

**ROCHESTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Rochester, Massachusetts  
16 Pine Street - Rochester, MA 02770**

**MEETING MINUTES  
October 7, 2021  
Meeting Held in Hybrid Format**

Regular meeting of the Rochester School Committee was held on Thursday – October 7, 2021 at 6:30pm.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sharon Hartley– Chairperson, Anne Fernandes – Vice-Chairperson, Robin Rounseville, Jason Chisolm and Katherine Duggan (all in person)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michael S. Nelson (in-person), Superintendent of Schools; Howard Barber (in-person), Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations; Derek Medeiros (remote), Principal; Charles West (in-person), Assistant Principal; Diana Russo, Administrative Assistant to Supt.; teachers, parents and members of the press and public. (remote)

Meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm., by Chairperson Hartley. Ms. Hartley introduced the Rochester School Committee members and stated in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, the Agenda has been set, the meeting is being video-taped, and unless there are any emergencies that need to be added, the Agenda will be followed as outlined. Chairperson Hartley stated that this meeting is being conducted in a hybrid format and the School Committee and Administrators and attending in person at Rochester Memorial School, located 16 Pine Street, Rochester, MA 02770 and Public Access is available through zoom. Superintendent Nelson also introduced the school administrators in attendance.

**I. Approval of Minutes:**

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Session: September 2, 2021

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the September 2, 2021 minutes as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

Motion Passed

**IV. General**

**A. Green Communities Grant Update**

Mr. Andrew Daniel, Facilities Director from Rochester updated the School Committee and Administration on the Green Communities Grant, he reported that the second batch of Grant funding through the Green Communities, he reported that this batch was \$176,000 and the main focus was on Rochester Memorial School, he expressed that some of the money is being used for air sealing due to insulation issues, he reported that some of the lighting will also be updated, he reported that the entire school will not be updated with this batch of money, however he is working on getting more funds. He expressed that the school alone is getting about \$300,000 of energy upgrades which includes automatic sensors and lighting. He reported that everything has been approved through Eversource and the work should begin soon.

Ms. Hartley expressed that not only will we be making improvements to our school but we will also benefit from long term savings. Mr. Daniel agree with Ms. Hartley and reported that the new lighting will have substantial savings in the school's electricity.

Ms. Hartley thanked Mr. Daniel for coming to the school committee meeting and updating the committee and she expressed they look forward to hearing more updates.

Superintendent Nelson also thanked Mr. Daniel for the good news and his ongoing support.

## **B. Approval of School Improvement Plan**

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

*"As you may all recall – at our recent Joint School Committee – with the support of my team I presented an overview of the Acceleration Roadmap that our schools will use moving forward to drive teaching, learning, and student outcomes. Additionally, we presented survey data from our parents and guardians regarding how they perceived not only their child's sense of belonging as related to school – but their general impressions on sense of safety, connection to school, and teaching and learning.*

*Furthermore, the leadership team made a presentation to the school committees on the work that has been done to meet the strategic outcomes of Vision2023 and specific targets to hit by the end of year four of the strategic plan.*

*Tonight – Principal Medeiros will present a two-year school improvement plan that we believe aligns with the strategic plan of the school system – but is localized to Rochester Memorial School. We are asking that the school committee review the school improvement plan and approve it tonight."*

Principal Medeiros presented the School Improvement Plan for the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school years. Please refer to Appendix A.

### **School Committee Feedback:**

Ms. Duggan expressed she was very pleased to see world languages mentioned in the school improvement plan, she expressed she understands we can't start off offering it to every student, but just have the exposure and perspective is so important. She expressed that any effort being made to in that particular area would be fantastic.

Mr. Chisolm expressed that Tabor Academy would be a great resource to build on Ms. Duggan's point, he expressed Tabor is a school within our community that has a diverse group of students from all over the world that could certainly share first hand from perspectives with our community and our students from their native cultures. He encouraged our administration to reach out to Tabor and to build that bridge to be able to collaborate with them. Mr. Medeiros expressed that that's a great suggestion and that administration will certainly look into it, he expressed that as an administrative team they have talked about just that, using technology is great but let's not forget about our surrounding community, not only here in the Tri-Town but also our neighbors who can give our kids great experiences as well, great suggestion.

Ms. Hartley expressed that she's excited about the School Improvement Plan as well as its connection to the Strategic Plan and she was excited about seeing new members on the school council, and she expressed she would love to hear as time goes on how they are involved in helping this come alive. She expressed that the State created the need for School Councils and



there were varying reviews when that happened but from my perspective it becomes a really nice connection to the community and my dream for Rochester Memorial School Council would be that we have senior citizen member at some point, she expressed that she knows it's built into the plan, but it's hard to find one to serve, she suggested maybe when she's done with school committee she can be the senior citizen member on the council. She expressed that she will also mention when she next meets with the members of the Council on Aging, she expressed she feels it's a very nice connection for students. Ms. Hartley requested that Mr. Medeiros update the School Committee from time to time on the plan and how things are going.

Ms. Rounseville recalls years ago when she was a member of the School Council having two community representatives and one of them was a senior citizen. She expressed it was a great connection to the community and a great asset to the school. Ms. Hartley expressed that it goes both ways it's great for the school and also great for the senior community.

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes to approve the School Improvement Plan for 21-23 as presented

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

Motion Passed

### **C. Approval of Student Handbook**

Ms. Hartley expressed that this was presented at the last meeting in September and edits were suggested and have been made and she expressed that she believes everyone has had a chance to review all the edits. She expressed that at this time the student handbook should be ready for approval.

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

*"At our last school committee meeting here in Rochester – we provided the first draft of the Rochester Memorial School student handbook. Since then we received feedback from members and have provided the school committee an updated student handbook. We are asking the committee to review the student handbook and approve it."*

Mr. Nelson did mention that there is a possibility that we might have to bring the handbook back for more revisions based off some of the changing guidance or mandates due to COVID-19, the most pressing is around the mask mandate, which has been extended until November 1<sup>st</sup>, however if that changes we may have to bring it back.

Mr. Medeiros briefly reviewed the Student Handbook with the School Committee. Please refer to Appendix B.

### **School Committee Feedback:**

Ms. Hartley asked if the Handbook would go up on the website within the next few days. Mr. Medeiros reported that yes once it's approved he will work with the website coordinator to get it posted tomorrow. Mr. Medeiros also reported that it will be posted in his newsletter the "Medeiros Minutes" and it will be shared with families through blackboard connect with an acknowledgment form to indicate that they have read the handbook.

Ms. Fernandes expressed that it looks really great. Mr. Medeiros thanked her for her comment.

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to approve the Student Handbook for the 21-22 School Year as presented

SECOND: by Mr. Chisolm



#### **D. Literacy Discussion**

Ms. Hartley expressed that the intent was to have the literacy discussion tonight, however because we are missing a really important school leader, the Asst. Supt. of Teaching and Learning, Ms. Hartley proposed with the committee's approval that we have part I of the discussion tonight and part II at our November meeting. She expressed that it was a hefty article for us to read, so it would make sense and it will probably help us to dig in to the article and help us and then talk about next steps and how our district can keep on a continuous improvement of teaching reading to our children. Ms. Hartley opened the discussion by making a few comments. Ms. Hartley made the following statement, *"I have been around school personnel for about 40 years, so when I read the article, and the article provides a lot of great information but it has an unfortunate name, the title of the article is What's Wrong with the Way Our Schools Teach Reading. But once you've read the article and the link is on our agenda, I think you get a look what has gone on in four decades of teaching reading, and it's been quite a time, when I read it, it went from my years of learning to teach, then teaching, the article talks about phonics, guided reading and the article also talks about balance literacy and when you get through the article the first thing I thought was "How incredibly complicated", the discipline of teaching reading of teaching literacy, how incredibly complicated it is, the other disciplines are much more clear cut on how we teach and how we provide successful learning for children, but reading, especially after reading this particular article, how complicated is the debate about reading and what makes sense and how do we help children to become readers and what really caught my eye as I started to go to other articles, I found this quote and I think this is such a great quote by Emily Cantford in an interview and what she said was, "decades of research have shown that reading doesn't come naturally, the human brain is not hard wired to read, it is hard wired to learn to speak but not to read, so children have to be taught explicitly how to connect letters and sounds" and then our article goes on to talk about how the cognitive researchers and scientists have looked hard at reading and have come up with some pieces that are scientifically true about reading, we have had so many theories and so many ideas, so many thoughts, the idea of saying does it look right does it sound right, the three questions, the whole language in the 80's and the reading recovery, whole word, learning to look at the whole word or visual memory, matching sounds to letters, learning the sounds and learning the groups of sounds, but the cognitive scientists have come up with what they call the science of reading which is very important for all of us who are teaching children to read to know the science of reading to be able to use those pieces and use those with our children."*

Ms. Fernandes made the following statement:

*"It's a whole field of very fascinating and updated research, the science of reading and because science is changing, things are very different from when Sharon and I were learning to be teachers, it's very different now and thinking about that change means that we need to keep our own knowledge and our own pedagogy updated as well, and I can tie that to the science of dyslexia and just making sure that we are doing the best for our kids. That was a great article."*

Mr. Nelson made the following statement:

*"My initial take away is right away I'm reminded of when teachers talk about licensures and when you become licensed, and one of the first questions is did you have to take the MTEL's and typically the second questions is how many times did you have to take the Foundations of Reading MTEL, which is specifically what we're talking about today, which is teaching students to read and understanding the A-Z's behind it, and more than not you will hear teachers say it was the hardest test for them to pass, it took a lot more coursework and understanding to get to the point to pass it, so I think that just makes the point of a lot of our comments, that this is probably one of the*



*hardest skillsets not only to initial develop but also to maintain as a teacher. We usually talk about literacy with our youngest learners, but this literacy as we know it is important throughout life, so when I think about my major takeaways, I think this article just emphasizes the importance of understanding the science of reading and I think this article did a nice job of giving you the context or frameworks to think of some of the major thought processes around literacy and then the differing positions in them, and I think even when they closed the article one of the authors double down which I appreciated, which makes the point of how polarizing this topic can be and the differing opinions. I think from my point of view, as the article points out this is a nationwide debate, and they gave us some of the data around it in terms of struggles some of the grade levels have here in the US. I know when I talk to other Superintendents whether in small or large groups, we're not alone in terms of wanting to do the best we can around literacy, I think this is one of the most dominant conversations, I always hear "yes we are looking at our literacy plan and at our programming" and if you read this article I understand a little bit more why people are saying that, because there are so many differing opinions on it, it really cements for me the need for us as a school committee to have this type of ongoing conversations, of understanding the science behind literacy and teaching students how to read, but also really committing to ongoing professional development for all of us, and my third commitment that I think about here is ownership, and when I say ownership from this part of the programming, I mean from everybody, school committee members, superintendent's office, administrators, teachers, staff, etc., because I think that's the way you develop a philosophy on literacy but also to be able to know that might change based on what you're seeing in your district and data and student needs. So I think it's a great article that summarizes a lot of other conversations that we've had in terms of talking about what we are currently doing, I know that we have articulated that our Literacy Plan has not been updated in some time and we are getting very close to release our proposal to move forward to take a look at that to make sure that we are taking actions to do some of the pieces that I just articulated. This conversation is just another piece that makes sure that our lense is back on teaching and learning and not simply the pandemic so I really appreciate you sharing this article and encouraging the committee to have an open discussion."*

Ms. Fernandes expressed that Dr. Pearson-Campbell has mentioned several times someone that she has integrated into teacher work around reading, do we know who that is? Mr. Nelson expressed that they are still in the process of cementing that, he reported that the person that is a go is his coach Ruth Gilbert Whitner, she is a Trained Coaching for Success trainer through the Department of Education and he thought it was important to have an outside facilitator to help design the planning for success model, and then from there as Dr. Pearson-Campbell mentioned we may introduce some outside reading consultants to help drive the conversations. Ms. Fernandes asked for a timeline, Mr. Nelson is hopeful that the action plan would be presented at the next Joint School Committee meeting.

Ms. Rounseville expressed that it was a great article to read and as she read it she shared it with her husband and they remembered that when they were children they had a separate phonics teacher and then they also talked about their own children's experience and approaches to learning to read and how different they were. Ms. Rounseville expressed that if anyone else had anything else to share she would be appreciative.

Ms. Fernandes reported that the links within the article are also very helpful and powerful.

Ms. Duggan expressed that from what her second grader is being exposed to and from what she read in the article it seems like Rochester Memorial is using the science based research model, which is great, but she asked if someone could confirm what's being used at Rochester Memorial.



Ms. Hartley reported that her three takeaways from the science research were 1, phonics and decoding, 2, word recognition and 3 teachers and students having an understanding of the English language. Ms. Hartley expressed that it's important to have almost a "research guru" in our district to make sure we see the most recent research and making sure that we all share that, talk out it and have time to understand it and use it.

Ms. Fernandes reported that Rochester Memorial has been using Reading Street and Guided Reading for some time now, but we've had Foundations in the building for about five to six years and that's the piece that the phonological approach that this article is endorsing, which is what Ms. Duggan's second grader is being exposed to, which is wonderful. Mr. Nelson also reiterated that Rochester Memorial is using phonics which is what was supported and endorsed in the article we reviewed. Mr. Nelson also expressed that the other piece is *"what's out tier I approach to reading, meaning for all kids when they are in the general education setting, and then looking at tier II and tier III interventions based off of data and how often are we looking at this data"*, he expressed these are all the important questions that we need to keep having. He expressed that the acceleration roadmap is routed in that ideology, continuous cycle of idealization of data, looking at what the data is telling you in terms of tier I interventions and then what supports do teachers and staff members need from an adult learning point or professional development point to make sure that their skillset is what it needs to be to achieve the outcomes that we are looking for.

Mr. Chisolm asked what is the alert that we get to or the course of action that we take when we find a student or a teacher who is struggling, he expressed that in his mind it's almost two-sided, if the teacher needs support in implementation practices then we need to be aware of that and have a remedy for it, and then with a student for example they are doing well in tier I then they start to struggle in tier II, what do we do, and what are the alerts so that we know we need to act.

Mr. Nelson expressed that's when we look at data points and screening tools. He reported that recently we spoke about our universal screening tool being AIMSweb, MCAS being a data point and then down to specific reading assessment, teacher data, informal data etc., he also expressed that as an administrator and a teacher you can look at that data in a few different ways, look at the class as whole, look at the grade level as a whole, and then make decisions around the different tiers and interventions. He reported as a building administrator you should also be looking at trends not only for that year but over a few year span. He said for example if we see a specific grade and class consistently showing us the same trend, maybe at that point we need to think about offering professional development to that particular teacher or grade level, based off what the data is telling us, or maybe it's time to do a certain type of training or professional development all over again, maybe it hasn't been done in a while and all our staff could benefit from it, he reported that these are types of things we are constantly looking at.

Ms. Rouseville asked if our sister schools are using the same reading programs. Mr. Nelson expressed that everyone has similarities and differences, all the school are using Foundations in terms of the over ache ring literacy programming. He expressed that when they start looking at the literacy plan, that's really the work that needs to be done first, which would be data collection, look at what you're doing, what are the interventions, what is the data telling you, how are people are feeling in terms of where we are at, and then setting priority goals in terms of moving forward, and that Literacy Plan would be a K-12 Plan.

Ms. Hartley thanked everyone for their thoughtful questions and comments.

## **V. New Business**



## **1. Financial Report**

Mr. Barber reported that as of June 30, 2021 the Rochester Memorial School has a \$0.00 balance available in the general funds appropriated in the 2021 Fiscal Year. He reported that per his Data Budget Report presented to the school committee we are able to identify how our funds are currently encumbered and expended. He reported that this final report is being utilized to support for Fiscal Year end June 30, 2021 annually submitted End of Year Report. Mr. Barber reported that he will have reports for 2022 Fiscal Year.

Mr. Barber also reported on facilities and food service.

Ms. Hartley expressed that the seal coating on the parking lot looks great and she's appreciative it was able to get done this summer.

Ms. Fernandes asked if Mr. Jones is involved in the Green Communities Grant with Mr. Daniel. Mr. Nelson expressed that Mr. Jones is involved with the rollout of the plan and him and Mr. Daniel will be working together.

## **E. Personnel**

Mr. Nelson reviewed two personnel changes/additions with the School Committee. Lea Sims and Janet LePage the two new lunch aides/paraprofessionals began working Ms. Sims on 9/15/2021 and Janet LePage on 8/31/2021.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Ms. Hartley reported that she attended a few meetings this past month, she attended the Joint School Committee meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, she reported they had a very good meeting. She was also part of the team working on the edits and revisions of the Student Handbook and she appreciates all the hard work that everyone did on that. She reported she has been working with Mr. Nelson on the support staff negotiations and met twice this week with that group. She reported because she was here at Rochester Memorial during two afternoons this week she was able to watch student dismissal and she was very impressed, she observed a very calm, well organized processed that exuded a comfortable and well-mannered school. She expressed that it seems like things are going well in that regard. Mr. West agreed and thanked Ms. Hartley for her comments.

## **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Superintendent Nelson made the following statement:

*"The Central Office report will be brief this evening. As I referenced earlier in this meeting – the recent presentations at the Joint School Committee regarding the Acceleration Roadmap and the Strategic Plan was important from my perspective. I say that because – we feel those two presentations refocused our school community on teaching and learning. While our teachers and staff members continue to move teaching and learning forward – ensuring COVID-19 safety remains a priority.*

*Since the last time we met – we have received and started rolling out air purifiers to be placed in all of our learning spaces here at Rochester Memorial and our other schools – this is another important piece of the puzzle to ensure high air quality for all individuals in our school buildings.*

*In addition, our COVID-19 testing program started on September 27<sup>th</sup>. With the support of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education resources – we have a testing team up and running to utilize as appropriate. Testing can only be conducted with staff members or students who have consented in writing.*



*This team offers symptomatic and test and stay options as needed. To date, we have had 14 positive COVID-19 cases at Rochester Memorial School since the start of school and we currently have five positive individuals isolating. It is critical that we continue to follow safety and health safeguards to prevent the spread of the virus in our schools.*

*Also, as communicated by the Department of Education and my office - the mask mandate has been extended until November 1<sup>st</sup> by the Commissioner of Education. I will continue to update the school community on any developments as they occur.*

*Last – but not least as the Tri-Town community is aware – we are currently working in alignment with a drinking water warning and boil water advisory. I have shared relevant information with our stakeholders and will continue to do so as we manage this situation. It is important to note that Rochester Memorial School is not directly impacted due to operating on well water – but our other five schools are adjusting operations to adhere to all necessary precautions.*

*Before I close – Robin – last meeting you asked me how many home schooled students we had this year and I indicated I would follow up with you next meeting...as of today we have seven students who have approved homeschool plans. This compares to 28 students last year, and 8 the year before.”*

Ms. Rounseville thanked Mr. Nelson for his report and also for all his communication about what’s going on at school, she expressed that it’s very helpful to get all the emails that the staff receives so that we are kept well informed. She expressed “it’s so nice when someone asks a question that you actually know the answer”. She also inquired about testing and how it’s done, she inquired if testing is needed does the testing nurse get dispatched to that particular campus. Mr. Nelson reported that we have actually been very fortunate and we have had a testing nurse at each school, plus the Testing Coordinator, Cassandra.

Ms. Rounseville inquired if the newly increase to the substitute rates has brought any relief and have we been able to add any substitutes. Mr. Medeiros reported that yes the increase in pay has certainly helped, he reported that they now have four or five regular substitutes that they use on a consistent basis when teachers and staff are absent.

Mr. Chisolm inquired about testing and asked if Mr. Nelson could explain how the program works. Mr. Nelson explained that when we view a need to offer testing we would move forward but we do need written consent from the parents, he expressed that verbal consent is not enough in these instances. He expressed that there is no deadline to opt in or out, parents can do it at any time during the school year. Mr. Nelson reported that around the procedure, we have maintained our isolation rooms which have actually ended up being extremely helpful now for testing.

### **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT:**

Mr. Medeiros reported on the following:

- Staff participated in our first building based professional learning community day on Thursday September 16th. The focus for these grade level meetings included training on how to utilize the book sign out software associated with our bookroom as well as data analysis timeline/processes for preliminary embargoed MCAS data.
- On Wednesday September 22<sup>nd</sup> staff participated in our first half day of professional development. The professional development workshops that were offered to staff included IXL introductory training, para-educator course – taking behavioral data, Atlas Rubicon unit development, specialist PLC and Aimsweb progress monitoring.



- The Rochester Memorial School Council met on Wednesday September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3:15 p.m. At this first meeting of the new school year the council reviewed and approved the new two-year Rochester Memorial School Improvement plan.
- School picture day took place on Thursday September 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday September 24<sup>th</sup>. Picture make-up day will be scheduled through Lifetouch and that date and time will be shared with all families. Updated lunch cards will be printed by Lifetouch to include student photos.
- All B.O.Y. Aimsweb math & ELA as well as Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments have been completed in all grade levels. This data will be critical in planning instruction for all grade level teams. The RMS SEL team has also analyzed our current attendance data and identified our chronically absent students.
- On Thursday September 30<sup>th</sup> we received MCAS parent/guardian reports from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Reports will be sent home to families sometime in early October.

Ms. Hartley requested that Mr. Medeiros update the school committee every other month on enrollment numbers. Mr. Medeiros agreed.

For more information, please refer to “RSC 10072021 Principal Report”.

## **VIII. School Committee**

### **B. Committee Reports**

1. Budget Subcommittee-NONE
2. ORR District School Committee – Mr. Chisolm reported that they spoke about the school reopening, he reported that there was a special guest from the Youth Football Association asking about use of the Multi-Purpose Field, he reported that it was a healthy debate and at the end it was approved with conditions. There was also an update on the Guidance Report and they are looking at next steps.
3. SMEC- Ms. Fernandes reported they met September 30<sup>th</sup>, approved minutes from previous meeting, reorganized of the board of directors was done, staff appointments and reductions were reviewed, the operating spending plan was reviewed but tabled for approval at the next meeting, revenue projections were reviewed, staffing incentives were discussed and approved. Next meeting is November 30<sup>th</sup>.
4. READS- Mr. Nelson reported that they reorganized, approved minutes, heard reports from administrators, heard about the reopening plans.
5. Tri-town Foundation- NONE
6. Early Childhood Council- NONE
7. Policy Sub-Committee- NONE
8. Anti-Racism Sub-Committee: NONE

## **IX. Future Business**

### **A. Timeline**

Chairperson Hartley reported:

The next meeting of the Rochester School Committee is Thursday – November 4, 2021 @ 6:30pm.



The next meeting of the Joint School Committee is Thursday – January 20, 2022 @ 6:30pm; held remote through Zoom.

Ms. Hartley reminded everyone about the special Town Meeting on October 18<sup>th</sup> and reported that the Old Rochester Regional Agreement will be on the warrant after much work from that committee and the Superintendent. She reported that it's very important for everyone to go out and support this warrant article.

X. Open Comments: Ms. Fernandes thanked everyone for a great start.

MOTION: by Ms. Fernandes at 8:22 p.m. to enter executive session for the purpose of exception #3 and exception #7

SECOND: by Ms. Rounseville

ROLL CALL VOTE: (Hartley; yes - Fernandes; yes – Rounseville; yes- Duggan; yes - Chisolm; yes)

MOTION: by Ms. Rounseville to go come out of Executive Session at 8:38 pm and to adjourn

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

ROLL CALL VOTE: (Hartley; yes - Fernandes; yes – Rounseville; yes- Duggan; yes - Chisolm; yes))

MOTION to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. by Ms. Duggan

SECOND: by Ms. Fernandes

ROLL CALL VOTE: (Hartley; yes - Fernandes; yes – Rounseville; yes- Duggan; yes - Chisolm; yes))

Submitted,

Diana Russo, Recording Secretary



**APPENDIX A**  
**Rochester Memorial School**  
**School Improvement Plan**  
**2021 - 2023**



**Rochester Memorial School**

ROCHESTER, MA

**Developed By:**

**Derek Medeiros – Principal, Forrest Cote - Grade 6 Teacher, Jenna Tavares - Grade 5 Teacher, Donna Cisco - Paraprofessional, Beth Jupin - School Council Parent Representative, Lindsay Tallman - School Council Parent Representative, Maciel Pais - School Council Parent Representative**



## [Strategic Plan 2023 Document](#)

### **Theory of Action**

#### **If we...**

provide all students with life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and technology skills, by integrating these skills into a rigorous and relevant curriculum  
**and**  
create a school district environment that broadens our students understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism, diversity, and global awareness by building relationships to establish a broader community/worldwide network, within and external to the school district and engage and enhance students social, intellectual, interpersonal, and leadership development and skills  
**and**  
develop and consistently utilize evidence-based approaches and strategies that foster the social and emotional well being of students to promote their success,

#### **Then we will ...**

have provided our Tri-Town students with 21st-century academic skills, strengthened their social and emotional competencies and prepared them to be engaged global citizens.



## Strategic Objective 1: 21st Century Learning for all Students

**Goal:** *Rochester Memorial School students will be engaged in instructional practices that include 21st Century Skills as well as Project Based Learning.*

Action Steps	Year	People Responsible	Indicators of Success	Status
Grade level teachers/specialists will provide opportunities for students which highlight 21st Century skills within project based learning assignments. Students will demonstrate the skillful use of media literacy, information literacy, and communication technology literacy in at least one developmentally appropriate grade level projects. At least one of these projects will be shared with grade level audiences.	2021-2022	Classroom Teachers Specialists Administrators	Student Work Samples/Displays Educator Eval Portfolios Media Center Showcase	
Students will experience two project or problem based learning experiences in which they showcase their work to an audience beyond their classroom teacher. During these showcases students will have demonstrated: flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility.	2022-2023	Classroom Teachers Specialists Administrators	Student Work Samples/Displays Educator Eval Portfolios Media Center Showcase	
Teachers will document the 4Cs connections within standards-based units that integrate subject areas.	2021-2022	Classroom Teachers Specialists	Lesson Plans Educator Eval Portfolios	
Opportunities for the 4Cs are fully integrated into standards-based grade level units that integrate subject areas. Moreover, the two PBL learning	2022-2023	Classroom Teachers Specialists	Lesson Plans Educator Eval	

showcases also evidence the 4Cs.			Portfolios	
Curricula on Atlas will include 21st Century skills and will be included in interdisciplinary Units with at least one of the following focuses: Global Awareness, Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy, Civic Leadership, Health Literacy, Environmental Literacy.	<b>2021-2022</b>	Administrators Classroom Teachers Specialists	Atlas Units Exemplars Student Work Samples	
Curricula on Atlas will include 21st Century interdisciplinary Units. These interdisciplinary Units will incorporate more than one of the following: Global Awareness, Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy, Civic Leadership, Health Literacy, Environmental Literacy.	<b>2022-2023</b>	Administrators Classroom Teachers Specialists	Atlas Units Exemplars Student Work Samples	



## Strategic Objective 2: Social Emotional Learning

**Goal:** *Members of the Rochester Memorial School will positively support students through engaging them as individuals by providing positive behavior supports, continuous feedback, working collaboratively with the community and utilizing school and community resources in order to ensure safety and security for all members of the school community*

Action Steps	Year	People Responsible	Indicators of Success	Status
Focus on staff and student relationship-building to address social/emotional needs due to the pandemic. This should include adapting to new routines as well as promoting flexibility and resilience.	2021-2022	RMS SEL Team Staff RMS Ambassadors	SEL Newsletter Morning Meetings/Closing Circles	
Students will be able to identify at least two trusted staff members to promote a sense of belonging. Measure students' data points on Panorama to ensure higher engagement and connectedness based on SEL programming.	2022-2023	RMS SEL Team Staff RMS Ambassadors	SEL Data Reports Panorama Survey Data	
Update Responsive Classroom rosters yearly to continue working towards 100% trained staff.	2021-2023	Administration Director of Student Services	PD Training List Certificates of Completion	
Continuation of Kaleidoscope tool to monitor and ensure best practices of Responsive Classroom implementation.	2021-2023	Administration Staff	Kaleidoscope Reports TLC Walkthrough Feedback	

Continue to implement and adjust school discipline planning. Maintain relevant discipline data, analyze and identify priority areas for improvement. Review and revise as needed the discipline documentation process.	<b>2021-2022</b>	Administration SEL Team TLC	RMS Google Incident Report Form Data Reports TLC Agendas		
Common student handbook language will be used across all elementary schools in the district. Discipline methods foster Responsive Classroom and CASEL competencies for all students.	<b>2022-2023</b>	Administration SEL Team TLC	RMS Google Incident Report Form Data Reports RMS Handbook		
Conduct annual review of ALICE procedures and make adjustments as needed. Review and analyze school safety Panorama data for all stakeholders, identify strengths and areas for improvement, implement at least one action item to address areas of improvement.	<b>2021-2022</b>	Administration SEL Team TLC	Panorama Survey Data Schoolwide Training Observation/Feedback		
Rochester Memorial School will have a current and operational crisis plan, which incorporates research-based best practices. All buildings will have enhanced campus communication capabilities. Based on survey data, all stakeholders will report an increased sense of safety in their buildings.	<b>2022-2023</b>	Assistant Principal PLC TLC	RMS Crisis Plan Panorama Survey Data		



## Strategic Objective 3: Global Citizenship

*Goal: Understanding that Global Citizenship is the idea that one's identity transcends geography or political borders, and that we, individually, have responsibilities to embrace all members of our community, Rochester Memorial School will prepare students for their role in becoming positive agents of change for racial equity in our global society.*

Action Steps	Year	People Responsible	Indicators of Success	Status
Identify teacher leaders to collect, analyze and share exemplars of projects that embed global themes at each grade level. District administration will identify and provide consistent time for the teacher leader working groups to input exemplar projects into Atlas per grade level. Teacher leaders will be asked to share exemplar lesson(s) to their building colleagues at a staff meeting or grade level professional learning community meetings.	2021-2022	Teacher Leaders Administration Curriculum Office	Atlas Units Staff Meeting Agendas PBL Exemplars	
Atlas will have curriculum units with links and resources in each curriculum area that provide learning experiences for global/multicultural learning used by all teachers at Rochester Memorial School.	2022-2023	Teacher Leaders Administration Curriculum Office	Atlas Units Educator Eval Portfolios	
With an increased focus on technology integration, teachers are able to continue to assess and identify applications in order to determine the level of effectiveness. The Leadership Council will continue to ensure that professional development opportunities/training will be ongoing to support staff competency in diversity, equity and cultural proficiency.	2021-2022	TLC Staff	Professional Development Plan Staff/PLC Meeting Agendas	

All teachers will have increased competence with digital tools that broaden access to world languages and cultures through professional development. These tools will be used with students each year.	<b>2022-2023</b>	TLC Staff	Professional Development Plan Educator Eval Portfolios	
The Pre-K-12 vertical team will collect, analyze and identify exemplars of units to be embedded into the civics and social studies curriculum. The team will also analyze and amend current standards based report card tools in student and family-friendly language.	<b>2021-2022</b>	Pre-K-12 S.S./Civics vertical Team Curriculum Office	Atlas Units Updated Report Card Language	
A completely updated curriculum for civics and social studies will be written, and documented, on Atlas aligned with the State Frameworks. All needed curricular resources will be identified by the vertical team as a result of implementation.	<b>2022-2023</b>	Pre-K-12 S.S./Civics vertical Team Curriculum Office	Atlas Units Purchased Resources	
Old Rochester Regional School District and Superintendent Union #55 will continue working closely with community organizations that support and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion.	<b>2021-2023</b>	TLC Staff	Family Engagement Events Sub-Committee Agendas	
All Old Rochester Regional District and Superintendent Union #55 teachers will have participated in Anti-Defamation League training and 3 other trainings that increase knowledge and understanding of cultures including LGBT so that all students throughout the District feel safe and have a sense of belonging.	<b>2022-2023</b>	TLC Staff	Professional Development Plans Sub-Committee Agendas	



# APPENDIX B

Rochester Memorial School

2021-2022

Student Handbook



## **Our Mission:**

*To inspire all students  
to think, to learn, to achieve, and to care.*

## **Our School Rules:**

*Take CARE of Yourself  
Take CARE of Others  
Take CARE of Our School Environment*

August 1, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to a new school year!

The Rochester Memorial School staff welcomes the opportunity to share each day with your children. We are confident that together we can create the optimum environment to ensure the success of all students.

The Rochester Memorial School Handbook has been designed to share information regarding school policies, and general school information. We hope that you will find the information contained in this handbook to be a useful reference throughout the school year.

We are looking forward to this new school year and continuing to work with each family. Together we can make a difference in the life of each child here at RMS!

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

Derek Medeiros, Principal  
Charles West, Assistant Principal



## **Rochester Memorial School Administrative Staff**

**Derek Medeiros** - Principal  
**Charles West** - Assistant Principal  
**Ellen Murphy** - School Nurse  
**Alison Guard** - Principal Secretary  
**Kim Amato** - Special Education Secretary

## **Central Office Administration**

**Michael S. Nelson** - Superintendent of Schools  
**Jannell Pearson-Campbell** – Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning  
**Howard Barber** – Asst. Supt. of Finance and Operations  
**Craig Davidson** - Director of Student Services  
**Eugene Jones** - District Facilities Director  
**Jill Henesey** – Food Service Director  
**Doreen Lopes** – Early Childhood Coordinator  
**Susana Cunningham** – Human Resources Coordinator

Central Office Phone (508) 758 - 2772

## **Rochester Memorial School Committee Members**

Sharon Hartley – Chairperson  
Anne Fernandes – Vice Chairperson  
Robin Rounseville  
Kate Duggan  
Jason Chisholm

**Rochester Memorial School Staff**  
**2020-2021**

**Project Grow:**

- Ms. Baronas
- Ms. Garcia - Speech-Language Pathologist - Project GROW

**Kindergarten:**

- Mrs. Bacchiocchi
- Ms. Russo
- Mrs. St. Yves
- Mrs. Weigel

**Grade 1:**

- Mrs. Alexander
- Mrs. Lenahan
- Mrs. Nelson
- Mrs. Lucas
- Ms. Russo

**Grade 2:**

- Mrs. Alves
- Mrs. Bradley
- Ms. Hedblom
- Mrs. Stupalski

**Grade 3:**

- Ms. Banno
- Mr. Forns
- Ms. Higgins
- Mrs. Mare
- Mrs. Mathieu

**Grade 4:**

- Mrs. Cabral
- Mrs. Cyr
- Mrs. Hemenway
- Ms. Griffin
- Ms. Wollenhaupt



**Grade 5:**

- Ms. Condry
- Mrs. Audette
- Mrs. Rogers
- Ms. Tavares

**Grade 6:**

- Mr. Cote
- Mr. DellaCioppa
- Mrs. Forns
- Ms. Teves
- Mrs. Taylor
- Mrs. Derderian

**Specialists Areas:**

- Mrs. Audette - Music
- Mrs. Guertin - Health
- Mrs. Smith - Art
- Mrs. Williamson - Band
- Mr. Woodward - Physical Education

**STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Specialist:**

- Mr. Huckabee

**Academic Interventionist:**

- Mrs. Mazzuca

**Reading Specialists:**

- Ms. Johnson
- Mrs. McIlmail

**School Social Workers:**

- Mrs. Cruz
- Mrs. Pacheco

**English Language Learners:**

- Mrs. Dranchak

**School Psychologist:**

- Ms. Ryan

**Speech Pathologists:**

- Mrs. Lambert-Matos
- Mrs. Bejtlich

**Physical Therapist:**

- Mrs. Hasbrouk

**Occupational Therapist:**

- Ms. Ward

**Paraprofessionals:**

- Mrs. Henrie
- Mrs. Bateman
- Mrs. Parker
- Mrs. Sherman
- Ms. Deschamps
- Mrs. Sousa
- Mrs. Ovian
- Mrs. Arruda
- Mrs. Harding
- Mrs. Hunter
- Mrs. Cisco
- Ms. Miranda

**School Nurse:**

- Mrs. Murphy

**Maintenance Supervisor:**

- Mr. Ouellette

**Technology Support:**

- Mr. Ashley
- Ms. Bednarczyk
- Mr. Houde
- Mr. Simmons
- Ms. Wheeler

**Cafeteria Staff:**

- Mrs. Gonet - Manager
- Mrs. Larue - Assistant Manager
- Mrs. L'Heureux
- Mrs. Randall

**Principal's Secretary:**

- Ms. Guard

**Special Education Secretary:**

- Mrs. Amato



**OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55  
SCHOOL CALENDAR 2021-2022**

July 2021						August 2021						September 2021							
M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F			
			1	2		2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3			
5	6	7	8	9		9	10	11	12	13		6	7	8	9	10			
12	13	14	15	16		16	17	18	19	20		13	14	15	16	17			
19	20	21	22	23		23	24	25	26	NT	27	20	21	22X	23	24			
26	27	28	29	30		30TM 31@						27	28	29	30				
						NT-New Teacher Orientation TM-Teachers Meeting @ OPENING DAY - ALL SCHOOLS						No School X - Prof. Dev. Early Release ALL SCHOOLS							
						1 days						20 days 21 days accrued							
October 2021						November 2021						December 2021							
M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F			
				1		1	2	3	4	5				1	2	3			
4	5	6	7	8		8	9	10	11	12		6	7	8	9	10			
11	12	13	14	15		15	16	17	18	19		13	14	15	16	17			
18	19	20	21P	22P		22	23	24	25	26		20	21	22	23E	24			
25	26	27	28	29		29	30					27	28	29	30	31			
P- Early Dismissal Parent Conf. MATT, ROCH. AND MARION K-6						J-Professional Development Full Day Vacation						Vacation E- Early Dismissal for Students & Teachers							
20 days 41 days accrued						17 days 58 days accrued						17 days 75 days accrued							
January 2022						February 2022						March 2022							
M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F			
3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4				
10	11	12	13	14		7	8	9X	10	11		7	8	9X	10	11			
17	18	19	20	21		14	15	16	17	18		14	15	16	17	18			
24	25	26	27	28		21	22	23	24	25		21	22	23	24P	25P			
31						28						28	29	30	31				
J-Professional Development Full Day						Vacation X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release						P- Early Dismissal Parent Conf./MATT/K-6 X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release							
19 days 94 days accrued						15 days 109 days accrued						23 days 132 days accrued							
April 2022						May 2022						June 2022							
M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F			
				1		2	3	4	5	6				1X	2	3			
4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13		6	7	8	9	10			
11	12	13	14	15		16	17	18	19	20		13	14	15	16*	17			
18	19	20	21	22		23	24	25	26	27		20	21	22	23	24**			
25	26	27	28	29		30	31					27	28	29	30				
Vacation No School												* 180th Day ** 185th Day X - Prof. Dev. All Schools Early Release							
15 days 147 days accrued						21 days 168 days accrued						12 days 180 days accrued							
<b>Holidays - No School for Students and Teachers</b>																		<b>Early Dismissal Times (CODES X D P)</b>	
7/5 - Independence Day																		ORR Jr. High & Sr. High School 11:30 a.m.	
9/6 - Labor Day																		Center & Old Hammondtown Schools 12:20 p.m.	
10/11 - Columbus Day																		Sipplan School 12:20 p.m.	
11/11 - Veterans Day																		Rochester Memorial School 12:30 p.m.	
11/25 - Thanksgiving Day																		<b>Telephone Numbers</b>	
12/25 - Christmas day																		Superintendent's Office 508-758-2772	
1/1 - New Year's Day																		Old Rochester Regional High School 508-758-3745	
1/17 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day																		Old Rochester Regional Junior High School 508-758-4928	
2/21 - Presidents' Day																		Sipplan School 508-748-0100	
4/18 - Patriots' Day																		Center School 508-758-2521	
5/30 - Memorial Day																		Old Hammondtown 508-758-6241	
6/20 - Juneteenth																		Rochester Memorial School 508-763-2049	
																		<a href="http://www.oldrochester.org">www.oldrochester.org</a>	

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**SCHOOL HOURS: 8:40 AM - 3:00 PM**

### Transportation Information

#### Bus Transportation

Bus routes for the Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55 for the Towns of Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester are established yearly. Eight buses transport our students. Routes are slightly modified each fall to accommodate new membership. Any questions regarding bus routes and/or stops that affect your child should be addressed to the District's transportation provider, **Amaral Bus Company Inc.** Ms. Cheryl Sweeney, Dispatch Manager at [amaralbustritown@gmail.com](mailto:amaralbustritown@gmail.com) or (774) 507-6082.

*At this time, changes in student transportation plans are strongly discouraged.* Please Contact the main office with any questions or requests.

For Rochester Routes, please use the following link.

<https://sites.google.com/oldrochester.org/orrbusroutes/rochester>

### Fall 2021 Transportation Plan

#### BUSES

The following safety precautions will be followed on school buses:

- Masks will be worn on buses at all times;
- Windows on buses will be kept open to circulate fresh air;
- Seating arrangements will account for students with disabilities who require close contact with adults.
- Routine cleaning of buses will be implemented.

There will be 8 Rochester Routes this year and buses will continue to use the front loop of the building. Students will be encouraged to stay three feet apart as they exit and enter their buses. Pacing will be maintained to encourage physical distances to the extent possible.

#### Arrival

1. Upon entering the building, students will proceed directly to their classrooms. Students will disembark in the following manner.
2. Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers/Staff will gather their students from each bus.
3. Kindergarten will enter the building through the K/Project Grow entrance and First Grade will enter through the middle entrance.
4. Grade levels 2-6 will disembark their buses one grade level at a time as directed by their bus driver. Grade levels will disembark beginning with Grade 2; and then the other grades will respectively follow.
5. Grades 2 will enter through the middle doors and will proceed down the hallway between the media center and the courtyard.



6. Grades 3, 4, 5 & 6 will enter through the main entrance and will proceed directly to their individual classrooms.

## **Departure**

Students will be dismissed following the afternoon announcements. Students will depart through the same doors they entered the building in the morning.

1. Students will be dismissed by grade level beginning with Grade 6 and progressing to Kindergarten.
2. Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers/Staff will escort their students to each bus.
3. Grades 2-6 teachers/staff will escort their students to the exits of the building.
4. Once all buses are fully loaded, they will be allowed to depart.

## **Parent/Guardian Drop-Off & Pick-Up**

There will be a change in the traffic flow for drop-off and pick-up this year. In an effort to facilitate the safest and smoothest transition for our students who are not riding the bus at the beginning and end of the day, we ask that you please adhere to the following safety precautions.

- There will be a change in the traffic flow for drop-off and pick-up this year.
- Parents/Guardians will remain in their vehicles during the drop-off and pick-up process.
- All students should be wearing their masks upon exiting their parent/guardian vehicles.
- Staff will be stationed at the two rear entrances to support students' transition into the building. Pacing will be maintained to encourage physical distances to the extent possible.
- Please do not pull around and pass other parent/guardian vehicles during this process. Your patience is greatly appreciated.
- In the event that parents/caregivers need to exit their vehicle, please maintain physical distancing standards and wear masks.

## **Arrival (Drop Off)**

- Parents/Guardians will drop-off their students in the back loop starting at 8:35 AM.
- Students in Grades K-2 will be dropped off and enter the building through the main rear entrance.
- Students in Grades K&1 will safely line up at a designated area outside while observing physical distance to the extent possible, and, once all students have arrived, a staff member will walk them to their classrooms.
- Students in Grades 2 will go directly to their classrooms.
- Students in Grade 3-6 will be dropped off and enter the building through the rear entrance of the C Wing. These students will go directly to their classrooms.
- In order that others cars may pull in behind, parents/guardians will be encouraged to pull their vehicles all the way up to the end of the building.

## **Departure (Pick Up)**

- Parents/Guardians will pick their students up in the back loop beginning at 2:45 PM.
- All students will be in line by grade level.
- Students in Grades K-2 will be picked up at the main rear entrance.
- Students in Grade 3-6 will be picked up at the rear entrance of the C Wing.
- As cars depart, please continue to pull your vehicle forward.
- Please refrain from pulling around and passing other vehicles during this process.
- Please stay in your car while your children are loading and please avoid allowing them to board on the passenger side of your vehicle.

## Student Emergency Information or Status: Parent Notification to RMS

To ensure student safety, changes in family situations, addresses, or cell and telephone numbers **must be** reported to the school office *immediately*. It is important that all our records are up to date.

Please return the Student Information Update Form, included in your opening day packet, to your child's homeroom teacher, or the school office, immediately. This form serves as an annual 'affidavit', attesting to a student's residency in our town.

Families moving from the town should notify the school office at least three days before their departure so transfer materials can be prepared. A *release of information* form must be received from the "new" school before any records will be forwarded.

## Attendance

School attendance is compulsory. Attendance law states that:

- *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts G.L. c. 76 sect. 1 requires that every child, with certain exceptions, between ages established by the state board of education, must attend a public day school or some other approved school, during the time when public schools are in session.*
- *Under G.L. c. 76, sect. 1, necessary absences by a student may not exceed 7 full-day or 14 half-day sessions in any 6-month period.*
- *Under G.L. c. 76, sect. 1, a pupil who is not present during at least half a session must be marked and counted as absent on the school register.*

All Massachusetts schools are accountable for student achievement. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandates particular indicators of success for all schools with one being "chronic absenteeism." All students are considered "chronically absent" if they miss 10% of the school year.

Full days of attendance are essential to the learning process. If a child is to be out of school, parents/guardians should call the nurse's office at **508-763-2647** before 9:00am on the morning of the absence. Please provide the following information in the message that you leave on the answering machine: **student's name, teacher, and reason for absence**. If a call is not received and a student is absent, the School Nurse uses the *Blackboard Connect* messaging system to contact parents/guardians at home or work. **After any absence, students should present a parent's note indicating the reason for the absence to the School Nurse.**

Absences are "excused" for only the following reasons:

- Bereavement
- Hospitalization
- School-sponsored trip
- Documented court or legal commitment
- Obligatory religious holidays
- Illness substantiated by a note (Five days or more of continuous absences for medical reasons must be corroborated by a physician's note).

Excessive absenteeism can occur because families take vacations during school time. This is strongly discouraged. Teachers will not provide assignments prior to vacations taken during school time. Upon students return, missed assignments will be made up as soon as possible. Missed assignments are factored into students' grades.



### ***When Absences Exceed Five or More Days***

On the fifth day of consecutive absence or tardiness, the school nurse or a designee of the principal will call the student's home. On the eighth day of an unexcused absence, the school attendance officer will be notified and a complaint for Failure to Cause School Attendance pursuant to G.L. c. 76, sect. 2 may be filed in Wareham District Court.

If the students' absences or tardiness occur on a regular basis and impede their academic progress, the school, as a mandated reporter, must consider filing a Child Requiring Assistance (CRS) report. Depending on circumstances, the school district may choose to file a 51A with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness negatively impacts the educational progress of all students. Therefore, the above policy will also be followed for excessive tardiness.

### **Dismissals**

All dismissal policies are developed with students' learning and safety in mind. Policies are developed with input from the Rochester School Committee and town safety officials.

#### ***Dismissals during the School Day***

No child will be dismissed from school during the day unless an authorized adult comes to the office to dismiss the student. This applies to daily, or occasional, pickup arrangements. Students being dismissed before the end of the school day must bring a note to the homeroom teacher that morning. Students will be called from class *when the parent/guardian arrives*.

#### ***Any Change in Dismissal Routine***

To ensure each child's safety, a note or alternative transportation forms from a child's parent/guardian must be provided before a child is allowed to leave school with any adult other than a parent or if he/she is normally transported by bus. There must be a note for each change to a child's routine. Bus changes are allowed for childcare purposes only, not for play or party dates. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must arrange with the office prior to a bus switch.

### **Riding Bicycles to School**

Students may ride their bicycles to school provided that they wear a helmet (as required under state law) and obey all traffic regulations. **A blanket permission note is required before students begin riding to and from school.** Bikes must not be ridden on sidewalks just outside school where children and adults are walking. Students not following safety rules may have their riding privileges revoked. A bike rack is available in front of the cafeteria. Students are encouraged to lock their bicycles.

## School Breakfast & Lunch - Food Service

Full student breakfast and lunches are available at no cost. A la carte menu choices are available at a variety of prices. *Free and Reduced Lunch Assistance* forms are sent home at the start of the school year, but applications are also available at the school office and accepted throughout the year. Review them carefully to see if they pertain to you.

### Lunch Protocol

Brief description:

- Lunch in the building cafeteria
- Students will come to the cafeteria line. The child's meal choice (hot or cold) is placed on the counter, and the student takes their meal package and proceeds to the cashier.
- Lunch monitors clean and sanitize desks after children leave prior to the next group entering.

### Lunch Menus

Lunch menus will be posted on Old Rochester Regional School District MSU #55 - School Nutrition and Fitness and Nutrition Website

Free and Reduced Lunch Application ([LunchApplication.com](http://LunchApplication.com))

Due to Covid-19, the USDA announced once again this year that there will be no charge for meals. However, students choosing only milk is not part of the free program and will be charged. Families that need assistance should complete a Free and Reduced Lunch Application immediately. Each application can be downloaded and emailed to the Food and Nutrition Director or by clicking the link and applying online. Online applications will be processed much faster than paper applications. The application for Free and Reduced Lunch can be found on the District website - LINK TO: District Food & Nutrition Website. Even though lunches are free, we still need to maintain our accounts in good standing with a debitable balance. If students want an extra milk or snack, there will be a charge for those items and the student's account will be used. There are settings to automatically replenish your account once the balance reaches a minimum amount. Here is a link to Titan: <https://family.titank12.com/>

### Bringing Lunch from Home

If you choose to have your child bring lunch from home each day, to keep it cold, we recommend (1) bringing food in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack or frozen juice box; (2) freezing the sandwiches overnight (will thaw by lunchtime but keep cold until then); (3) packing the foods in a cooler with ice or another cold source.

Please note the District Life Threatening Allergy Policy Below:

[Life Threatening Allergy Information](#)



## School Safety and School Visits

**All visitors and volunteers are required to have a valid driver's license or Massachusetts issued identification card to be scanned-in upon entering the building *for any reason*; office staff will provide badges to wear once the ID is scanned into our system and each visitor is approved to enter. This includes stops at the Nurse's station. All visitors who do not have a valid driver's license or Massachusetts issued ID card will not be allowed to enter the school during operating hours.**

Parents or guests wishing to visit a particular class are asked to plan with the teacher or the principal at least one day in advance. Teachers will always welcome an extra pair of hands; we encourage you to become an active part of our volunteer staff. Massachusetts State Law requires that all regular classroom volunteers, lunchroom visitors and field trip chaperones have a Criminal Record (CORI) check. These forms must be completed in the school office before your first volunteer visit.

Visitors are asked to park in the lot at the rear entrance of the school. Do not park in the driveway or on the road in front of the school. Cars parked on either side of Pine Street during school hours will be ticketed.

## Clothing & Masks

### Mask Policy

At the special meeting of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on August 24, 2021, the Board voted to declare "exigent circumstances" pursuant to the Student Learning Time (SLT) regulations, 603 CMR 27.08 (1), and authorized the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education to require masks for public school students (age 5 and above) and staff in all grades through at least October 1, 2021. This has since been extended to November 1, 2021.

The mask requirement is an important additional measure to keep students safe in school at this time. Consistent with the authority provided by the Board, and after consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner is implementing the following requirements:

- Effective immediately, public school students (age 5 and above) and staff in all grades are required to wear masks indoors in schools, except as noted below. Masks are not required when outdoors. All visitors are also expected to wear a mask in school buildings.
- The mask requirement will be in place until at least November 1, 2021. The Commissioner will revisit the requirement in the near future to revise it as warranted by public health data.
- Masks should cover an individual's nose and mouth. For more information about appropriate mask use, please see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.
- It is strongly recommended that students younger than age 5 also wear a mask in school.
- Students and staff who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons, and students who cannot wear a mask for behavioral reasons, are exempted from the requirement. Face shields may be an option for students with medical or behavioral needs who are unable to wear masks or face coverings. Transparent masks may be the best option for both teachers and students in classes for deaf and hard of hearing students.
- The mask requirement applies when students and staff are indoors at school, except when eating, drinking, or during mask breaks.
- Mask breaks may occur throughout the day. If feasible, breaks should occur when the windows are open or students are outdoors. As a reminder, meals and outdoor recess provide built-in mask breaks for students and staff.



- Masks may also be removed indoors when necessary to participate in elective classes, such as the use of wind instruments in band. When traditional masks cannot be worn, districts should consider additional mitigations, such as the use of instrument masks (masks with a slit or hole cut for the mouthpiece) or bell covers, along with physical distancing or outdoor classes as feasible.
- Masks are required for any sports-related activity for student-athletes and coaches when indoors, in alignment with guidance provided by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).
- Masks should be provided by the student/family, but disposable masks should be made available by the school for students who need them.
- By federal public health order, all students and staff are required to wear a mask on school buses.
- Whether and when a student should be disciplined for failure to wear a mask is a local decision, guided by the district's student discipline policy and the particular facts. Districts should consult with their legal counsel to address these matters. Districts should provide written notice to students and families about expectations and potential consequences, and are encouraged to use a progressive discipline approach. The mask requirement includes an exemption for students who cannot wear a mask due to medical conditions or behavioral needs. Further, some students with disabilities may need additional supports to wear masks and may need to be accommodated. Districts are encouraged to consider and implement alternatives before resorting to disciplinary exclusion. Keeping students connected with school is especially important this fall, as students return to school after a challenging school year.

**Student Dress:** School is a place where student learning is a priority. A student's attire may influence his/her attitude as well as how much he or she learns. Student dress, therefore, is expected to be in good taste, appropriate for the weather and for academic work. It is not our purpose to dictate specific dress, but rather to ensure that our students are dressed in such a way as to contribute to their success and help generate a positive learning environment throughout our school. Students are not to be attired in clothing that which compromises safety or modesty or is disruptive to the educational process.

In order to assist parents in planning for their student's school apparel, the following guidelines are presented. Students are prohibited from wearing any clothing, including masks, that contain offensive or obscene symbols, slogans or words that degrade any gender, cultural, religious, or ethnic values, and clothing that contains language or symbols oriented toward violence, drugs, or alcohol.

The administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines. A student whose clothing is determined inappropriate for school will be required to arrange for other, more appropriate, clothing to be provided.

**All coats, boots, sweaters, sweatshirts, backpacks, lunchboxes and hats should be clearly marked with students' names.** For those of you who have seen our Lost and Found area, you know that this can be a problem. Take the time to label! This will allow items to be returned easily if lost, or avoid confusion when two items are similar. Several cases of lost clothing were donated to charity during the last school year.

### **Recess**

**All students will have outdoor recess. Recess is held indoors only in very inclement weather.**

**Please be sure that your child is properly dressed.** Decorative footwear and flip-flops can create a safety issue when students play at recess. Therefore, flip-flops or any other type of opened-toe shoes are not to be worn to school. We strongly recommend sneakers for all students.



### **Student Valuables**

It is strongly recommended that students do not bring large sums of money, cell phones, hand-held video games, toys or stuffed animals to school.

### **Inclement Weather: Cancellations and Delays**

Please be attentive to our telephone messaging system for news of school cancellations or delays. During stormy weather the District may call school for an entire day, or for a one to two hour delayed opening. If bad weather develops during the school day, afternoon classes or special programs and after-school activities may be cancelled. It is important that families have plans in place for dealing with these possibilities.

We utilize the "BlackBoard" communication program that is capable of contacting all RMS families within a five to ten-minute window. As soon as the Superintendent has determined a delay, closing, or early dismissal, we will send out a "BlackBoard" call.

Because all district schools utilize the BlackBoard system, storm delays and closings may not be broadcast on local television stations. We ask that you not call the school office or the police station. The dispatcher reports they receive many calls which interfere with their ability to handle actual emergencies.

If the decision is made to close school early or cancel after-school activities, due to inclement weather, an attempt will be made to contact parents, using all emergency contact numbers within the "BlackBoard" system. In the event of a non-weather emergency, we will contact all parents using the same system.

### **Telephone Calls**

Responsibility is an important attribute for all students. No school telephone in any office may be used by students. If students have forgotten books, classwork, or musical instruments, classroom teacher discretion will determine whether a call can be made via the classroom telephone. Teachers' classroom phones are capable of local calling only. In cases of illness or emergency, calls will be made by the school nurse, an administrator, guidance counselor or personnel in the main office. Students will not be called to the phone for any reason. Messages will be taken in cases of illness and emergency.

### **Cell phones**

A student may carry or keep a cell phone in his/her backpack **if authorized by the school office**. The phone must be shut off and kept in the child's locker/backpack and may be used only for emergency or unusual circumstances as agreed by parents and administration. The phone may not be used to receive or send messages anytime during school hours **or on school buses**. Student phones used to make, or receive, unauthorized calls during school hours, or on a bus, will be confiscated by the school administration or the bus driver.

### **Homework and Independent Reading**

The School Committee has established homework guidelines that all teachers follow. Your child's teacher will establish homework routines appropriate to his grade level. The School Committee policy can be acquired through the main office at the school. We ask all family members to become "Reading Partners" with our students. Research shows the more children read, the better readers they become. We encourage all students to read independently each night for 20–30 minutes before bed. In some classrooms, Student Reading Logs are sent home for students and/or parents to initial.

## **Photographs of School Activities for Local Papers**

### *Opt-Out Procedure for Parents Who Do NOT Want Their Child's Picture to Appear*

As part of our public relations efforts, local newspapers are invited to photograph many school programs and events. Students are often included in these photos. As a parent, you have the right to request that no picture of your child is used in this way. **You must make this request in writing by completing a FERPA Privacy Form and returning it to the Principal before September 3rd.** If no letter is on file, we assume parental permission is granted for photographs to appear in local newspapers or on our school website <https://www.oldrochester.org/Domain/433>.

## **Parent Involvement/Parent Concerns**

1. Being actively involved in your child's school is helpful to both your child and the school community. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets for an hour once a month in the PTO Office at RMS.
2. **School Council** - In June of 1993, the Massachusetts State Legislature passed and Governor Weld signed into law The Education Reform Act of 1993. Section 59C of Chapter 71 of the Education Reform Act of 1993 calls for the establishment of a School Council at each elementary, secondary, and vocational school in the Commonwealth. The school council provision of the act is intended to enhance parent and community participation in the school. The PTO, by law, is responsible for conducting the election of all parent representatives to the School Council. The nomination and election process is conducted each September parent volunteers are needed to be a part of our School Council. Representation from primary and intermediate grade students' families, as well as special education parents (if available), staff members and the community sit on this advisory team. Meetings are typically one afternoon per month.
3. The Rochester School Committee sets its meeting schedule at the start of the school year. These meetings are typically on the first Thursday evening of the month. Meetings are held at the Rochester Memorial School and are televised.

Constructive criticism of our school is welcomed on the assumption that it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip the school to perform its tasks more effectively. Complaints are resolved most expeditiously if they are first taken to the staff member or administrator immediately in charge of the area in which a problem arises, then through successive administrative levels to the Principal, Superintendent, and subsequently to the School Committee, if necessary. Anonymous letters serve no positive purpose when trying to resolve problems and will not be given the same weight as an identified correspondence. The School Committee has adopted a policy to be followed when a parent/guardian has a concern that has not been satisfactorily addressed. A copy of that policy is available at the school office.

Our principal, Mr. Derek J. Medeiros, is available to all parents each month before PTO or School Committee meetings and at other times during the school day by appointment. Please call the school office or contact the principal directly via email: [derekmedeiros@oldrochester.org](mailto:derekmedeiros@oldrochester.org). All teachers are accessible via the school's e-mail carrier as well. Go to our school website, <https://www.oldrochester.org/Domain/433>, to access a list of staff/teacher email addresses.

## **First Aid/Emergencies**

If a sudden illness or an accident occurs at school, the school nurse will administer first aid and immediately notify parents. Parents are responsible for transporting the student home in the event of illness or injury. If a serious illness or accident (life-threatening accident) occurs at school, the Rochester EMS will be called for transport to the hospital.



## Health Information

### COVID-19 Health Guidance

Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves.

COVID-19 Symptoms List:

- ***Fever (100.0° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills***
- ***Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath***
- ***New loss of taste or smell***
- ***Muscle aches or body aches***
- *\*Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)*
- *Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms*
- *Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms*
- *Headache when in combination with other symptoms*
- *Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms*
- *Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms*

**Anyone who is feeling sick or ill should remain home and strongly consider being tested for COVID-19.**

Close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual while indoors, for at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. Please note that the at-risk exposure time begins 48 hours prior to symptom onset (or time of positive test if asymptomatic) and continues until the time the COVID-19 positive individual is isolated.

**The following close contacts are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols:**

- Asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts: Individuals who are asymptomatic and fully vaccinated are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- Classroom close contacts: An individual who is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual in the classroom while both individuals were masked, so long as the individuals were spaced at least 3 feet apart, is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- Bus close contacts: Individuals on buses must be masked according to federal requirements. As such, individuals who are masked on buses when windows are open are exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols.
- Close contacts who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days: An individual who has been previously diagnosed with COVID-19 and then becomes a close contact of someone with COVID-19 is exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols if: The exposure occurred within 90 days of the onset of their own illness AND The exposed individual is recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms.

## **Recommended Testing and Quarantine Response Protocols**

The Rochester School District has received approval from DESE to start the school year with the 'symptomatic testing' and 'test and stay' options. Please use the link below to view the Recommended Testing and Quarantine Response Protocols. [Testing Protocols 8.23.pdf](#)

Preparation is essential and we have listed below a few ways for you and your child to prepare for the upcoming school year. Please be aware that face coverings will be required for grades PK-6 and strongly encouraged for our younger students.

- Practice thorough hand washing for at least 20 seconds and practice applying hand sanitizer correctly by rubbing a small amount into hands for 20 seconds until the hand sanitizer is dry.
- Practice putting on/taking off a mask/face covering, taking care not to touch their face.
- Practice wearing a face covering/mask for an extended period of time as masks will be required.
- Purchase or make extra masks/face coverings as we are asking students to bring their own and have one as a backup.

Practice physical distancing from others, maintaining 6 feet apart.

Make sure your child is up to date on their physical and immunizations. Talk to your health care provider and school nurse about health concerns you have for your child.

- Submit emergency health information forms with correct contact information as soon as the school year begins. If your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed above during the school day they will need to be picked up from school promptly.

Rochester School District is committed to providing a safe environment during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining a safe environment is critical to the District's ability to provide students with in-person classroom learning. Due to the fluctuating nature of the pandemic and resulting guidance and recommendations from public health experts, such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the local Board of Health, Rochester School District may, from time to time, establish health and safety requirements, including but not limited to, mandatory face coverings, to ensure the health and ongoing operations of the school community. Rochester School District will provide notice of any health requirements to students/parents/guardians. Rochester School District reserves the right to establish such health requirements, in a manner consistent with state and federal law, and which will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee and/or Superintendent.

### **Health Records**

Student health records are kept in a locked file in the nurse's office. It is the parents' responsibility to keep the nurse informed of new medical information. Students are required to have physical examinations in grades 3 and 6.

Vision/hearing screenings and height/weight measurements are done yearly. Parents are notified only if the results are not within normal limits. Postural screening is done only for students in grade 5. Screening for head lice is done as needed.



## **Dispensing Medications**

Children are not permitted to carry medications on the bus or in the school building. A signed order from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant is required to administer any prescription medications in school, as required by Massachusetts General Law. Parental permission is also required. A Medication Protocol form that covers non-prescription medications is included in this packet. Special arrangements for medication administration during field trips must be made with the school nurse. Medications will be given by a parent or by a school representative who has permission from the parent. Children will be allowed to self-administer inhalers on field trips only, with permission of the school nurse and when parental permission is on file at the nurse's office.

## **Additional Services Available**

Rochester Memorial School offers all students General Education support and accommodations including:

- Title I Services
- Social Work/Counseling Services
- Availability of the School Psychologist
- Reading Recovery and Reading Specialist Support
- STEM Specialist
- Academic Interventionist
- Others as outlined in the Rochester Memorial School Curriculum Accommodation Plan.

Rochester Memorial School provides many Special Education services to students (who are eligible) including:

- Inclusive support in regular classrooms
- Pull-out instruction when warranted
- The availability of the school psychologist
- Speech and Language therapies
- Occupational and physical therapies
- School Social worker small group/individual support

## **Health and Guidance Curricula**

District Health and Guidance Curricula have been implemented across all grade levels at RMS. There are nine general topics covered with the specific content tailored to the developmental needs of our differing age groups. The topics are as follows:

### **Growth & Development**

Students will learn the basic characteristics of physical growth and development, including body functions and systems throughout the life cycle, and will acquire skills to promote and maintain positive growth and development (At the fifth-grade level, students will have an introduction to the human reproductive system. A parent letter will be sent out prior to the presentation).

- **Nutrition** Students will gain the knowledge and skills to select a diet that supports health and reduces the risk of illness and future chronic diseases.
- **Social & Emotional Health** Students will acquire knowledge about emotions and physical health, the management of emotions, personality and character development, and social awareness; and will learn skills to promote self-acceptance, make decisions, and cope with stress, including suicide prevention.
- **Family Life** Students will gain knowledge about the significance of the family on individuals and society, and will learn skills to support the family, balance work and family life, be an effective parent, and nurture the development of children.



- **Interpersonal Relationships** Students will learn that relationships with others are an integral part of the human life experience and the factors that contribute to healthy interpersonal relationships, and will acquire skills to enhance and make many of these relationships more fulfilling through commitment and communication.
  - **Disease Prevention & Controls** Students will learn the signs, symptoms, and treatment of chronic and communicable diseases, and will gain skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and health maintenance.
  - **Safety & Injury Prevention** Students will gain the knowledge and skills to administer first aid and carry out emergency procedures, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, will avoid, recognize, and report verbal, physical, and emotional abuse situations, and will assess the factors that contribute to intentional and unintentional injury, including motor vehicle accidents, fire safety, and weapons safety.
  - **Violence Prevention** Students will learn how their actions affect others, will understand the power that positive character traits can have in violence prevention, will gain skills to report incidents of violence and hurtful behavior to adults in the school and community, will avoid engaging in violence, and identify constructive alternatives to violence, including how to discourage others from engaging in violence.
- If parents/guardians wish their children to be exempt from any portion of the Health Curriculum, a written request should be addressed to the school principal.***

### **The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Testing**

Once during the school year, students in grade 5 participate in the Science Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test. Also, once a year all students in grades 3-6 will participate in the English Language Arts & Mathematics Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests. Testing during the 2021-2022 school year will take place at the following times:

<b>Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics, and grades 5 and 8 STE (computer-based tests)</b>	
ELA test sessions	<b>March 28 - April 29, 2022</b>
Mathematics test sessions	<b>April 25 - May 27, 2022</b>
STE test sessions	<b>April 26 - May 27, 2022</b>

**It is highly recommended that all students must be present during MCAS testing.**

### **Student Records**

The privacy of student records is guaranteed. Only parents/guardians and appropriate school personnel are allowed access to the information in a student's record. Specific written consent provided by the parent or legal guardian is necessary for any other examination. A student transcript, which includes name, address, and grades, is kept for at least sixty years. However, the student's temporary record, containing standardized test scores, evaluations by teachers, Special Education records are given to the student upon graduation or destroyed within five years after the student leaves the school system.

In accordance with the student record regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education, parents have the right to inspect a student's record. Records are made available within two (2) working days of a request being made. Copies of any part of the record may be requested and a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating these materials. It has been our practice to make any student records easily accessible to parents.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has adopted procedures for non-custodial parents who wish to receive separate copies of student records or school notices. Information is available in the school office.



## Report Cards and Parent Conferences

It shall be the duty of each teacher at the end of each term or at the end of any period of time designated by the Superintendent, to estimate and to record the progress of students. The report card is an effective means of communicating an individual student's progress in relation to the curriculum and his/her own mastery of skills and social development. In the elementary grades, the written record is a standards-based report that indicates a student's progress.

Rochester Memorial School operates on a three-term grading cycle.

Marking Periods	Report Cards go home
Term 1: <b>Marks Close 11/19/21</b>	<b>12/8/21</b>
Term 2: <b>Marks Close 3/4/22</b>	<b>3/16/22</b>
Term 3: <b>Marks Close 6/3/22</b>	<b>6/16/22 (Day 180)</b>

Regular communication between school and home is important if we are to be successful. Conferences between parents and teachers are scheduled once during the school year, but if questions about your child's progress should arise in any curricular area, initiate a conversation with teachers at any time.

## Promotion/Retention of Students

It is expected that students' progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions are made only when it is in the best educational interest of the student.

## Student Enrichment:

RMS offers various ways for students to enrich their academic learning. Below are some examples:

- Student Council with 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> grade representatives and officers
- Annual Talent Show
- Science Fair
- Student vs. Staff Basketball Game
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus: Students participate in a music-based production that is presented in January.
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus: Groups meet once a week during school, several performances each year including the *FORM* concert which showcases all choruses in the district.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Band: Students select an instrument for in-school instrumental instruction. In January, students come together as a beginner band.
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band: Weekly instrumental instruction continues and the students meet as a band once a week.
- Jazz Band: Auditions are held in the fall and the band meets before school once a week.
- Drama Club: Auditions are held in the spring for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who are interested in participating as either cast and/or crew for the annual production
- After School Activities: There are three enrichment/athletic sessions each year: one in the fall; two sessions in the spring. Each session lasts 8 weeks and offers a variety of elective programs. Brochures are sent home with students.
- Destination Imagination: Teams form in the fall for this out-of-school activity. Teams work together to

develop a solution to an assortment of challenges using a variety of skills, including: creative problem solving, critical thinking, research, communication, and teamwork. Teams present their solutions at a regional tournament in March.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

During the year, field trips may be scheduled at each grade level. A student's behavior while on these trips will reflect upon his/her school. Misconduct will not be tolerated. A permission slip must be signed by one of his/her parents or guardians before a student can participate in the field trip. The form must be returned to the teacher-in-charge prior to the trip. All school rules apply to field trips. Any child may be denied the privilege of going on a field trip based on poor academic performance or inappropriate behavior.

### **INTERNET USE POLICY**

An Internet user agreement is given to students at the beginning of their elementary experience. Students and parents sign and return the agreement and it is kept on file.

## **General Statement and School Rules**

Rochester Memorial School emphasizes a positive, community-based sense of responsibility and respect throughout the school day. Students learn what is expected of them through the consistent modeling of the adults around them. Students, teachers, administrators and parents all work together to maintain a safe, orderly school environment where everyone can learn and grow.

Students are expected to follow the school-wide rules that follow. These rules apply at all times, in all areas of the school.

- **Take CARE of Yourself**
- **Take CARE of Others**
- **Take CARE of Our School Environment**
- **Everyone C...A...R...E...S!**

<b>COOPERATION:</b>	<b>We work, learn and solve problems together, with our friends and teachers.</b>
<b>ASSERTION:</b>	<b>We assert ourselves appropriately and respectfully.</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITY/ RESPECT:</b>	<b>We make good choices about our behavior and our learning. We respect one another and ourselves throughout the day.</b>
<b>EMPATHY:</b>	<b>We think of our friends and their feelings; we care about how others will react to us.</b>
<b>SELF CONTROL</b>	<b>We stop to think about what it is we'll say or do - in class, on the bus, on the playground - everywhere.</b>

### **Party Invitations**

In keeping with RMS's C.A.R.E.S. philosophy, and as a result of not wanting any child to feel hurt or excluded, we remind parents of the insensitive practice of students bringing party invitations to school. Uninvited students as well as the inviter may be in unnecessarily uncomfortable situations. Please take the time to mail party invitations, or see that they are delivered outside of the school community and school day.



The Rochester Blue Book is a great reference for parents to find addresses. We ask that you not call the office for this information.

### **School Staff Role in Establishing High Behavioral Expectations**

Teachers and support staff model and reinforce positive behavior and compliance with school-wide rules and values. In addition, teachers implement classroom rules and policies. Generally, these rules are developed with student involvement appropriate to age and social development.

These classroom policies are submitted to the Principal for review. After administrative review, teachers will send home written classroom rules and consequences for family discussion. Students and parents/guardians and teachers will sign the Student Conduct Agreement that will be kept on file in the classroom.

Teachers follow all disciplinary steps outlined in their program on a consistent basis. This may include notes or phone calls home, after school time, individual contracts as deemed appropriate, or other strategies.

Teachers and parents who have ongoing concerns about a student's behavior have several sources of support - the School Adjustment counselor, Administration, and the Staff Assistance Team.

### **Responsive Classroom**

Rochester Memorial School utilizes the Responsive Classroom approach in supporting our students in the learning process and throughout the school day. All RMS teachers and administrators have participated in Responsive Classroom training.

Responsive Classroom is a way of teaching and leading that creates a safe, challenging, and joyful classroom and school wide climate for all students. Teachers who use the Responsive Classroom approach understand that all of students' needs—academic, social, emotional, and physical—are important.

Elementary teachers create an environment that responds to all of those needs so that your child can do his or her best learning. The Responsive Classroom approach develops teachers' competencies in four key areas:

1. Engaging Academics—Teachers create learning tasks that are active, interactive, appropriately challenging, purposeful, and connected to students' interests.
2. Positive Community—Teachers nurture a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers.
3. Effective Management—Teachers create a calm, orderly environment that promotes autonomy and allows students to focus on learning.
4. Developmentally Responsive Teaching—Teachers use knowledge of child development, along with observations of students, to create a developmentally appropriate learning environment.

### **Student Fee, Fines and Charges (Approved by the Rochester School Committee)**

The School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges. A school may exact a fee or charge only upon School Committee approval. The schools, however, may:

- ***Charge students enrolled in certain course for the cost of materials used in projects that will become the property of the student.***
- ***Charge for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies and equipment.***

Students who are indigent are exempt from paying fees. However, indigent students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies and equipment.

All student fees and charges, both optional and required, will be listed and described annually in each school's handbook or in some other written form and distributed to each student. The notice will advise students that fees are to be paid and of the penalties for their failure to pay them. Permissible penalties include the withholding of report cards until payment is made or denial of participation in extra class activities while the student is enrolled in this District. Any fee or charge due to any school in the District and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

#### **Replacement Fee Recommendation:**

Chromebook Complete Unit Replacement	\$300.00
Chromebook Screen	\$50.00
45W Adapter with Power Cord (USB-C Connection)	\$50.00
Keyboard	\$50.00
iPad Complete Unit	\$325.00
Apple usb-c to lightning cable	\$25.00
Apple usb power adapter (block)	\$25.00
Case	\$50.00

#### **Bullying**

In the spring of 2010 the legislature and governor enacted an anti-bullying law that impacts all schools in Massachusetts. Bullying is defined as a type of violence that occurs when someone uses his or her power unfairly and repeatedly to hurt someone else. The law recognizes bullying as any repeated word, look, sign, or act that hurts a person's body, feelings, or things. All staff members will receive training during this year that will better equip them to deal with students' needs in this area. We recognize each student for his or her unique qualities, attributes, and characteristics. We embrace the differences among all students and will continue to foster an environment of acceptance with an appreciation for those differences.

#### **DISCRIMINATION**

The Rochester School District adheres to the following Anti-Racism Resolution:

WHEREAS, as schools have the responsibility to equip students with their civil right of obtaining a free and appropriate public education, it is the responsibility of each school to ensure we create a welcoming community for ALL students.

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility that every district provide to all district staff, including School Committee members annual professional development on diversity, anti-racism, equity and inclusion;

WHEREAS, every district will commit to recruiting and retaining a diverse and culturally responsive teaching workforce.



WHEREAS, every district will examine their policies for institutional and systemic racialized practices and implement change with sustainable policies that are evidence based.

WHEREAS, every district will incorporate into their curriculum the history of racial oppression and works by diverse authors and works from diverse perspectives.

WHEREAS, we as school district leaders can no longer remain silent to the issues of racism and hate that continue to impact our public and private institutions.

RESOLVED: that the Rochester School District and all the school districts in the Commonwealth must guarantee that racist practices are eradicated, and diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty and staff. We must ensure our own school culture and that of every district in the Commonwealth is actively anti-racist.

Treating people differently, or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study in a public school because of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). A person may not be subjected to discipline or more severe punishment for wrongdoing, nor denied the same rights as other students, because of his/her membership in a protected class.

The Rochester School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, homelessness or disability in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical conduct on school property or at a school-related event, function or activity relating to an individual's action or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status), that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's programs or activities, by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. For purposes of this policy, harassment shall also mean conduct, if it persists, that will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational environment.

## **RETALIATION**

Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under the district's Comprehensive Civil Rights Policy, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

## **HATE CRIME**

A hate crime is a crime motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice, or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because of his/her actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age disability or sex. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another's property.

## **Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policies**

- Everyone has the right to feel safe in and out of school. Any form of bullying or cyberbullying is forbidden in any location. *Bullying* refers to repeated, intentional acts of physical or mental cruelty or intimidation between two people who are unequal in real or perceived social power. Targets of school bullies may be perceived as "different" in either subtle or noticeable ways. Bullying is *not* simply "conflict". The most common type of bullying is verbal or psychological but technological advances in our society mean that the next most common type of bullying is, or soon will be, written

in the form of cyber bullying.

- Every reported act of bullying will be investigated, action will be taken where necessary, and parents will be notified. The school can investigate any bullying or cyberbullying that occurs on or off school grounds if it is having an apparent impact on the student's education.
- School disciplinary actions will be taken if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school, disrupts the education of the victim or disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
- Disciplinary actions range from a warning to after school detention, an in or out of school suspension, and may include notifying police.
- Targets must seek help from an adult. Reports of bullying can be made to parents, guardians, principals, teachers, counselors, or any trusted adult. The adult will immediately inform the principal and an investigation will begin. It is important to note that a member of the school staff may be named as the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report. For example, the following staff members (but not limited to) could be named: educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, and advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.
- Retaliation is prohibited against a person who witnesses and reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or has reliable information about bullying.

#### **School Contacts**

- Derek J. Medeiros, Principal (508)763-2049 ext.2010 derekmedeiros@oldrochester.org
- Charles West, Assistant Principal ext. 2224 charleswest@oldrochester.org
- Sharon Cruz, School Social Worker ext. 2015 sharoncruz@oldrochester.org
- Jamie Pacheco, School Social Worker ext.1116 jamiepacheco@oldrochester.org

#### **Video Cameras**

The School Committee, after carefully considering the privacy rights of students and drivers and the District's duty to ensure discipline and protect the health, welfare, and safety of staff and students on school transportation vehicles, has authorized the use of video cameras on its transportation vehicles when deemed necessary by school administration.

#### **School Bus Conduct Rules**

1. Treat your bus driver and other passengers with respect and courtesy.
2. Get on and off the bus by moving slowly and safely.
3. Passengers must be seated at all times with their feet on the floor, and facing forward.
4. Conversations should be carried on in a normal tone of voice. Shouting is inappropriate and unsafe.
5. Arms and heads must be kept inside the bus.
6. Windows may be open only by the bus driver or with his/her permission
7. Aisles must be kept clear at all times.
8. Profane and bullying language is forbidden.
9. Horseplay is unsafe and forbidden.
10. Throwing objects is unsafe and forbidden.

### **BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The driver of the offending student will report violations of bus rules to the student, the school principal and the student's parents in writing promptly. Violations may result in the loss of bus privileges or application of discipline sanction up to and including suspension.



1st Offense – Warning

2nd Offense – Detention or Assigned Seat at Front of Bus – *This will be strictly enforced in conjunction with changes to our bullying policy*

3rd Offense - 5-day bus suspension

Repeated Offenses\* - Consideration of permanent exclusion

\*Including exclusion from the bus for the balance of the school year.

Complete copies of the Transportation Policy are available upon request and for all new incoming students.

The Rochester School District has established rules and policies regarding bus discipline. Bus drivers report violations of rules to administration. Parents receive a written notice of the incident and its consequences. School buses are equipped with videotape equipment. Taped incidents may be used in the process of dealing with infractions of school bus rules.

*Copies of the Rochester School District Bus Policy are available at the RMS office or by visiting [this link](#).*

## **District-Wide Behavioral Guidelines**

### **Expectations**

Expectations for behavior are necessary in order to guarantee that those who do not respect these rights do not interrupt the educational rights and privileges of well-behaved students. Rules are required to ensure students' cooperation and responsible behavior. Self-control and consideration of others are the key components.

Students must behave appropriately and accept the leadership of teachers, school officials and others who have been assigned such responsibilities. Students must also adhere to school regulations on the way to and from school, on school grounds, on school buses, during extracurricular activities, or any time while under the school's supervision. Students may be disciplined for other behavior, which directly or indirectly impairs the educational process or good order of the school.

### **Due Process/Suspension and Expulsion**

Ordinarily, Teachers, administrators, and other authorized staff will discipline students for inappropriate behavior. Consequences may include verbal warning, "time out", and notification to parents, referral to the principal, and/or detention. More serious cases, such as disrespectful language, stealing, destruction of property, fighting, drug possession and/or abuse, and possession of dangerous objects, will be referred to the administration, who may impose discipline, including suspension and/or expulsion, as provided by law.

Before a student is removed from the school for disciplinary reasons, the student will be provided with notice and a hearing; however, a student may be immediately removed from school if the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process. In such circumstances, the notice and hearing will follow the initial removal from school.

Notice and hearing will consist of the following: the designated disciplinarian will give the student and/or parent/guardian oral notice of the charges against him/her, and an opportunity to present his/her version of the facts. If the designated disciplinarian thereafter decides to suspend or expel the student, the student will be informed of the length of the suspension or expulsion. The parent will be notified of the hearing and will be permitted to attend.

## Sexual Harassment

We are committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form at any level of the school system. Any student or employee found to have condoned or engaged in sexual harassment may, depending upon the extent of his/her participation, be subject to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including suspension, in or out of school, or permanent exclusion from school in the case of a student, and up to and including termination of employment, in the case of an employee.

If a student or employee believes that s/he has been subjected to sexual harassment, whether by a student, a school employee, or any other person who comes on school property with permission, or that s/he has witnessed the sexual harassment of another, the student or employee should report the incident promptly to the Principal, the Assistant Principal, the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, or any other administrator with whom the student or employee feels comfortable. A complaint of sexual harassment by a student, or by a parent on the student's behalf, may also be made to any counselor or teacher. A counselor or teacher who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate administrator to initiate an investigation.

It is the policy of the school committee to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation. Normally, the Principal/Assistant Principal will conduct the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment or a designee selected by the Principal and will include separate private interviews with the complainant, each person accused of harassment and each of the witnesses, if any. The administrator conducting the investigation will ordinarily document the interview, but those interviewed may also be asked to provide a written statement. All students and employees are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation of sexual harassment. Information provided during an investigation of sexual harassment will be shared with the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. The accused may be informed of the identity of the complainant or witnesses, but, in those circumstances, the accused will be cautioned against reprisals or recriminations or any attempted intimidation or coercion of the complainant or witnesses. At the conclusion of the investigation, the administrator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. If the complainant or the accused is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, either may discuss the issue directly with the superintendent.

## Special Offenses

*Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H*

G.L. Chapter 71, §37H	G.L. Chapter 71, §37H ½	G.L. Chapter 71, §37H ¾
<p><b>Offenses:</b></p> <p>On school premises or at school-sponsored events or activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possession of a dangerous weapon</li><li>• Possession of a controlled substance</li><li>• Assault on a member of the educational staff</li></ul> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p>	<p><b>Offenses:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A felony charge or felony delinquency complaint against a student.</li><li>2. Conviction, adjudication, or admission of guilt with respect to such felony.</li></ol> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Felony charge or felony</li></ol>	<p><b>Offenses:</b></p> <p>Any offense that is not addressed in 37H or 37H ½.</p> <p><b>Consequence:</b></p> <p>May not suspend a student from school long-term (i.e. more than 10 days) until other remedies and consequences have been</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exclusion for amount of time up to expulsion;</li> </ul> <p>Principal may suspend and not expel as he or she deems appropriate</p>	<p>delinquency complaint: suspension for a period of time deemed appropriate by principal <b>if</b> the</p> <p>Principal determines the student's continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school.</p> <p>2. Felony or felony delinquency conviction or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony: removal for a period of time up to expulsion (i.e. permanent exclusion) <b>if</b> the principal determines that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school.</p>	<p>considered; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consequences other than suspension may draw from evidence- based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and behavioral interventions and supports.</li> <li>● No student may be suspended for more than 90 school days in a school year.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Due Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Constitutional due process;</li> <li>● Prior notice to student of charge and written notice of right to hearing;</li> <li>● Right to representation at hearing; and to present evidence and witnesses at hearing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Due Process (for either suspension or expulsion):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Constitutional due process;</li> <li>● Written notice of the charges and of the reasons before the suspension takes effect;</li> <li>● Principal may determine the appropriate amount of time for suspension;</li> <li>● Written notice of the right to appeal to the superintendent;</li> <li>● Suspension remains in effect pending appeal to the Superintendent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Due Process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Except for in-school suspension and emergency removals, prior oral and written notice of the charge to the student, and to the student's parent, and the opportunity for a meeting/hearing with the principal before suspension takes effect. Consult 603 CMR 53:08 for details on notices.</li> <li>● Consult 603 CMR 53:07 for emergency removal process and 603 CMR 53:10 for in-school suspension process</li> <li>● Explicit requirement to</li> </ul>
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		<p>translate notice of the charges and the reasons in primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal must make and document reasonable efforts to include the parent in meeting/hearing with the student.</li> <li>• Principal must audiotape the hearing if requested by the parent and all those attending the hearing must be informed of the taping.</li> <li>• Following hearing, principal must provide a written decision; and if a long-term suspension imposed, must inform student and parent in writing of the right to appeal to the superintendent and the process to be followed; translate notice of appeal rights in primary language of the home, or other means of communication where appropriate.</li> <li>• Before any out-of-school suspension of a student in preschool or grades K – 3, principal must notify superintendent in writing of the alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school.</li> </ul>
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<b>Appeal from Principal's Decision:</b>	<b>Appeal from Principal's Decision to Suspend or to Expel:</b>	<b>Appeal from Principal's Decision:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeline for requesting appeal: written request</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to appeal expulsion decision to superintendent</li> <li>• Timeline for requesting appeal: ten days from date of expulsion</li> <li>• Right to counsel at hearing</li> <li>• Superintendent can make factual determinations as well as determine consequences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeline for requesting appeal: no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion</li> <li>• Superintendent must hold hearing within 3 calendar days of receipt of request and issue a decision within 5 calendar days.</li> <li>• Superintendent may overturn or alter the decision.</li> </ul> <p><b>A student may appeal a suspension decision and the subsequent expulsion decision (following the conviction, adjudication or admission of guilt) regarding the same offense.</b></p>	<p>not later than 5 calendar days following effective date of suspension; parent can request extension for up to 7 calendar days, which must be granted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The superintendent must hold hearing within 3 calendar days of the parent's request for a hearing. The student or parent may request up to 7 additional calendar days. If so, the superintendent must allow the extension. The superintendent may have the hearing without the parent if the superintendent has made a good faith effort to include the parent.</li> <li>• The student has the right to present oral and written testimony, to cross examine witnesses, and to counsel at his or her expense at the hearing.</li> <li>• The superintendent must audiotape the hearing and notify hearing participants that the hearing will be taped.</li> <li>• The superintendent determines the facts and consequences, if any, but cannot impose a consequence greater than the principal decided. A written decision is due within 5 calendar days of the hearing.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Provision of Education Services:</b></p> <p>Provide every student an opportunity to make <i>academic progress</i> during the period of suspension (whether in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion, to make up assignments, and earn credits missed. A district that suspends or expels a student for <i>more than 10 consecutive days</i> must provide the student and the parent with <b>a list</b> of alternative educational services.</p> <p><b>See G.L. c. 76, §21 and 603 CMR 53.13 for details, including required notice.</b></p>	<p><b>Provision of Education Services: Same</b></p>	<p><b>Provision of Education Services: Same</b></p>
<p><b>Discipline Collection and Reporting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collect and report to the Department data concerning the types and lengths of removals, suspensions, and expulsions, and access to education services.</li> <li>● Periodically review discipline data by selected student populations; determine extent of disciplinary removals and the impact on such populations; adjust practice as appropriate.</li> <li>● Department will provide assistance to school(s) if Commissioner identifies school(s) in district that have the highest percentage of</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discipline Collection and Reporting: Same</b></p>	<p><b>Discipline Collection and Reporting: Same</b></p>

suspensions or expulsions in Massachusetts for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year. • Create a plan to address disparities if Commissioner determines that school or district discipline data reflect significant disparities by race and ethnicity or disabilities. See 603 CMR 53.14 for details.		
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### **Procedure for the Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

If a suspension of more than ten days is proposed, or if a shorter series of suspensions would result in more than ten cumulative days out of class, for any student who has an IEP or 504 Plan, the school must convene a TEAM meeting before the expiration of the ten-day period.

At that meeting, the TEAM must first develop or review a behavioral intervention plan, consistent with the functional behavioral assessment of the student, then review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that is the subject of the discipline action. If the TEAM determines that the student's misconduct is a manifestation of the student's special needs, or results from an inappropriate special education program/program placement, or from an IEP that was not fully implemented, the long-term suspension or expulsion may not be imposed.

If the TEAM concludes that the misconduct is not related to the student's special needs, and it does not result from an inappropriate special education program/placement, or an IEP that was not fully implemented, then the long-term suspension or expulsion may be imposed, following the procedures listed in the law. Among other things the TEAM must offer placement in an interim alternative setting that will (1) enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, (2) enable the student to receive services listed in the last agreed upon IEP, and (3) include any services and modifications designed to address the student's behavior. The parents have the right to request an expedited hearing before the Bureau of Special Appeals (BSEA) to challenge the manifestation determination or the alternative program. If the parents request a hearing, the "stay put" provision of the IDEA entitles the student to remain in the last agreed upon educational placement while the procedures are pending before the BSEA. The right does not apply if the student is charged with possession of a dangerous weapon or drugs. In those circumstances, the school personnel may remove the student to an interim alternative setting without parental consent for up to 45 calendar days. Similarly, if the school convinces the BSEA hearing officer that the student's continued presence in the current placement poses a danger to that student or to others, the student may be ordered into an interim alternative setting for up to 45 calendar days without parental consent.



***Procedural Requirements Applied to Students not yet determined to be Eligible for Special Education:***

1. If, prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:
  - a. The parent had expressed concern in writing;
  - or b. The parent had requested an evaluation;
  - or c. District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.
  - d. The district may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.
1. If the district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.
2. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

**Conflict of Interest Law and Gifts for Teachers**

The Commonwealth's conflict of interest law, G.L. c. 268A, and the financial disclosure law, G.L.c.268B, restrict gifts and gratuities that school staff may receive. All teachers and school volunteers must be made aware of the content of these laws, specifically sections 3 and 23 of 268A, and section 6 of 268B. Section 3(b) prohibits a public employee from requesting or receiving anything of 'substantial value'\* which is given for or because of an official act or act within the public employee's official responsibility. Similarly, under section 3(a), no one may give or offer such gifts to public employees.

In addition, G.L.c. 268B, section 6, specifically prohibits public employees or members of their immediate families from soliciting or accepting gifts with an aggregate value of \$100.00 or more in a calendar year. Next, under G.L.c. 268A, section 23(b)(2), public (school) employees are prohibited from using or attempting to use their position to obtain for themselves or others unwarranted privileges of substantial value that are not properly available to similarly situated individuals. Finally, even if a gift or gratuity is not of substantial value or does not fall within the prohibitions discussed above, G.L. c. 268A, section 23(b)(3) will, in many situations, require public (school) employees to disclose to their appointing authority, the gift and their relationship with the giver.

All school volunteers are required to be aware of the state's general laws and language surrounding gifts.

***\*Anything worth \$50.00 or more is considered to be "of substantial value" for the purposes of the conflict of interest law.***

The full content of the State Ethics Commission law is available from the school office or online at <http://www.mass.gov>.

OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55**  
135 Marion Road, Mattapoisett, MA 02739  
Tel. (508) 758 -2772 FAX (508) 758-2802  
[www.olderochester.org](http://www.olderochester.org)

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Old Rochester Regional School District and the Massachusetts School Superintendency Union No. 55, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, Massachusetts are committed to equal employment and educational opportunity for all members of the school community. Students and employees are protected from discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender identity, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, homelessness, or disability in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities.

The schools are also committed to maintaining a school and work environment that is free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, pregnancy, homelessness, and disability. Harassment includes physical or verbal conduct that is derogatory; this may include jokes, gestures, unsolicited remarks, or other behavior that creates an intimidating or offensive working or learning environment.

A student or employee who has a concern about discrimination or harassment should inform the Principal or the Superintendent of Schools, who will take appropriate steps to attempt to resolve the situation, such as discussion with involved persons, identifying and questioning of witnesses, and other appropriate steps. In most cases, a resolution will be achieved. However, if it is determined that a hearing is warranted, a hearing will be held before the Superintendent of Schools or a person that he or she may designate.

The goals of the above grievance procedures are to resolve complaints in a fair and timely manner and to ensure compliance with nondiscriminatory practices. Additionally, reprisals or retaliation against any individual who reports on, or files a discrimination or harassment complaint is strictly prohibited.

If you wish to discuss your rights, would like further information, or want to obtain help in filing a complaint, you may contact the Superintendent of Schools. The telephone number is (508) 758-2772 x1956. Any person having inquiries concerning the School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, or Chapter 622 is directed to contact the superintendent of schools, who has been designated by the School District to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, and Chapter 622, or write to:

Office for Civil Rights  
John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse  
Room 222  
Post Office Square  
Boston, MA 02109



**OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55  
Marion – Mattapoisett – Rochester, Massachusetts**

**Annual Notification of Rights under PPRA**

August 31, 2021

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

*Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education:*

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

*Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:*

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

*Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:*

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The School Committee has adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The school district will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The school district will also directly notify, such as through US Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The school district will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901