



Regional School Unit No. 18

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41 Heath St. Oakland, ME 04963

Carl Gartley
Superintendent

Keith Morin
Asst. Superintendent

Melannie Keister
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Parents,

This past week we had to deal with our first incidents of having positive cases in two of our schools, WES and MHS. In addition to these two cases, we did have a handful of our staff who have been identified as close contacts and are therefore quarantining. Two of these staff members who were quarantining because they were close contacts eventually tested positive. Most importantly, both are doing fine. Quarantines will be up soon, and both will be back to work. Because of the details around these cases, we were able to identify that there was no exposure in our schools. Mr. Morin or I attend meetings every week with either the Commissioner of Education or the Deputy Commissioner. We continue to hear from the DOE and the Maine CDC (specifically Dr. Shah) that our schools are considered safe for students and staff. As of today, Kennebec County is still classified as green. RSU 18 will stay with our current hybrid system which allows families the choice of remote or five day in person learning.

Today, I have two additional updates for parents. First, I need to inform people of an issue from Mid Maine Technical Center. Another district in Central Maine has a student who has tested positive. After contact tracing was done at MMTC, three individuals connected with MHS have been identified as being close contacts. These people have been contacted and are quarantining. The second update is regarding communication. Early in the school year I informed parents that I would post weekly updates on the RSU 18 website, and that I would share these on our Facebook page. The goal has been to keep families, staff and students up to speed on everything happening in our schools regarding COVID-19. This past week there were two incidents in our schools, one at WES leading to the quarantine of a significant number of students, the second leading to shifting MHS to remote learning. What became clear was that if we are closing a school or there is a major incident such as what happened at WES, emailing parents is preferable to just posting on our website and Facebook. I appreciate the parents who reached out to me to provide me this feedback. So, from now on, I will continue to post weekly updates as I have been for the last few months, but if we are closing a school or have another major event, I will send this out via email as well as the normal posting. I know the importance of transparency and open communication with parents, staff and students. We have worked hard to be diligent with open communication, but there is always room for improvement.

Students, please take care of yourselves. Find a safe way to have some fun. Get outdoors, taking precautions, and be safe. If you need help, if you are feeling isolated or depressed, PLEASE talk to your parents, your school counselor, a teacher or a friend. We will get through this together.



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Last night I found myself actually excited for the snowstorm. Well, that has passed. After spending a few hours outside clearing snow this morning, my nostalgia for a snowy Maine winter is already in question. On well, what else would 2020 bring but a heavy wet snow that is difficult to clear. On that note, because of power outages I have received several messages today asking about school tomorrow. At this point there is no decision. I am checking regularly to see if we have power in our schools. Currently, it appears as if Belgrade is our only school without power. We also have to take into account that we have a lot of people relying on remote learning right now.

As always, if you have questions, send me an email.

Thank you everyone, be safe and stay healthy.

#WeAreRSU18

Carl Gartley
Superintendent