



# Rockford Public Schools

Quality Community – Quality Schools  
*Together Building a Tradition of Excellence*

## **2020-21 Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan** *as described in Public Act 149, Section 98a*

On August 20, 2020, Governor Whitmer signed House Bill 5913 into law as Public Act 149. Section 98a states that in order to receive state aid for 2020-21, districts must provide for instruction under an extended COVID-19 Learning Plan (“Plan”) that has been approved by an intermediate district or authorizing body. The Plan does not replace the District’s COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, it is an additional plan that includes new assurances and sections on educational goals, instructional delivery, grading, and equitable access. PA 149 does not apply to districts that operate as a cyber school.

District educational goals written for all students and all subgroups must be established no later than September 15, 2020, and submitted in the Plan to the Kent intermediate School District no later than October 1, 2020, for approval. The Kent ISD will transmit the approved plan to the superintendent of public instruction and the state treasurer.

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## **Rockford Public Schools Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan**

**Address of School District:** 350 N. Main Street, Rockford MI 49341

**District Code Number:** 41-210

**District Website Address:** [www.rockfordschools.org](http://www.rockfordschools.org)

**District Contact and Title:** Dr. Michael Shibler, Superintendent of Schools

**District Contact Email Address:** [mshibler@rockfordschools.org](mailto:mshibler@rockfordschools.org)

**Name of Intermediate School District:** Kent Intermediate School District

**Rockford Board of Education Approval:** September 28, 2020

**Kent ISD Approval:** September 29, 2020

## Assurances

1. The Rockford Public Schools will make their approved Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan accessible through the transparency reporting link located on the [district's website](#) no later than October 1, 2020.
2. The Rockford Public Schools will create and make available on its transparency reporting link located on the district website:
  - a report concerning the progress made in meeting the educational goals contained in its Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan not later than February 1, 2021 for goals the district expects to be achieved by the middle of the school year; and
  - a report concerning the progress made in meeting the educational goals contained in its Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan not later than the last day of school of the 2020-21 school year for goals the district expects to be achieved by the end of the school year.
3. For Benchmark Assessments, Rockford Public Schools will:
  - select a benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments that is/are aligned to state standards; and
  - administer the approved benchmark assessment, or local benchmark assessment, or any combination thereof, to all pupils in grades K-8 to measure proficiency in reading and mathematics within the first nine weeks of the 2020-21 school year and again not later than the last day of the 2020-21 school year.
4. If delivering pupil instruction virtually, Rockford Public Schools will:
  - provide pupils with equitable access to technology and the internet necessary to participate in instruction; and
  - expose each pupil to the academic standards that apply for each pupil's grade level or courses in the same scope and sequence as the district had planned for that exposure to occur for in-person instruction.
5. The Rockford Public Schools, in consultation with the Kent County Health Department, will develop guidelines concerning appropriate methods for delivering pupil instruction for the 2020-21 school year that are based on local data that are based on key metrics. A determination concerning the method for delivering pupil instruction shall remain at the discretion of the Rockford Public Schools. Key metrics that the the Rockford Public Schools will consider shall include at least all of the following:
  - COVID-19 cases or positive COVID-19 tests
  - Hospitalizations due to COVID-19
  - Number of deaths resulting from COVID-19 over a 14-day period
  - COVID-19 cases for each day for each one million individuals
  - The percentage of positive COVID-19 tests over a four-week period
  - Health system capacity strength
  - Testing, tracing, and containment infrastructure with regard to COVID-19
6. If the Rockford Public Schools determine that it is safe to provide in-person instruction to pupils, the district will prioritize providing in-person instruction to pupils in grades DK- 5 who are enrolled in the district.

7. The Rockford Public School District assures that:
  - instruction will be delivered as described in this plan and approved by the Rockford Public Schools Board of Education;
  - the description of instructional delivery in this plan matches the delivery of instruction to be delivered during the 2020-21 school year;
  - the Rockford Public Schools will reconfirm how instruction will be delivered during the 2020-21 school year 30 days after the approval of the plan, and every 30 days thereafter, at a meeting of the Board of Education; and
  - public comment will be solicited from the parents or legal guardians of the pupils enrolled in the Rockford Public Schools during a public meeting described in PA 149.
8. The Rockford Public Schools will ensure that students with disabilities are provided with equitable access to instruction and accommodation in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.
9. The Rockford Public Schools will ensure that two 2-way interactions occur between a pupil enrolled in the Rockford Public Schools and the pupil's teacher or at least one of the pupil's teachers during each week of the school year for at least 75% of the pupils enrolled in the district. The Rockford Public Schools will publicly announce its weekly interaction rates at each Board of Education meeting when it reconfirms how instruction is being delivered. The Rockford Public Schools will make those rates available through the transparency reporting link located on the district website each month for the 2020-21 school year.



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Miles J. Postema, President  
2020-21 Board of Education



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Michael S. Shabler, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Dated: September 28, 2020

# Learning Plan Narrative

Why an Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan is necessary to increase pupil engagement and achievement for the 2020-21 school year.

In March 2020, when COVID-19 was first identified in Michigan, school districts throughout the state transitioned to online teaching and learning for all students. A remote-only delivery resulted in a variety of student experiences and loss of academic ground for many.

As we enter the 2020-21 school year, there is a wider-than-usual range of competencies than is typical upon starting a new school year. Equity issues are more pronounced. Teachers needed additional support to prepare for the year as well as opportunities to collaborate to identify the best learning strategies to ensure success for all students.

Regardless of which of the two learning environments a student has chosen (in-person or virtual), the district is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and providing the support necessary to make up for lost time.

The district will establish clearly defined instructional strategies, resources, support, and personnel to work within a growth model so that all students will grow at the grade level pace and depth.

# Educational Goals

The following outlines the educational goals expected to be achieved for the 2020-21 school year. Rockford Public Schools established all of its goals by the September 15, 2020 deadline.

Goals are to be achieved by the middle of the school year and subsequently expected to be achieved by the end of the school year.

Rockford Public Schools is committed to ensuring to the best of our ability that all of the following apply to the educational goals described in this section:

- (a) The goals include increased pupil achievement or, if growth can be validly and reliably measured using a benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments, growth on a benchmark assessment in the aggregate and for all subgroups of pupils;
- (b) The district's benchmark assessment(s) are aligned to state standards and will be administered to all pupils grades K-8 at least once within the first nine weeks of the 2020-21 school year and not later than the last day of the 2020-21 school year to determine whether pupils are making meaningful progress toward mastery of these standards; and
- (c) the district's educational goals are measurable through a benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments.

To the extent practicable, Rockford Public Schools will administer the same benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments that it administered to pupils in previous years.

## Quality Evidence-Based Assessment Practices

The Rockford Public School District believes that benchmark assessment evidence should be used to monitor and evaluate patterns and trends in school/district academic performance and to identify effective instructional programs. We believe measuring student achievement with objective data can provide guidance for standardizing or adjusting curriculum and instruction across grade levels and schools.

The Rockford Public Schools will use benchmark assessment data to influence systematic instructional decisions to increase and monitor student achievement trends.

The Rockford Public Schools will continue the use of (and professional learning around the use of) the formative assessment process as a powerful practice embedded in teaching and learning to continuously observe where our students are in order to modify instruction.

We believe the use of the formative assessment process, which is supported by an extensive body of research, provides in-time data for both our teachers and students to accelerate their learning and progress and gives us a more comprehensive picture of what our students know and are able to do.

## Educational Goals

The NWEA assessments in reading and mathematics will be administered to all students three times: once in the first nine weeks of the school year, once mid-year, and again prior to the last day of school. Each year, the district expects every student to display at least one year of growth for one year of instruction. It is our district goal that 100% of students will meet or exceed their expected growth goals as measured by the difference between fall and spring NWEA results.

Classroom common formative assessments will provide teachers with timely information to inform progress toward our goals over the course of the year.

**Goal 1** - All students (K-8) will demonstrate one year's worth of academic growth in Reading/ELA from Fall to Spring as measured by classroom formative assessments and NWEA.

- All teachers will use the common formative assessment process to support adjustments to teaching and learning and to support meaningful student progress towards mastery of Reading/ELA academic standards.
- Results from Reading/ELA benchmark assessments, local Reading/ELA summative assessments, and common formative assessments will be continuously discussed and analyzed by staff through our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) structure and the Response to Intervention (RtI) process.

**Goal 2** - All students (K-8) will demonstrate one year's worth of academic growth in Mathematics from Fall to Spring as measured by classroom formative assessments and NWEA.

- All teachers will use the common formative assessment process to support adjustments to teaching and learning and to support meaningful student progress towards mastery of Mathematics academic standards.
- Results from Mathematics benchmark assessments and common formative assessments will be continuously discussed and analyzed by staff through our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) structure.

# Instructional Delivery & Exposure to Core Content

**Note:** The Rockford Public School District's full instructional plan can be found in the [Rockford Public Schools MI Safe Schools Return to Learn Roadmap](#).

How and where instruction will be delivered during the 2020-21 school year (e.g. instruction may be delivered at school or a different location, in-person, online, digitally, by other remote means, in a synchronous or asynchronous format, or any combination thereof).

## Modes of Instruction

As part of the [Rockford Public Schools MI Safe Schools Return to Learn Roadmap](#), families are offered two options for their children's education. The Roadmap also outlines mitigation strategies for safety within the physical school environment. The two educational options offered to families are:

1. **In-person instruction** in the classroom delivered remotely from August 24 through September 11, and physically in the classroom starting September 14, 2020; or
2. **Rockford Virtual** for families who choose to not send their students to school for in-person instruction.

Once a family selects a student's mode of instruction, they are asked to commit to a full trimester of that option. The district will provide notice to families in advance of the second and third trimesters of the opportunity to navigate between the two options at trimester. Due to continued parent/guardian anxiety leading up to the start of the school year, a limited late enrollment opportunity into Rockford Virtual was provided for families.

The health and safety of students and staff will be supported through a cohort model that keeps students together for the entire school day in grades DK-5 and with structured arrangements that include mitigation strategies in grades 6-12. Rockford Public Schools is committed to continuously monitoring and revising our practices to best meet the needs of our school community.

How instruction for core academic areas will expose each pupil to the academic standards that apply for each pupil's grade level or course in the same scope and sequence as the district had planned for that exposure to occur for in-person instruction.

### **Curriculum and Instruction: Academic Standards**

The Rockford Public School District curriculum for all core academic area instruction is aligned to Common Core State Standards. In this manner students from every grade level and core content area are exposed to the same academic standards whether in person or virtual. Additionally, RPS teachers have identified and aligned priority standards that further define curriculum emphasis areas for all students. These priority standards serve as the core foundation of curriculum by grade level and content area as well as to inform the design of new (or best utilize existing) formative assessments to check for student understanding and plan for differentiation of content. Finally, teachers will also use results from NWEA and College Board assessments to inform instruction and further prioritize DK-12 instructional standards for the 2020-21 school year.

The District uses the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to guide teachers to implement research-based instructional approaches. Our teacher/PLC collaboration is also focused on student achievement around the identified priority standards, and the professional dialogue calibrates instructional practices across content areas and grade levels. This collaboration model is designed to provide a systematic framework for teachers to identify and react to student learning needs.

How pupil progress toward mastery of the standards described within this section will be graded or otherwise reported to the pupil and the pupil's parent or legal guardian.

### **Assessment and Grading**

The Rockford Public School District bases its assessment system on the Common Core State Standards that align the curriculum and instruction for every course taught. The district will regularly assess students at the district and classroom levels to determine if they are making progress toward meeting the content expectations described in the standards as well as focus at the beginning of this school year on student understanding of the Rockford Priority Standards. The district places heavy emphasis on formative assessment. This is critical in the instructional process so that students receive timely feedback that helps them know what they need to do to improve. It also gives the teacher important information to know how to adjust the teaching and learning process to meet each student's needs.

The district also utilizes a system for delivering summative assessments at the district and classroom levels. These are given at the end of a period of learning as an evaluation of what has been learned and they are used as part of the district grading process. For example, teachers deliver summative assessments at the end of each unit of study in the curriculum. These assessments are based on a coherent set of standards in the subject area that focus on a related group of skills and disciplinary knowledge.

The district holds an expectation for all teachers to keep parents and guardians abreast of academic progress and any concerns throughout the year. As a summary report, the district publishes report cards at the end of each trimester and makes available to parents and legal guardians a web-based system (Family Access) which allows access to their children's grades (grades 6-12) at any time.

## Equitable Access

How the district will provide pupils with equitable access to technology and the internet necessary to participate in instruction.

### Technology

Through its technology plan outlined in the [Rockford Public Schools MI Safe Schools Return to Learn Roadmap](#), the district ensures that all students are provided equitable access to technology and the internet. The roadmap also describes the district's system for maintaining student access to technology devices and the internet.

The district's technology support plan for families ensures all students in grades DK-8 are provided a district-issued device, students in grades 9-12 are provided a district-issued device if needed, and all students are provided assistance when access to wifi is limited. Additionally, a helpdesk is dedicated to providing technical assistance.

How the district will ensure that students with disabilities are provided with equitable access to instruction and accommodation in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

The RPS Special Education Re-entry Plan comprehensive description can be found in the [Rockford Public Schools Re-Entry Plan for Special Education](#).

Before school starts, students' IEPs, IFSPs, and 504 plans will be reviewed/revised in coordination with general and special education teachers to address any data-driven accommodations and/or services that are needed due to known changes in students' needs.

IEPs will be fully implemented with safety precautions to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

For students from birth to five, those with identified special needs, and those attending CTE programming, intervention and support services will be integrated into the student's educational programming.

Rockford Public Schools has established structures for general and special education teachers to collaborate on delivery methods for assessments and instruction as outlined in IEPs. Additionally, considerations are made for students' needs around accessibility and to provide assistive technologies where possible.

The district also has planned to ensure the continuation of services for students needing either occupational, physical, and/or speech and language therapy, including evaluations by school psychologists and social workers.

Rockford Public Schools will continue to put safety first through implementation of the RPS [Return to Learn Plan](#), while ensuring that students with disabilities receive the instruction, programs, and services they require in order to make progress.

**Optional Considerations for the Rockford Public Schools Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans:**

In addition to the students with disabilities noted above, the district will ensure that the needs of other vulnerable student populations, such as but not limited to, early English Learners and fledgling/struggling students, are met.

The district will ensure that students will, during pandemic learning, have continued access to programs such as, but not limited to, Early Childhood, CTE, Early-Middle College, Dual Enrollment, and Advanced Placement as applicable within the Rockford Public Schools.

The Rockford Public Schools will continue to ensure the needs of all students are met, including vulnerable student populations. Remote instruction for English learners will be provided as outlined in the [Rockford Public Schools Remote Instruction and Re-Entry Plan for English Learners](#). Additionally, mental health, instructional, and other necessary support will be provided as described in the [Rockford Public Schools COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan](#).

The district will continue to provide opportunities for students working in partnership with area universities and programs offered through the Kent Intermediate School District, including the Kent Career Technical Center and the Kent Transition Center, to maintain opportunities that were available to students pre-pandemic.

Students enrolled in both modes of instruction (in-person and Rockford Virtual) who meet eligibility requirements are provided the opportunity to participate in Advanced Placement coursework, courses offered through partnerships with post-secondary institutions Ferris State University (FSU) and Grand Valley State University (GVSU), and dual enrollment courses.