



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
STATE FIRE MARSHAL MANDATE
September 12, 2016

The State Fire Marshal issued the Rochester Community School District with an order which requires all kindergarten and first-grade classrooms to be located on the lower level of each building. In order to enable us to comply with this state mandate and safely relocate the classes, there will be no school at Hugger, Musson, Brewster, and University Hills Elementary Schools on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 13-14.

1. What is the current fire code that references the mandate to locate grades K-1 on the lower level of a building?

NFPA 101, 15.2.1.2 states: "Rooms normally occupied by preschool, kindergarten, or first-grade students shall be located on a level of exit discharge, unless otherwise permitted by 15.2.1.4."

2. How many classrooms will be impacted by the mandate to relocate the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms to the lower level of the building?

A total of 50 classrooms across four buildings will be impacted by the mandate to relocate kindergarten and first-grade classes to the lower level of the building.

3. What schools will be impacted by the mandate?

Hugger, Musson, University Hills, and Brewster Elementary Schools will be impacted by the mandate to locate kindergarten and first-grade classrooms to the lower level of the building.

4. How many classrooms will be impacted by the mandate at each school?

- Musson. A total of 14 classrooms are impacted – four (4) kindergarten and three (3) first-grade classes, along with seven (7) upper elementary classrooms.
- Hugger. A total of 12 classrooms are impacted – three (3) kindergarten and three (3) first-grade classes, along with six (6) upper elementary classrooms.
- University Hills. A total of 12 classrooms are impacted – three (3) kindergarten and three (3) first-grade classrooms, along with six (6) upper elementary classrooms.
- Brewster. A total of 12 classrooms are impacted – three (3) kindergarten, two (2) first-grade, and one split (kindergarten and first grade) classroom, along with six (6) upper elementary classrooms.

5. Will students be required to make up the missed days of instruction?

We are continuing to have dialog with the MDE to discuss whether or not the students will be required to make up the missed days of instruction.

6. Which classrooms will be relocated to the upper level at each building?

Administrators are thoroughly evaluating individual classroom needs to determine which classes will be relocated to the upper level. The needs may be different at each school.

7. Why are the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms currently located on the second floor?

At the time when Hugger, Musson, Brewster, and University Hills Elementary Schools were built, they were specifically designed for lower elementary classrooms to be located on the second level of the building. Hugger was built in 1988, Musson in 1989, Brewster in 1980, and University Hills in 1972. Kindergarten classrooms are larger and have both carpeted and tiled areas. Many of the rooms also have bathroom facilities.

8. Did the district know previously that they were out of compliance with the state fire code?

Last year, Rochester Community Schools proactively engaged experts during the pre-bond efforts to identify critical infrastructure needs across the district. At that time, new codes and compliance issues were discussed. Since the site plans were originally approved by the state, it was our understanding that these buildings were considered to be grandfathered until bond renovations were complete. District administrators subsequently developed a plan to systematically address those critical needs, which included the relocation of the kindergarten and first-grade classes to the lower level of the buildings. Although construction has already begun on Musson and Hugger Elementary Schools, the state has directed us to relocate our youngest learners immediately.

9. Why is it safe for grades 2-5 to be located on an upper level of the building?

Life Safety Code standards are published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Any specific questions related to those standards and codes can be addressed with the NFPA.

10. How does the district plan to execute the classroom relocation efforts?

In order to enable us to safely relocate the classrooms, there will be no school at Hugger, Musson, Brewster, and University Hills on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 13-14. A moving company has been hired to pack and relocate larger items. Teachers will report to school on Tuesday and Wednesday to offer assistance.

11. Did the district look at other options to resolve the state mandate instead of closing school?

Our architectural and district representatives discussed options with representatives from the Rochester Hills Fire Department to determine if interim measures could be completed to allow classrooms to remain in their current location until the buildings are remodeled. Proposed interim solutions included the addition of fire separation walls and fire-rated door assemblies, added fire extinguishers in existing classrooms, and the provision of a “fire watch” policy, among others. Unfortunately, the implementation schedule necessary to complete the various options did not align with the mandate from the State Fire Marshal to relocate our youngest learners immediately.

12. What extra measures is the district taking to assist families with childcare options?

To assist our families with locating childcare options, the district will be offering non-instructional day camps located in unaffected areas of a student’s respective school. These areas may include the gymnasium, cafeteria, and other areas on school grounds. The day camps will be supervised by teachers and para-educators and will be offered at no cost to our families. Children who are participating in the day camp will be expected to remain at their building location for the duration of, what would have been, a normal school day. Lunches will be offered for purchase through Chartwells; however, students are also welcome to bring a lunch from home. Please note that all facilities will be nut-free. Unfortunately, busing services will not be available for the affected students on Tuesday and Wednesday, so parents will be expected to pick up their child at the end of the day. Parents can register their child for this one-time, day camp program by going to: <https://goo.gl/forms/bF1UtXOsdQepB6L83>.

Day camp times:

Hugger, Brewster, and University Hills: 8:10 a.m. – 3:13 p.m.

Musson: 8:55 a.m. – 3:58 p.m.

13. Will School Age Care (SAC) still be available on Tuesday and Wednesday?

School Age Care will be available for operation as usual.

14. How are the relocation efforts being funded?

The funding for the relocation efforts will be provided through the district’s general fund.

15. What is the district’s plan for the future?

In November 2015, the community overwhelmingly passed a \$185 million bond proposal. This five-year capital improvement plan will impact all of our schools and school facilities. Hugger, Musson, Brewster, and University Hills, in particular, are scheduled to receive approximately \$11 million each worth of expansions and improvements, which include locating the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms on the exit level of the building.