

roots & wings COMMUNITY SCHOOL



February 5, 2021

Dear RWCS Community,

I want to start this week by clarifying one point that I failed to directly mention last week in talking about schools reopening and that is that it is a LOCAL decision on whether a school moves into a form of in-person or remains remote, this will not be mandated by the State. RWCS is continuing on our plan of reevaluating before Spring Break to decide how we will finish the year. We will send another parent survey out to help guide our decision and to update the options that are available at that time.

Just a reminder that this Wednesday, February 10th, is a Regular School Day for all students and staff. Art and Music classes will occur as scheduled. Just a reminder, these are required school days and classes.

State Testing

New Mexico along with several other states is requesting a waiver from the Federal Government to opt-out of the End of Year State Testing Program because of the continued COVID pandemic and knowing the state would NOT meet the required 95% participation in the testing program the NM Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) for 3rd-8th graders. Because of this schools may choose to opt-in on a voluntary testing program, or opt-out altogether (parents can request to opt their child in). RWCS has decided to **Opt-Out** this year for several reasons:

1. Tests would have to be given **in-person**, at the school, in small groups (5:1 ratio) with all the usual test security and rigidity. The logistics of this considering we are still in full remote learning would be difficult and very time-consuming.
2. This would be voluntary testing so parents could still opt out creating inconsistency in testing and additional logistics and scheduling issues for school staff.
3. The data collected from the tests cannot be used to make “High-Stakes” decisions on the student and there is nothing to compare to last year, and next year's testing can NOT be compared back to those that took the test this year since it was done in a unique year.
4. We will still be using our I-Ready assessments which include the End-of-Year assessments, plus teachers will be evaluating students as usual based on school philosophy.

*Jon Orris, Director
Veronica Garcia, Office Manager*

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5. We would prefer to continue teaching during the weeks testing would cause us to basically close down. We feel that time with teachers and classmates is much more valuable for the students, especially this year, than any limited data we would get from this snapshot testing.

We are required to allow parents to opt-in to the testing, even though the school is not planning to participate. If a parent wants to opt-in their student, they will have to be tested In-Person, at the school and the parent will be required to provide transportation and other logistics. You must opt-in by February 12, 2021. If you have any questions please call Jon Orris, Director, and District Test Coordinator (DTC) at (575) 586-2076 during regular school hours.

IMPORTANT: ALL 3rd – 8th Grade Parents and Students (Supplies will be used starting February 10th)

There is an art supply pickup happening NOW at TiLT (Peg's house) (215 La Posta Rd, Taos) and in the Greenhouse at the School. Taos area students should pick up at TiLT and Questa/Lama students at the school. The kits will consist of art supplies for the Wednesday required art classes with Sarah Newberry. In addition, thanks to our friends at Twirl Taos there will also be a mask-making kit that you will pick up at the same time. **PLEASE only take kits for students in 3rd – 8th grade, the K-2 students already did the mask making and have the supplies they need for their art classes.**

Chess Club has Openings

RWCS Chess Club has openings for any student that would like to join! The Chess Club meets Monday and Fridays from 5 – 6 pm via Google Meets with Sara Saint-Hogan. If interested please contact Ms. Sara at ssainthogan@rwcs.org.

The next Governing Council Meeting is February 16th at 5 pm. G.C. Meeting Agendas with the Google Meet link are posted on the school [website](#) 72 hours before the meeting. All are welcome to attend.

I hope you all have a good weekend and get to enjoy some of the recent snow!

Sincerely,

Jon Orris

Jon Orris, Director
[school calendar](#)

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