



Regional School Unit No. 18

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Parents,

As we come back to school after Thanksgiving break, we do have a few more incidents involving COVID-19 that I need to share with people. Over the break, three staff members and three students reported that they were in contact with someone who has tested or is presumed positive. All of our staff members and students who were exposed are quarantining and have helped us with contact tracing to make sure there was no further exposure for our school community. As of this evening, at least one of these people has tested positive. These exposures happened during break so there has been no further exposure that we are aware of for staff or students in these cases.

An additional incident was a little more complicated leading to further quarantines. A person connected with Williams Elementary School tested positive this weekend for COVID-19. Because the person reports symptoms earlier in the week, we took extra precautions through our contact tracing. On Saturday, I worked with the individual involved, the school nurse and the principal and we identified a group of people from Williams who would be considered close contacts. All of these people have been contacted. All of these people are quarantining. This group consists of some of our students and three teachers.

Due to the preparation and great work done by our staff, an educational plan is already in place and we will be transitioning to remote learning for these students with minimal disruption. The school is NOT closing. The exposure was limited to this group of students and staff and was limited exposure. However, after consulting with state officials, our school nurse and the principal, this was the best decision we could make to ensure the safety of our school community. On Monday our nurse will have further contact with the Maine CDC, and we will review our actions and protocols.

Our goals for this year remain the same: First and foremost, to keep our students and staff safe and also to provide our students with the quality education they deserve. If closing a school is needed to keep people safe, that is what will happen without hesitation. If we can keep people safe by taking other precautions, that is the path we will follow. In this case, we are able to quarantine everyone involved, and within a day or so have remote learning available for our students who are involved. Again, thank you to the teachers, our school nurse and Ms. Smith at WES for their great work to take care of our students.

I hope everyone had a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

Stay safe and stay healthy.