



Regional School Unit No. 18

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RSU 18 Families,

This past week marked the end of the first semester, halfway through the year. For the second time this year we had to shift the high school to fully remote because of cases in the school. In addition, we had a positive case at China Primary School. At CPS there were less people identified as close contacts, so we were able to keep the school open. Every single time one of our students or staff tests positive it is scary, emotional and difficult on all of us. I commend the nurses, our entire staff and administrators involved in these incidents. Their attention to detail and care for their colleagues is outstanding.

This past week we had multiple days with a high number of new cases in our state, this is the reality of what we are dealing with this year. However, the Department of Education sent out some new data this week that I want to share. In the last 30 days, the new case rate for people connected to Maine Schools is 15.5 per 10,000 people. In the state of Maine overall, the new case rate over the same period of time has been 41.1 per 10,000 people. From the start of this year, our belief has been that keeping students in school will allow us to provide our students with the quality education they deserve and keep our students and staff safe. The data coming out of the CDC and the DOE has consistently supported our mission.

Another odd thing about this year has been the lack of snow. But parents do continue to ask me about snow days. In future years I would fully expect that we will be looking at better ways to handle snow days. Like the rest of the schools around the state, we have learned skills to handle snow days without disrupting education. I do not know all the details yet, but we will be looking into this in the future. However, this year if there is bad weather, we will be having traditional snow days for our students.

A reminder to parents, February 12th is now a workshop day for staff. As we continue to deal with the challenges of this year, providing fully remote and fully in person learning, trying to plan lessons that are consistent for grade levels across the district and just dealing with the work that is needed to make this year a success, these workshop days have been invaluable. Thank you to parents for your understanding and flexibility this year.

This past week the Department of Education extended the flexibility for schools when it comes to the number of student seat days. This extension is scheduled to be in place until 30 days after the current state of civil emergency. As we go through the next few months, I will keep everyone informed of what this means for the rest of our school year and any changes to our schedule. Long term planning has been difficult this year. I will continue to send out weekly updates with changes and reminders.

THANK YOU to everyone for helping us make this a successful year for our students.

Carl Gartley
Superintendent of Schools
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