknowledgement letter prior to the return to in-person school outlining new procedures. Employees have received COVID-19 guidelines for ROWUSD that are signed by each employee and kept on file by their administrator. Parent letter acknowledgement will also be kept on file.
- Target solutions training on COVID-19 has been assigned to all classified staff members. Teachers will be encouraged to take the same training upon their return to campus.
- The district provided to all employees, the *COVID-19 Employee Guideline* handbook (attached)
- Parents and students will receive training on opening procedures and protocols prior to returning to campus, including a *Parent Acknowledgement* form.
- All press releases and the ROWUSD Strategic Plan are posted and stored on the district website for review at any time.

Testing of Students and Staff:

- The district will coordinate testing with the Department of Public Health to get staff to testing clinics locally and through district health insurance. Time will be available during their workday (after students leave) to get tested. Staff will be reimbursed for payment of their copayment/deductibles for the test based on current district limits.
- Mobile temperature check stations will be placed at various locations throughout each campus.
- Parents will be encouraged to get necessary medical attention/testing should a student display any COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or should a case occur in a cohort. The district will not be responsible for student testing costs.
- Employees were provided the *COVID-19 Employee Guidelines* to provide guidance on what to do should they test positive for the virus.

Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning:

- Although we received guidelines from the California Department of Education for reopening schools on June 9, 2020, State Superintendent Thurmond stated that it is a local district decision to be made in collaboration with local health officials. This changed on July 17, 2020, When Gavin Newsom issued mandates on reopening based on county data with a waiver possible for elementary reopening only. We are also working with our certificated and classified associations on the implications of CDE guidelines, Executive Orders, and budget shortcomings. School sites will use this plan to provide overarching guidance; however, principals and staff will outline key action steps to address the specific needs at their sites.
- A COVID Task Force which includes parents, classified, certificated teachers, administration, and a student began to meet in September and will continue to meet twice a month until the district fully reopens.
- Should we obtain the elementary waiver we will monitor any reports of positive cases and county data for the Lake Arrowhead region in order to determine cohorts returning to distance learning at any given time. We understand that 5% of any cohort testing positive will need to return to distance learning for 14 days.

- Chromebooks have been distributed to students, which are currently being used during distance learning. Should it be required that a school or the district return to distance learning, the current model will be reimplemented. Memorandums of understanding between the two association groups already address the distance learning model. No further negotiations will need to take place.

Communication plans:

- This plan will be updated periodically throughout the 2020/2021 school year, to include the most recent guidance from CDPH, SBDPH, CDC, and CDE. Community COVID 19 data will be used to determine if a transition is required to a more restrictive scenario. Families will receive updates to this plan on our ROWUSD website and Facebook accounts. All-calls and emails will also be sent out to families to share, in English and Spanish, any reopening plans and changes to our current scenario in distance learning.
- Communication between staff, students and parents regarding cases and exposure will adhere to FERPA and HIPAA requirements. A key area of communication is to ensure the privacy of the individual(s). Information provided to the appropriate stakeholders will be communicated to those specific locations in which exposure occurred. This is to allow tracing of individuals potentially exposed to the virus.

Definitions:

Synchronous learning refers to a learning event in which a group of students is engaging in learning at the same time.

Asynchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time.

Passive Wellness Checks are ones in which the parent/guardian or employee follows symptom check protocols before arriving at school or getting on the bus. Staying home if a student or employee displays any symptoms. Families will sign an acknowledgement letter and employees the COVID-19 Guidelines handbook.