



Regional School Unit No. 18

41 Heath Street Oakland, ME 04963 • Telephone: 207-465-7384 • Fax: 207-465-9130

Carl Gartley
Superintendent of Schools

Keith Morin
Chief Academic Officer

Gary Smith
Chief Operations Officer

Parents, staff and students,

The warm fall weather seems to have come to end, and we are wrapping up the first trimester. The holiday season is upon us, which unfortunately this year brings some unique challenges. I heard this weekend that Massachusetts has been removed from the exempt travel list. Everyone is reminded that if you travel outside of any of the approved states, you must either get a negative COVID test or quarantine for 14 days. As a school district, our goals remain the same: first and foremost, to keep our students and staff safe, and second to provide our students with the quality education and learning experiences they deserve.

Every school district in our state is different. There are different spaces available, different levels of nursing support, different class sizes, different technology availability, different facility challenges, different staffing levels, different availability of substitutes, etc. I understand there are a handful of schools who are closing all in person classes for a period of time after Thanksgiving. I am sure these districts are making the best decision they can for their community. However, based on the conditions in our schools and our community, at this time we have no plans to close schools and change our educational model. The decision whether we can safely keep our schools open is one that has had to be answered every single day this year. This is how we will continue to handle the decision making process. The conditions in our school and in our community, and the ability to keep people safe will always be our guide.

If the conditions change and one or more of our schools have to make the shift to remote learning for an extended period of time we will be prepared. There are too many scenarios to get into the specific details for each school, but there are some basics I have shared and want to reiterate: we are committed to continuing with a daily schedule for all students, direct online instruction on a daily basis, continuing to make free meals available to any student who wants one, and making sure all students can keep connected with their teachers, counselors, nurses, specialist, administrators and support staff. If a remote scenario has to happen in one or more of our schools, there will be daily communication to make sure families and staff know what they need in order for it to go smoothly. This will include information about schedules, food service and when and how we will deliver materials and technology home. Finally, if we do have to close one or more schools, we will start working immediately to be ready to reopen to in person learning as soon as we can do it in a safe manner.

We continue to have staff and students with potential exposures in the community. One of the main reasons we have been able to be so successful with our version of an educational hybrid model is that we have had open lines of communication with parents and staff. Thank you so much to all of you who have kept us up to date on any COVID related issues. This has allowed us to make the decisions that need to be made to keep our school community safe. A special thanks to our school nurses whose knowledge and guidance has been crucial this year. We are so fortunate to have a Registered Nurse in each of our schools taking care of our students and providing leadership in this difficult time.



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You may have heard about Coronavirus Response Funds on the news. We did apply for and receive these funds. We have used this money to create new classroom spaces, purchase a lot of PPE, provide additional staffing in our buildings to cover any absences and reduce class size, improve the ventilation systems in our schools, hire extra custodial staff to make sure our buildings are clean, purchase the necessary equipment, technology and materials needed, make facilities improvements to allow for more social distancing, etc. Our facilities team, our directors and our building administrators have worked diligently with the Central Office team to coordinate this massive undertaking. Their hard work has paid off for our students and staff.

We are in the midst of this horrible pandemic, and to say it has been a difficult year is truly an understatement. But there is still a lot to be thankful for this season. I am so thankful for the community that I live and work in. I am thankful for the talented and dedicated group of educators that draw so many people to live in our towns, and I am thankful that we have been able to keep people safe and healthy.

Have a great week

Carl Gartley
Superintendent of Schools
#WeAreRSU18