



# Regional School Unit No. 18

Phone: 207.465.7384

Fax: 207.465.9130

41 Heath St. Oakland, ME 04963

Carl Gartley  
Superintendent

Keith Morin  
Asst. Superintendent

Melannie Keister  
Director of Business / Finance

Staff / Parents / Students / RSU 18 Community,

I received several thoughts and questions this week about the ongoing discussion of how to handle snow days. It was refreshing to know that a lot of people must have read my previous weeks' update. As I write these updates every weekend, I am never sure if many people look at them. How to handle a snow day is definitely a hot topic for many of you. No final decisions have been made on this yet, but again, thank you for all the input. It is helpful to know what people are thinking when we are considering this type of schedule change.

On the COVID front, I continue to believe that our schools are a safe place for our students and staff. Yes, I know there are many cases in our community, and yes still some in our schools. Parents, I want to take a moment to thank you for being so vigilant in screening your children before sending them to school. Most cases we dealt with this week were not "in school" cases. They were cases that we heard from parents who had kept their child home because of symptoms for a couple of days, and sadly some of them ended up testing positive for COVID. This is helpful to the schools, our community, our staff and to other families. A question we received quite often from parents is, "If my child had symptoms and I kept them home, is a negative test required to return to school?" Answer: no, it is not. It is recommended but we do not require a test. Students must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If they test positive, yes, they must quarantine. However, a test is typically not a bad idea because as one parent said to me this week, this is a sneaky virus. Symptoms are not the same for everyone.

So far this year we have had 27 cases that were "in school" cases. We are averaging just under 2 students having to quarantine per case, and just over 5 students who are exempt from quarantining per case because of vaccinations or masking. At this time, I do not have any more updates about vaccination clinics for students under age 12.

This week I also want to take a moment to thank our nurses and our building administrators for their hard work. Pretty much every weekend and many evenings during the week there is something to be done related to COVID. Either calling parents to answer questions, helping with contact tracing or one of the many other extras that we have needed during the pandemic. Our success has not come without a lot of hard work from so many people. These two groups of professionals have been front and center throughout the last year and a half, and they have done remarkable work. THANK YOU!