

 **Rankin School District #98**

 **2021-2022 School Year**

 ***“Emerging Stronger Together”***

3/28/22

Plan subject to change

Our School Plan for the 2021-2022 school year is fluid and should be considered “subject to change” as the District will continually be monitoring, evaluating, and assessing our plan as we respond and adjust to the ongoing happenings related to the pandemic.

For questions related to this plan and for ease of communication, please email Dr. Matt Gordon, mgordon@rankin98.org.

***EASE Of READInG***

***Given the fluidness of the plan, grey highlights, italics, and increased font size are included for ease of reading..***

FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS OF PLAN

Our District’s Mission of “Empowering all students to reach their maximum potential and become productive, respectful, responsible, and well-rounded citizens” is combined with our Vision of “Building the foundation of the future by engaging youth through rigorous and diverse educational opportunities.” In accomplishing the District’s Mission and furthering our Vision last year, an extraordinary amount of communication, flexibility, character, teamwork, and resilience was needed. *Emerging Stronger Together* is the goal as we continue the efforts described above again this year. Rankin becoming a stronger/better organization as a result of the monumental challenges we have faced, greatly benefits our students!

Let’s continue working TOGETHER for what is best for our students. In regards to communication, it is imperative that staff and parents make the District aware of any COVID-19 health situations. Please be prepared for the District to ask specific questions regarding symptoms related to absences. The District, while protecting the identity of students and staff, will always strive to keep everyone informed as best as possible.

PHILOSOPHY

The safety and well-being of our students and staff remains the District’s top priority. Further, the District has prioritized providing In-Person Learning that closely resembles, as much as possible, a return to teaching and learning in pre-pandemic conditions.

The District understands that vaccination is not currently required. We respect, value, and care for all of our students and staff regardless of their vaccination status.

Vaccination information can be accessed here [TCHD Vaccine Link](https://www.tazewellhealth.org/399/COVID-19-VACCINES). Information about an individual’s vaccination status can be helpful when making decisions for students and staff related to COVID-19 for this school year. Thus, please be aware that the District ***may*** inquire about vaccination statuses and vaccination documentation via seeking the information from students/parents and staff in a voluntary manner. Showing proof of vaccination documentation is not mandated under current guidance; however, mitigation measures ***may***differ for those who provide proof of vaccination as set forth in Federal and State guidance. If an individual or parent wishes to avoid application of certain mitigation measures required for unvaccinated individuals, proof of vaccination ***may***be necessary. The District realizes that this practice may not be ideal and/ or popular with some; however, this information is helpful as the District continues to provide In-Person Learning, which, along with safety, is a top-priority of the District.

Please note that our approach to mitigation measures should be considered multi-tiered and will be based on the current local conditions. The District’s Mitigation Levels are different procedures and strategies within the levels designed to mitigate the spread of the virus based on the data and conditions in our school and within the county our school resides in. We certainly commit to keeping everyone regularly updated regarding our plan throughout this entire school year, including when/if the need exists to change the Mitigation Level in our District.

Please do note that upon the daily reporting of symptoms, the District does request to know if the symptoms are within a 3-day window of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Various symptoms may be attributed to the 3-day window of receiving the vaccine.  The day of receiving the vaccine is considered day one.

VACCINATION

In regards to what is now considered “fully vaccinated,” it means:

* Those 18 years or older who have received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses, including boosters for any individual who completed Pfizer-BioNTech primary vaccination series beyond the past 5 months, the Moderna primary vaccination series beyond the past 5 months, or Johnson & Johnson Janssen’s (J&J) primary vaccination dose beyond the past 2 months (and additional primary doses for some immunocompromised people)
* A student aged 5-17 years who completed the primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine.

RESPONSIBILITY OF RANKIN COMMUNITY

Protecting everyone from COVID-19 and other illnesses is everyone’s responsibility and relates to the following:

* + Students and staff must stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and contact the school for a review before return. Also, it is preferred that all students and staff experiencing signs of any infectious illness contact their healthcare provider for further evaluation.
	+ Special attention is required for students and staff when experiencing:
		- Fever - The District is considering greater than 100.4 as the threshold for fever.
		- Other symptoms of COVID-19 - The known COVID-19 symptoms can be found [HERE](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).
		- Suspecting a positive case of COVID-19
		- Awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test
		- Receiving a positive result of a COVID-19 test
		- ***Students/parents and staff experiencing the above need to notify the school as a determination for a plan forward will be made.***
	+ The District will expect all staff and students to attend school only when healthy.

MITIGATION LEVELS

As noted, the District is taking a multi-tiered approach to mitigating the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The District will determine mitigation levels by consulting the [IDPH Tazewell County Detailed Metrics & School Metrics](https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countyschool?county=Tazewell) and our [School's Weekly Statistics](https://www.rankin98.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/COVID-19%20Information%20and%20Resources%7CCOVID-19%20Daily%20Statistics%20and%20Update) (i.e. number of positive cases for students and staff). Each Mitigation Level has additional mitigation strategies to assist in keeping the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses to a minimum.

Unless notified otherwise, the 21-22 school year will begin at Mitigation Level 1 described as (Baseline for 21-22 during Global Pandemic).

The Administration will continually assess the appropriate Mitigation Level for the District. Consideration to adjust the Mitigation Level of the District will be based upon the following:

1. The **weekly** number of current positive cases and exclusions for students and staff

within Rankin School District #98.

2. The determination of Minimal, Moderate, and Substantial for Tazewell County’s

metrics of the:

* Weekly New Case Rate Per 100,000 People
* Weekly Count of New Cases Increase
* Weekly Count of New Youth Cases Increase
* Weekly Test Positivity

With the consideration of the above, a determination may be made by the Administration to increase the Mitigation Level for the District when:

1. The **weekly** number of current positive cases for students and staff within Rankin School District #98 are increasing substantially.

AND/OR

1. Three of the four IDPH Metrics are deemed Substantial.

\*The Administration ***may***also strive to consult with the Tazewell County Health Department before adjusting the District’s Mitigation Level. The District will also pride itself on regular, ongoing communication and updates that will be provided to the Rankin Community.

STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATING RISKS AT ALL LEVELS

* + - * Social Distancing - While it is important that our students interact with each other on a daily basis, the social distancing concept will be continued in attempt to avoid the spread of the virus. The District will strive for 3-feet or greater of physical distancing throughout our classrooms and building to the extent possible.
			* Modifying facilities, when possible, to allow for physical distancing.
			* The adjusted approach for last year of school-wide cleaning and disinfecting procedures during the school day (i.e. cleaning of high-touch areas during the school day) will continue this year until further notice.
			* Regular handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be promoted daily.
			* Seating charts will be utilized in the classrooms and for busses.
			* Providing accommodations for students with disabilities who have special needs.
			* ***Face Coverings – (Athletics/Co-curriculars/Extracurriculars) – Generally, Rankin will follow our school plan, unless required by IESA and/or requested by another host school.***
			* Last school year’s adjusted pick-up plan for the end of the school day for students (i.e. multiple doors and pickup points) will continue this year until further notice.

STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATING RISKS AT LEVELS I, II, & III

* Mitigation Levels I (Baseline for 21-22 during Global Pandemic)
* Screening - students and staff self-monitor daily for COVID-19 symptoms.
* ***Face coverings (Indoors and Outdoors) unless directed otherwise (i.e. positive case days 6-10) are as follows regardless of vaccination status:***
* ***For students (age 2 and older), it is the decision of the parents***
* ***For non-students (adults), it’s each individual’s decision***
* ***Contact Tracing & Exclusions. Generally, contact tracing will occur and the District will make an attempt to notify parents of our students and staff of potential COVID-19 exposure. Generally, temporary exclusions for students or staff will not occur for those who are asymptomatic regardless of vaccination status.***

* Mitigation Level II (Moderate for 21-22 during Global Pandemic)
	+ Screening - students and staff daily COVID-19 symptom checks at school are implemented (i.e. morning temperature checks and daily monitoring admission/symptom tickets).
	+ ***Face coverings (Indoors and Outdoors) unless directed otherwise (i.e. positive case days 6-10) are as follows regardless of vaccination status:***
	+ ***For students (age 2 and older), it is the decision of the parents***
	+ ***For non-students (adults), it’s each individual’s decision***
	+ ***Contact Tracing & Exclusions. Generally, contact tracing will occur and the District will make an attempt to notify parents of our students and staff of potential COVID-19 exposure. Generally, temporary exclusions for students or staff will not occur for those who are asymptomatic regardless of vaccination status.***
* Consideration of utilizing water fountains only for refillable bottles will occur.
	+ No visitors, unless approved by Administration for educational purposes.
	+ Students will not change for P.E.
	+ An increase in morning before school stations will be considered.
* Mitigation Level III (Substantial for 21-22 during Global Pandemic)
	+ Screening - students and staff daily COVID-19 symptom checks at school are implemented (i.e. morning temperature checks and daily monitoring admission/symptom tickets).
	+ ***Face coverings (Indoors and Outdoors) unless directed otherwise (i.e. positive case days 6-10) are as follows regardless of vaccination status:***
	+ ***For students (age 2 and older), it is the decision of the parents***
	+ ***For non-students (adults), it’s each individual’s decision***
	+ ***Contact Tracing & Exclusions. Generally, contact tracing will occur and the District will make every attempt to notify parents of our students and staff of potential COVID-19 exposure. Generally, temporary exclusions for students or staff will not occur for those who are asymptomatic regardless of vaccination status.***
	+ Consideration of utilizing water fountains only for refillable bottles will occur.
	+ No visitors, unless approved by Administration for student services.
	+ Students will not use locker rooms and will not change for P.E.
	+ Students congregating during unstructured times will be limited to the extent possible.
	+ An increase in the number of morning before school stations may occur to allow for additional spacing.
	+ Passing periods may be tiered to allow for more distancing in hallways.
	+ Field trips, assemblies, and some programs may be canceled or postponed.
	+ Consideration of a Special Board Meeting will occur to review if additional plan guidance for the remainder of the school year is needed.

DISTRICT’S REVIEW PROCEDURES (medical)

NURSE AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE CLINICAL JUDGMENT

The District nurse’s clinical judgment and/or Administrative judgment is included in the District’s protocols for COVID-19.  The District includes this notice to help everyone understand that specific situations may cause the District to provide additional restrictions, adjustments, and/or attendance restrictions for certain situations.

SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS

A process to determine whether unvaccinated/vaccinated symptomatic individuals, untested, should be subject to **a *temporary***exclusion will be utilized. Vaccination status ***may***be requested and considered in these cases. Proof of vaccination status ***may***be requested in these cases. In addition, the following two steps will be utilized:

Step 1:

Check for the following symptoms, which indicate possible COVID-19 illness that puts persons at risk for spreading the illness to others:

* Fever (100.4°F or higher)
* New onset of moderate to severe headache
* Shortness of breath
* New cough, sore throat, vomiting, and/or diarrhea
* New loss of sense of taste or smell
* Fatigue from unknown cause
* Muscle or body aches from unknown cause

Step 2:

If the individual has any of the above symptoms and/or potential exposure to COVID-19, a ***temporary exclusion may be implemented on a case by case basis based on all factors involved and/or via nurse or administrative clinical judgment.***

Potential exposure by a person is defined as:

* Had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19;
* Traveled to or lived in an area where the local, Tribal, territorial, or state health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases;
* Live in areas of high community transmission while the school remains open.

UNVACCINATED/VACCINATED PERSON – MAKING A DETERMINATION

The District (Nurse or Administration) will review the information gained from the 2-step process. After considering all available information, a determination will be made and all efforts will be made to contact and/or consent with families. Typically, the District would choose from any of the following options:

* A COVID-19 test is administered and the results are evaluated
* Temporary exclusion for COVID-19 positive or probable case. ***Length of temporary exclusion determined on a case by case basis.***
* Exclusion based on existing school illness management policy (until symptom-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications and have had no diarrhea or vomiting in the previous 24 hours).  Other illnesses besides COVID-19 have specific criteria for when a student or staff member can return to school [IDPH Guidance](https://www.rankin98.org/vnews/display.v/SEC/COVID-19%7CIDPH%20Communicable%20Disease%20in%20Schools%20Guidance).
* Request medical evaluation or additional medical information from a healthcare provider
* Determine the student does not need to be immediately excluded and monitor closely

UNVACCINATED/VACCINATED PERSON - POSITIVE TEST

* Staff or students who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should isolate for 5 days after onset of symptoms, or 5 days from specimen collection date if no symptoms are present.
* Staff or students who test positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms or their symptoms are resolving can be released from isolation after 5 days. To calculate the 5-day isolation period, day 0 is the first day of symptoms or specimen collection date if asymptomatic. If they continue to have fever or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end isolation until they are fever-free, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours and their other symptoms have improved.
* ***For staff or students returning in this situation, generally, for days 6-10, versus remaining at home, masks (indoors and outdoors) are required for these few days.***

COVID-TESTING @ RANKIN

***COVID-19 Testing at Rankin will be utilized when the District and staff or families members are in agreement with the testing.*** Rankin School District #98 has entered into an agreement with Achieve Health Management (AHM) for COVID-19 Testing.  You can access the agreement [here](https://www.rankin98.org/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/6154b6c99e9ed/Testing%20Services%20Agreement%2009%2010%202021%20Rankin%20%2398%20Fully%20Executed%20Copy.pdf).  AHM was recommended by the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) for COVID-19 Testing services.   Please see comments from IASA about AHM from August 3, 2021, *"A major challenge facing school leaders is how to oversee a successful COVID-19 testing program that can help keep kids in school but also be affordable for your district and manageable for your staff. As IASA has done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to share with you an option to consider that we believe can help your district navigate this pressing challenge.*[*Achieve Health Management's COVID-19 Testing for Schools*](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001peg6Ghwtxf_pOs7EfY5KxHoZNFIOHbGRepZ3cosmP20C387IzcKg-ogqDgvDLL3BDtvnU6z7PabJPMxAZ6hSaKRmG9VOCg5Ty5cBqCY4rJEFuPpsg_DphomLIx4_oc2N6zIOqaHtR_t_y8tFTtejUzbtM_IvRzl_r3jfJ9dpES-ISlpKXXOB9eqpCWV_Cu3N&c=Ti9EWn-XadDnYOCgUFoKykD2_qiwLas82LPT8hhooMtmAtmgc2WqGA==&ch=pJiu68LeggioLav9NKRMO-SxeI60kT1VeFQP7HoEneOvRXwG0AcegQ==)*includes a team of diagnostic experts, as well as a CLIA-certified, nationwide laboratory network that analyzes multiple specimen types and reports results within 48 hours. Achieve diagnostic experts will coordinate the entire testing process on your behalf, and the company has the capacity to administer and process high volume PCR testing for students, staff and community members. Rapid Antigen testing is available on site.  Achieve Health Management was approved to receive federal grant money for COVID-19 testing and therefore is able to conduct this service at no cost to your district, no matter what tier.  We were also impressed with the accuracy of the COVID-19 tests Achieve Health Management provides, and the ability to detect SARS-CoV-2, as well as the Delta and Gamma variants."*

It is imperative that everyone understand that NO STUDENT WILL BE FORCED TO TEST!  Further, it is also crucial that everyone understand that we must have signed parent permission in writing for each and every test and provided or emailed to Nicole Washkowiak, District Nurse at nwashkowiak@rankin98.org.

Mrs. Washkowiak can assist families with any questions about the form.  The form includes the need for insurance information for each individual.  AMH has continually communicated to the District that the costs of the tests are submitted to private insurance carriers, Health Resources & Services Administration, and Medicare.   AMH via

<https://achievehealthmanagement.com/illinois-schooltesting/> states, *"Achieve's third-party billing and reimbursement services were designed to submit claims for Covid testing directly to private insurance, HRSA, and Medicare so there will be no cost for testing to students, faculty, and staff."*

The GenBody antigen test information can be found [here](https://www.rankin98.org/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/6154b6c99e9ed/GenBody%20Antigen%20Testing.pdf).  Please understand that the District will ONLY utilize the Anterior Nares specimen collection process, which is just inside the nose and not intrusive.

We understand you may have questions regarding our testing procedures.  Please feel free to contact Dr. Matt Gordon at mgordon@rankin98.org or Nicole Washkowiak at nwashkowiak@rankin98.org.    You can also call the school at 309-346-3182 as well.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

The District realizes this pandemic has created various challenges and adversity for our students. In conjunction with our staff, our Social Worker will be providing a variety of different supports (check-ins, one on one support, and group support). Beginning August 16th, all parents are encouraged to contact our Social Worker, Sarah Grako, at sgrako@rankin98.org, to make her aware of any social/emotional wellness concerns that you may have for your children.

VISITORS

***Visitors will follow the guidance associated with the Mitigation Level the District is operating under unless directed otherwise.***

STAFF COVID-19 RELATED ABSENCES

The Administration and Rankin Association of Teachers have approved a Memorandum of Understanding to allow for the possibility of telework options for Staff- COVID-19 related absences for the 2021-2022 school year.