



RASD COVID 19 UPDATE
November 6, 2020

Dear RASD Parents and Guardians,

I hope this email finds you well and your family healthy and safe! I appreciate your patience as we navigate COVID 19 and the second surge of the virus. I understand that the changes we have endured since March 13, 2020 can be frustrating at times. I also understand that not knowing from day to day can be overwhelming. But again, I want to thank you for your patience, understanding and flexibility in our efforts to keep students, staff and the community safe.

After several meetings today and after consulting with both the Elk County Department of Health Nurse and local providers, **the Ridgway Middle and High School students will return to in person instruction on Monday, November 9, 2020.** **If you were quarantined last week and are not sure of your return date, please contact the school nurse on Friday at 814-773-3164.**

RMHS students who borrowed a device for full remote learning MUST return the device and adapter on Monday, November 9, 2020. Devices and adapters will be collected during 1st period on Monday. I want to thank the middle and high students, staff and families for their quick transition to full remote learning. I heard a lot of positive feedback from staff, students and parents.

Local Community and District Data Informing the Decision to Return to In Person Instruction for RMHS (as of 11-05-2020):

- Per an email from Pennsylvania Department of Education on Monday, November 2, 2020 - Elk Co is in "moderate" for the previous 7-day window.
- As of 11-05-2020, Ridgway has 10 active COVID 19 cases in the past 7 days (this is down from 13 the previous day - 11-04-2020) - this is a good trend.
- Per PA Department of Health-Elk County Nurse on Thursday, November 5, 2020; there are no pending investigations into COVID cases for Ridgway schools.
- Per local provider update on Thursday, November 5, 2020; there is one pending test result for an elementary student.
- By Monday, November 9, 2020, 85 of the previously quarantined or isolated staff/students at RMHS are able to return per PA DOH guidelines.
- By Wednesday, November 11, 2020, 40 of the remaining quarantined staff/students at RMHS are able to return per PA DOH guidelines.
- RMHS has no known active positive cases of COVID 19 in staff or students and therefore is eligible for in person instruction.
- FSG school environment remains stable in terms of COVID 19 exclusions. There are no known positive student/staff cases at FSG at this time. In person instruction is recommended to continue.
- Winter open gyms may resume on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 for 6-12 athletics teams.

Reminders and Updates to PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

- RASD is using PA DOH and PDE Guidance to make decisions. Please review at <https://rasd.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/Determining-Instructional-Models-School-District-Closure.pdf> .
- We are tracking, analyzing and making decisions based on community and school based data (see above).
- We are aware that the county case counts are increasing at this time partially due to an outbreak at a local nursing home. Again, the most relevant data for our decision making is based on the community and each school's specific data points, tracked daily.
- A global connect call and email was sent to parents on 11-0-52020 providing information about returning to in person instruction and device collection.
- Please be vigilant about completing your child's wellness check every day (see attached).
- IF your child does not feel well, they MUST stay home - this will help to mitigate the spread of COVID 19, reduce in school exposure, and keep our school open for in person instruction.
- There is a lot of confusion about cases, close contacts, and contacts of close contacts. RASD is following the PA DOH and PDE guidance. If you are a close contact of a positive case and your exposure occurs in school, the school nurse or an administrator will let your child and you know. The following information is helpful <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/HAN/2020-PAHAN-525-09-14-ALT%20-%20Guidance.pdf>
- Close contacts will also be contacted by phone, by the PA Department of Health, and asked a series of questions.

We want to thank all of you for your efforts in keeping our students, staff and community safe AND keeping our schools open. Please wear a face covering, maintain a social distance of at least 6ft, wash/sanitize your hands AND if you are sick PLEASE STAY HOME.

Sincerely,
Heather McMahan-Vargas
RASD Superintendent