

# roots & wings COMMUNITY SCHOOL



August 28, 2020

Dear RWCS Community,

Today we are wrapping up our second week of school! It sounds like many of the students and families have begun to settle into this “new” school routine, and we appreciate all the patience being shown by the students, parents, and the school staff as we have worked out some of the start-up bugs. It appears we have most of the technical glitches resolved or are making the necessary adjustments. If families are still having issues with internet connectivity, accessing student materials, childcare, etc., please let us know. The State has been working hard to make sure parents that need to work have appropriate childcare, and have additional resources available to help provide and potentially assist in paying for childcare. Please let us know if you have childcare issues and we can get you in touch with the correct people.

Because of the Governor's press conference and news stories about various districts choosing to reopen or remain in online formats, we have received questions about our plan. As we announced before we began school two weeks ago in the online/remote learning format, we will continue in that format through Labor Day and THEN begin to evaluate bringing students back in a Hybrid format. We also said we will give families a two-week notice before we would make that change. We are staying with that plan until further notice. The Governor and PED are allowing individual districts and state-authorized charters (what RWCS is) to choose if they move out of the online/remote format or remain in that format. Schools may begin Hybrid after Labor Day if they choose to, and they meet state criteria and have a PED approved learning plan, but schools are NOT required to move to Hybrid learning at that time. This is the short answer to all those questions.

To be as transparent as possible, I want you all to know we at RWCS want nothing more than to fill our school with students and staff and return to our in-person, Expeditionary Learning inspired model, that we are known for! That day will come, it just isn't going to be quickly and I cannot tell you an exact timeframe for that happening, no one can. In the meantime, the amazing RWCS teaching staff we have is taking as many components of EL and transferring them online the best we can and we will continue to improve in that area.

*Jon Orris, Director*  
*Veronica Garcia, Office Manager*

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Every week and it has just been switched to every other week, I along with all Charter Directors and Superintendents in the State have a Zoom meeting with the Secretary of Education Stewart and other PED leaders and the State Health Department to get updates and to plan for the safe re-entry of your students back into school. These meetings give me the latest updates on what we can and can't do and the resources PED and the State are providing to families and schools, so we can share with everyone and best inform our decisions on the local level.

The decision to move to the Hybrid model is not just a matter of flipping a switch but will involve staff, the Governing Council, and our families. First and foremost, in that decision to return is the health and safety of our students, staff, and families. We have to make sure our re-entry plan is approved and followed, which includes staff training, all safety measures in place with all the what-if plans developed, that we have enough PPE for all staff and students, that our custodian is trained in the proper CDC and state guidelines for cleaning the school, etc., etc. In a small school like ours, there are additional challenges as our staff doesn't wear just one hat! For example, when we move into the Hybrid model your classroom teacher is not just responsible for educating the students they are instructing in-person in the classroom that day, but also the other half that is at home that day, and the students that are choosing to be online for the full year. We don't have a separate set of teachers coordinating online and in-person as larger districts do. So when we do make the decision (and we will involve families in that decision through surveys, etc.) to move to Hybrid, we want everyone to be ready because the last thing we want is to move too quickly and end up having an outbreak in the school and having to immediately shut down and return to online/remote learning with sick staff, students, and family members. One only has to look at what happened to some of the schools that opened fully and too quickly in other states, now they are back online and in quarantine with sick staff and families. Thank you all for your continued patience and input as we move forward using the most up-to-date, and scientifically-based information available to us. We are all in this together, and together we will overcome!

A reminder: the top three things you and your family can do to get your children back in school is: 1.) Wash your hands, 2.) Wear a mask, 3.) Socially distance.

School office hours will continue 9:00 am – 5:00 pm on school days and we can be reached at (575) 586-2076

Sincerely,

*Jon Orris*

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