

Rantoul City Schools #137

Return to School Plan 2020-2021

The following is the Return to School Plan for RCS. While we would love to have all students return in person for full days, we are unable to do so. Creating a plan that we feel would be best for our students academically balanced with having everyone's safety in mind was most important. The plan below still has details to decide but as you can see, we have many details determined. We hope the Frequently Asked Question format is helpful!

Rantoul City Schools is planning to allow all students to return to schools this fall following a hybrid model in accordance with the guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). The full guidelines for schools from ISBE and IDPH can be found here: [ISBE Reopening Guidelines](#), [ISBE Transition Guidance](#). These guidelines have and will likely continue to change in the weeks to come. This may mean that this plan will have to be updated and altered.

The basic guidelines are as follows:

- All persons in our schools **must** wear face masks at all times.
- More than 50 individuals are prohibited from gathering in any one space.
- Social distancing will be observed as much as possible.
- Symptom screenings and temperature checks must be completed before entering school buildings.
- An increase in school wide cleaning and disinfection.

RCS will conduct a hybrid model of instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. The hybrid model is a combination of both at-home learning and in-person learning while following the guidelines set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Health and various area-wide educational union representation.

Our plan allows families two primary choices:

1. **BlendEd Academy.** Students follow a BlendEd Academy model (Blended Education Academy model) of two days of in-person learning per week and three days of at-home learning per week (in a typical five-day week). The two days in-person will be approximately 4 hrs long in the morning. See below for sample schedules.
2. **LEARN Academy.** Student remains at home and participates in the LEARN (**L**earners **E**ngaging **A**t-home in **Ra**ntoul) Academy model. LEARN Academy allows students to learn remotely and not attend school in-person.

Overview of the BlendEd Academy Model (In-person learning with at-home learning included):

RCS will offer all families the option for participating in either our BlendEd Academy model or our LEARN Academy option. If the school district is required to close again by the Governor, all students will participate in our LEARN Academy option. When it is deemed safe for most students to return to school, the LEARN Academy option may end.

In the BlendEd Academy model, students will attend school two days a week in-person and participate in at-home learning activities three days a week (in a typical five-day week). Teachers will teach in-person four days a week seeing half of their students each day. (Example: Group A: Attends Tuesday and Thursday; Group B: Attends Wednesday and Friday; Both groups work from home on Monday).

All students, whether in BlendEd Academy or LEARN Academy are expected to participate in five hours of learning daily. All students are required to participate in at-home learning activities on Mondays to allow each school to deep clean the facilities and allow time for teachers to collaboratively plan for the week. Teachers will be responsible for instruction of students in the BlendEd Academy and LEARN Academy models.

The district is working to place individual families / households on the same rotation (Group A or B) so that individual families / households can better manage childcare needs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are my options for school this fall?

- RCS will offer two models:
 - BlendEd Academy—In-person and at-home learning
 - LEARN Academy--No in-person learning

What is a BlendEd Academy?

- In BlendEd Academy, students will attend school in-person some days and complete at-home learning every day.
- In a typical five day school week, students will attend school on two days and complete at-home learning three days per week.
- Students will attend school in-person on either Tuesdays and Thursdays (Group A) or Wednesdays and Fridays (Group B).
- Some students who qualify for intensive Special Education services or English as a Second Language services may have the option to attend four days per week in a typical week. These families will be contacted individually for information.
- In a typical five day week, the BlendEd Academy schedule is as follows:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Students in Group A	Asynchronous at-home learning.	In-person learning at school. At least one hour of homework.	Asynchronous at-home learning.	In-person learning at school. At least one hour of homework.	Asynchronous at-home learning.
Students in Group B		Asynchronous at-home learning.	In-person learning at school. At least one hour of homework.	Asynchronous at-home learning.	In-person learning at school. At least one hour of homework.

What will an in-person learning day look like? (Revised 8/3)

Exact school start times are yet to be determined based on bus routing. Example schedules are listed below for elementary and junior high:

Elementary: ~~7:30 am – 11:30 am~~ (sample daily schedule)

- ~~7:30-8:00~~ Arrival and breakfast in the classroom (with SEL lesson).
- ~~8:00-8:50~~ Math Instruction
- ~~8:50-9:15~~ Bathroom break and mask break w/ (mini-lesson)
- ~~9:30-10:45~~ Literacy instruction (Integration of SS/Science)
- ~~10:45-11:00~~ Bathroom break
- ~~11:00-11:30~~ mask break/SEL lesson

Jr. High: 8:30 am – 12:30 pm (sample daily schedule)

- 8:30-8:55 Eater 101 and Breakfast
- 8:55-10:00 Reading Language Arts
- 10:00-11:05 Math
- 11:05-12:10 Social Studies or Science
- 12:10-12:30 Eater 101/SEL lesson

What are the school start and end times? (Added 8/3)

- K-5th grade Student Hours:
 - Broadmeadow and Northview: 7:40-11:40
 - Eastlawn: 7:50-11:50
 - Pleasant Acres: 8:00-12:00
- J. W. Eater Jr High Student Hours: 8:15-12:15
- PreKindergarten (PreK) Student Hours: AM session: 9:00-11:00 ~~PM session: 1:00-3:00~~

Why are we doing BlendEd Academy?

- After careful deliberation, we determined this was the safest way for us to return as many students as possible to school and still maintain six feet social distancing as much as possible. If all students were to attend school every day, classrooms would be too crowded to maintain social distancing.

What is the LEARN Academy model?

- LEARN stands for Learners Engaging At-home in RaNtoul
- This is a choice for families to keep their student at home and access RCS instruction remotely.
- Students will be given a device, and we have limited supply of hotspots for internet connectivity.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
LEARN Academy	Asynchronous at-home learning.	Asynchronous at-home learning.	Asynchronous at-home learning.	Asynchronous at-home learning.	Asynchronous at-home learning.

What if my student starts the year with one Academy and wants to change to another Academy?

- Changes from LEARN Academy to BlendEd Academy will only be allowed at semester. Families must notify the school by December 1st.
- Changes from BlendEd Academy to LEARN Academy can happen at any time.

Why can't all students return to school every day?

- Although the ISBE/IDPH guidance allows us to maintain six feet social distancing "when possible", RCS feels that the best way to keep students and staff as safe as possible means that six feet social distancing must be in place in all settings. If someone is diagnosed with COVID-19, every single person who is in contact with that person less than six feet for 15 minutes or longer must be quarantined. If we did not maintain six feet apart as best as we can in all settings, we will very quickly have entire classrooms, including teachers, quarantined at home for 14 days. The concern is we won't have enough teachers to continue teaching and of course the safety of all.

What will the school day look like? (Revised 8/3)

- School will be in session for approximately four clock hours per day. Exact school times will be determined after bus routes are finalized. Six feet social distancing on the bus means more than one run of each route.
- Students will stay in one classroom with the same students and the same teacher as much as possible.
- Students will have frequently scheduled movement breaks throughout the day in order to remove their masks under social distancing guidelines, preferably outside, weather permitting.

- For elementary, students will have breakfast in their classrooms and take lunch home. ~~and all students will be offered 1-2 extra days of food for days at home.~~
- For Jr High, students will have breakfast and lunch in their Eater 101 classrooms. ~~and all students will be offered 1-2 extra days of food for days at home.~~
- Students may not have traditional schedules and may not have specials (music, art, PE, etc) during in-person instruction that would happen in a typical school year. These activities will likely occur during at-home learning.

How/When do students get lunches? (Added 8/3)

- Meal distribution for families will be on Mondays from 3pm-6pm behind J.W. Eater Jr High for RCS students only. As we monitor the traffic and response to this need, we may alter the time to 4pm-6pm?
- Families may pick up one week of meals for each RCS enrolled student. The amount of meals will vary depending on if you are a BlendEd or LEARN Academy student.
- Meals will include frozen (chicken nuggets, pizza, etc), refrigerated and shelf-stable items similar to the spring email distribution.
- During Parent/Teacher/Student conferences on August 13 you will be given a car window sign that you must have in order to pick up meals. If you cannot attend Parent/Teacher/Student conferences, you must make arrangements to pick up the window card as well as your child's device and sign off on mandated documents.
- Tracking meal pickup is different in the spring because we are mandated to mark off each students' name, and the child must be an RCS student.
- If you need someone else to pick up your child's meals, you must give them your child's car window sign. We cannot distribute meals to anyone without a car window sign.

Why is the school day shortened?

- Staff must plan for both BlendEd Academy and LEARN Academy.
- Staff are required to have duty-free 30 minute lunch as well as plan periods. These cannot be accommodated during the current school day since the teacher remains with the students all day.
- In order to keep all students in the same classrooms all day requires us to restructure our regular school schedules.
- More time is needed to clean the building efficiently every day after students are dismissed.
- Wearing a mask for long periods of time will be challenging for all but in particular for young students.

Can I send my student to school every day?

- Not at this time. In order to meet social distancing recommendations, we cannot accommodate all students at school at the same time.
- Some students with IEPs, or with intensive ESL needs, may be able to attend school on the four days per week when teachers are in school. Case managers will contact families directly to inform you if this is an option for your student.

Will six feet social distancing be expected? (Revised 8/3)

- Yes. RCS will establish six feet social distancing in all classrooms, set expectations for staff and students on social distancing, and establish schedules to promote limited interaction with others throughout the day. However, despite our efforts, RCS cannot guarantee that students will never come within six feet of another person during their time at school.
- If a student repeatedly refuses to maintain six feet social distancing, the school may determine that the student can only participate in school through LEARN Academy.

Do I have to send my student to school?

- No. You have three options for schooling:
 1. You may choose for your student to participate in BlendEd Academy.
 2. You may choose to keep your student enrolled at RCS and access LEARN Academy, which is 5 hours of learning a day. LEARN Academy can occur at any time during the day/evening. If you keep your student at home full-time, you must complete this form [LEARN ACADEMY REQUEST](#).

3. Withdraw your student to conduct your own home-schooling, not provided by RCS. If you choose to keep your student at home but do not want your student to complete five hours of e-learning each school day, you must withdraw your student from RCS.

Will RCS supply my student with a mask?

- RCS will supply your student with one cloth mask, provided by ISBE. The mask should be washed each evening to wear the next day. This can be done by handwashing with soap and hot water and air dry.
- RCS will have a limited supply of disposable masks for emergencies but we do not have the means to supply a fresh disposable mask every day for 1,800 students.

May I provide my own mask for my student? (Added 8/3)

- Yes. You are encouraged to have additional masks for your student, and students should wear a clean mask each day of school.
- Typically, cloth masks should be two to three layers thick.
- “Gaiters” are acceptable as long as they are the correct thickness and cover both the mouth and nose.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

What if my student cannot wear a mask or I don't want my student to wear a mask for other reasons?

- In order for your student to not wear a mask and attend school, you must have your physician complete this medical certification form [MASK ACCOMMODATION REQUEST](#), and RCS will then determine if accommodations can be made for your student.
- If it is determined by RCS that your student cannot wear a mask but can attend school, you will need to provide your student with a face shield as an alternative, and your student will be required to wear that face shield. In this scenario, it is possible that your student will be further separated from his/her classmates as face shields are not as effective as masks in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- You have the option to keep your student at home and participate in RCS's LEARN Academy or you may withdraw your student from RCS.

What if my student has a mask at school but refuses to wear it or wear it properly, covering the nose and mouth?

- All people in the school building must wear a mask and wear it properly.
- Students will be directed to wear the mask properly and be given the opportunity to comply.
- If a student repeatedly refuses to wear a mask or not wear a mask properly, the school may determine that the student can only participate in school through LEARN Academy.

What will symptom screenings and temperature checks look like? (Revised 8/3)

- RCS will provide families with a symptom screening and temperature check document [SYMPTOM AND TEMPERATURE SCREENING](#), and families are expected to complete this screening at home before sending their student to school.
- At each school building, staff will conduct temperature checks on all students before entering the building or school bus, **as much as possible**.
- We will not do temperature or symptom screenings when students board school buses.

What will happen if my student has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, or symptoms of COVID-19? (Revised 8/3)

- [Please see the Rantoul City Schools Covid-19 Return to School Health Plan for Families](#).
- First, your student will be isolated and the temperature will be taken again after 10 minutes to ensure it is a fever, rather than overheating. After ten minutes we will recheck symptoms to determine if symptoms are still present.
- Second, if symptoms persist, the family will be contacted to pick up the student, and the student will need to return home immediately.
- Third, the student may be required to stay home for up to 10 calendar days .

- During this time, your student should participate in LEARN Academy and can return to BlendEd Academy after the quarantine time. This situation does not require a student to wait until semester to return to BlendEd Academy.

What happens if a student/staff member in the school is diagnosed with COVID-19? (Revised 8/3)

- [Please see the Rantoul City Schools Covid-19 Return to School Health Plan for Families.](#)
- The school will inform families if a student or staff member assigned to your student's classroom is diagnosed with COVID-19 maintaining confidentiality.
- We cannot reveal the name of the person diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If your student has had "close contact" with the infected person (within six feet for more than 15 minutes), your student will be required to stay home for up to 14 calendar days. During this time, your student should participate in LEARN Academy.
- Close contact means your student was within six feet for more than 15 minutes with the individual who tested positive for COVID-19, or is suspected of having COVID-19.

How will transportation work? (Revised 8/3)

- RCS will continue to offer regular transportation but students will maintain close to six feet social distancing by having approximately 12 students per regular sized bus instead of 70+ students.
- The district is working on developing an updated route schedule with First Student. Approximately 9-11 students can ride the bus at once. Students from the same household can sit together so there could be more than nine on a bus.
- Students will be required to wear masks when on school buses.
- We will not do temperature or symptom screenings when students board the bus.
- When possible, families are encouraged to transport their students to school to avoid high numbers on the bus.
- Students will have assigned seats and must enter the bus in the order that the bus monitor directs.
- If students refuse to follow bus rules including assigned seats and masks, it is possible that the child will be assigned to LEARN Academy for safety reasons.

Will school work be graded?

- Yes. Work completed in BlendEd Academy (both in-person and at-home components) and LEARN Academy will be assessed by teachers.

Will at-home learning work be graded?

- Yes. Unlike this past spring, there is an expectation that all work is completed at a proficient level. If students do not complete work at a proficient level, students will be subject to regular promotion and retention guidelines.

Will the district provide a device for my student to do at-home learning?

- Yes, students will be able to take a device to and from school in order to complete some at-home learning activities. Families and each student must complete this [Device Agreement Form](#) in order to take a device to and from school.
- If you choose the LEARN Academy option, and you do not have a device for your student, the district will be able to check out a device for your student as needed. Families and each student must complete this [Device Agreement Form](#) in order to check out a device from school.

How do I pick up a device for my student? (Added 8/3) (Revised 8/5)

- You must come to the school to check out a device, preferably during Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences on Aug 13th 12:30-8:30.
- The specific device will be issued to you and your student, and you will be required to review and sign the [Device Agreement Form](#).

Will the district provide internet service for my student to use for at-home learning?

- In general, no. However, RCS can support some families on a limited basis. Please contact your student's principal if you have no internet access.
- If you choose to keep your student home to complete LEARN Academy instead of sending your student to school for in-person learning, it is your responsibility to provide internet access. If the district has enough hotspots, we will loan these to families in need. These are limited in supply.

With the increase in on-line learning and virtual platforms, how is the district maintaining privacy and confidentiality? (Added 8/3)

- RCS is taking reasonable measures to ensure confidentiality and security of information exchanged while supporting students.
- [STUDENT USE OF VIRTUAL PLATFORMS](#)

Will attendance be taken and how will this be monitored?

- Yes, attendance must be taken.
- Those students participating in LEARN Academy:
 - contact with the teacher must occur daily—Monday through Friday.
- Those students who participate in the BlendEd Academy:
 - in-person learning attendance days 2 days a week.
 - at-home learning attendance must have contact with the teacher daily for the at-home learning days (3 days a week).

Will students and families have the opportunity to meet teachers before school starts? (Revised 8/3)

- ~~Yes, RCS will provide two days for families and students to meet their teachers individually during scheduled appointments on August 13th and 14th. Weather permitting, this will be held outside. Masks and 6-ft social distancing is required.~~
- August 13th 12:30-8:30 is Parent/Teacher/Student conference day. Families and students will have the opportunity to schedule individual appointments with their student's teacher. Each school will contact you to make these appointments. At JW Eater these appointments will be scheduled with the Eater 101 teacher. Masks and 6ft social distancing is required.
- Please do not bring school supplies. These will be provided by the district. Your child will need the set of school supplies you purchase for use at home. Supplies at school will be kept in individual baskets with your child's name on it and will only be used by your child.
- The [Device Agreement Form](#) for taking a device home will be discussed and completed.
- The teacher will explain what school days look like and many specifics about the at-home learning piece to include what systems students will use and passwords so you can monitor your student's progress and how/when to communicate with the teacher.
- For those who choose LEARN Academy, the teacher will discuss what those days look like and the expectations.
- Lastly, the teacher will answer any questions you may have

How will RCS determine if my student has an "A" day or "B" day schedule and can I change that?

- Your household should have all students in that household on the same schedule. Since buses can only hold a limited number of students, we will start with JW Eater bus students and split those groups in half. Then all connected households in the district will be connected to attend in-person on the same day.
- For schools and households with no busing, the staff will divide students in half and connect households.
- After families are informed as to their student's assignment, there will be an opportunity BEFORE SCHOOL begins to contact the school to request a change based on emergency needs such as daycare.

How do we know students are doing their at-home learning work?

- Because school work will be assessed, Skyward will have a record of your student's work completion, and families can access Skyward from home.
- Families can access their student's Google Classroom accounts (your student should share this password with you) to see work that is assigned and whether that work has been turned in.

- Contact your student's teacher.

What if I'm not home to monitor my student's at-home learning work? (Revised 8/3)

- We know this will be a challenge for many families, but at-home learning work is designed to be completed at any time and to be completed independently by the student.
- Students participating in BlendEd Academy will receive coaching from teachers on how to complete the at-home learning work independently.
- Teachers will be available for appointments after in-person student attendance hours and on Mondays.

Are parents/guardians or outside visitors allowed in the building? (Added 8/3)

- In general, no. We must limit the number of people in the building in order to reduce possible exposure for all students and staff.
- If a parent/guardian has a scheduled meeting and cannot attend the meeting remotely (such as an IEP meeting), the parent/guardian must go through a temperature check, symptom screening, and wear a mask in order to enter the building.]

Will the school/s need to shut down again? (Added 8/3)

- RCS will follow all applicable guidance from CUPHD, IDPH, and ISBE. If a shutdown is mandated, we will need to close schools and shift all students to LEARN Academy.
- If we are unable to fully staff our schools due to staff illness or staff quarantine, we may have to shift students to LEARN Academy. This may be done on a class-by-class or school-by-school basis.

Where can I get a revised school calendar that includes updated holidays and a listing of A and B days? (Added 8/X)

- [Please follow this link.](#)
- Please note, it is possible that we will return to full-time in-person learning this school year.

How will students have drink breaks? (Added 8/3)

- Students will be provided labeled water bottles that will be washed and refilled daily.

JW EATER SPECIFIC FAQS

What will be different at Eater this year (during this reopening plan)?

- Most students will remain in one classroom for all classes instead of changing classrooms.
- Students will be grouped into mini-teams of three teachers for instruction. For most students, two of three subjects will be “live-streamed” from another classroom.
- Students will have only Science OR Social Studies at any one time. Students will have both during the course of the school year.
- Students will not use lockers because they will be staying in one classroom for the day, and social distancing would be very difficult to maintain in hallways if we continue to use lockers.
- Students will not have the same choices for specials. Most specials instruction will occur during at-home learning time.
- Students may be pulled for small group or individual instruction or services as long as social distancing can be maintained. For example, students may be pulled for social work/counseling, speech therapy, reading interventions, etc.

Will my student have Physical Education?

- Not as an in-school class. Students will be with Physical Education teachers for activities for about 20 minutes a day. Students will have some assigned Physical Education activities to complete as part of their at-home homework.
- Students will not need to change clothes or use locker rooms for Physical Education.

Will my student have Band class? (Revised 8/3)

- Not as an in-school class. Students enrolled in Band will have daily assigned band activities to complete as part of their at-home learning homework.
- Completion of remote learning band activities as well as participation in some live-streamed lessons or activities may be required.

Will there be sports? (Revised 8/3)

- Eater will follow the guidelines of the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) whenever possible. When the IESA releases their return-to-play guidelines, we will determine the feasibility of beginning sports on a sport-to-sport basis.
- As of July 31, the IESA has allowed the following fall sports: Cross Country, Softball, and Baseball. JW Eater will be sharing information to families about tryouts and practices.
- In order to participate in athletics, parent/guardian and student must complete this form prior to any tryouts or any practice. [ATHLETICS FORM](#)
- Boys and Girls Basketball and Volleyball have been shifted to second semester.
- There are no changes to Track and Field at this time.

Will there be activities?

- Yes. Similar to sports, we will determine the feasibility of each activity on a case-by-case basis. At this time, most activities will need to be hosted remotely.

What will arrival at school look like? (Revised 8/3)

- School begins, meaning students are in classes and ready to learn, at 8:15.
- Students should not arrive at school earlier than five minutes prior to the start time of the school day.
- Students will be assigned to an entrance based on their mini-team assignment. Students will be expected to line up outside of their assigned entrance. We will use multiple entrances for each grade level. Lines will be marked with six feet spacing.
- Prior to entering the building, all students must have their face masks in place properly.
- Students will enter the building one at a time through their assigned entrance. As students enter, they may undergo a ~~symptom screening and/or~~ temperature check.
- Once students enter the building, they will go directly to their Eater 101 classroom for the day.

What will dismissal from school look like? (Revised 8/3)

- Dismissal for most students is at 12:15.
- Dismissal will be similar to previous years. First, we will stagger dismissal for bus riders. Then, once hallways are clear, we will stagger dismissal for walkers and car riders.
- In general, students will be expected to exit the same door they used for entrance to the building.

How will you maintain social distancing during passing periods?

- We will no longer have passing periods where all students are in the hallways at the same time.
- Because most students will remain in the same classroom with the same students all day, there will not be typical passing periods.

How will the restroom and drink breaks work?

- Students will be provided water bottles that will be washed and refilled daily.
- Restroom access will continue as normal. Like previous years, classes will have scheduled restroom breaks, and most students will use the restroom during these times.
- We have increased soap access in restrooms and added paper towel dispensers.
- All classrooms will have hand sanitizer stations.