



**ROCHESTER**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS  
PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE

Rochester Community Schools

Dear RCS Families,

As our students successfully complete their first full week of school, we remain grateful for the support of our entire school community. Thank you for working together and putting the needs of our students first.

The following includes information and community updates regarding school quarantine guidance, busing, and food services.

**School quarantine guidance.** We are pleased that the OCHD is working to balance COVID-19 transmission risks with the impact of quarantine periods on student learning. The Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) provided updated [school quarantine guidance](#) on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021. An updated list of [frequently asked questions](#) is also available on our website.

**Food services.** Throughout the pandemic, Chartwells and our dedicated food service team worked exceedingly hard to meet the nutritional needs of our students. We appreciate their efforts but must now ask our community for some grace.

Chartwells is experiencing supply-chain interruptions due to limited product availability, nationwide transportation challenges, and labor shortages among suppliers. While it is our intention to serve menu items as scheduled, these challenges may require food substitutions. When necessary, we will replace unavailable scheduled menu items with similar alternatives. Every effort will be made to communicate substitutions when possible so families can plan accordingly.

Please know that we will continue to provide wholesome meals that are consistent with USDA nutrition standards and meet student needs.

**Transportation services.** As you may be aware, the national shortage of bus drivers has impacted RCS transportation capabilities. Although we have been working closely with Durham School Services to support staffing, it has been a continued challenge to maintain consistent coverage.

This week, staffing shortages caused us to make the difficult decision to temporarily pause bus service for middle-school athletics. Thankfully, our families quickly partnered together to facilitate carpools and ride-sharing so student athletics could continue as scheduled.

We are sorry for this inconvenience and are doing all we can to meet the transportation needs of our school community. Many of our drivers have graciously taken on extra routes to help with the situation, and we are truly grateful for their efforts. Recruiting events and job fairs have provided some success; however, the driver shortage remains. Currently the district is operating with 94 bus drivers; 110 drivers are ideal.

To attract credentialed drivers, sign-on bonuses are currently being offered by Durham School Services, and RCS is matching bonuses through October 2021. Durham is offering a \$1,000 sign-on bonus to fully credentialed drivers; a \$750 sign-on bonus to drivers who have a CDL, but lack the school bus endorsements; and a \$500 sign-on bonus to drivers with no current credentials. With the district match, bonuses would increase to \$2,000, \$1,500, and \$1,000, respectively.

We will keep our families informed as we continue to explore opportunities to work with other vendors and navigate through transportation challenges. If you or someone you know is interested in the rewarding profession of driving a school bus, [applications](#) are available.

Thank you for your patience as we collaborate with our partners, to include Chartwells Food Services and Durham School Services, to meet the needs of RCS families.

As always, we appreciate you continuing to encourage your student to wear a mask; get vaccinated if eligible; wash hands frequently; and stay home when sick.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Robert Shaner  
Superintendent