



Sheepscoot Valley Regional School Unit #12  
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April 24, 2021

*Health Advisory System Update - Kennebec County “Yellow”*

*RSU 12 will continue to provide in-person learning five days a week and will monitor the case rates in Kennebec County. RSU 12 will not initiate a hybrid learning approach at this time.*

Dear RSU 12 Students, Staff, Parents, and Community,

The Mills Administration and the Maine CDC released an update yesterday to its color-coded Health Advisory System that classifies counties’ relative risk of COVID-19 transmission to assist schools as they continue with their efforts to deliver instruction and support students safely. Maine’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) assessed COVID-19 data and trends for all counties and released new designations yesterday, Friday, April 23, 2021. **Kennebec County, a county in RSU 12, was designated as yellow.**

These designations are made out of an abundance of caution and for the consideration of school administrative units in their decisions to deliver instruction. DHHS and Maine CDC also took the opportunity to highlight in the update evidence that indicates lower transmission of COVID-19 in schools compared to the general population.

*From the Maine CDC Update - YELLOW: Androscoggin has experienced a sharp rise in cases over the last two weeks, with a new case rate more than double the statewide average. **Kennebec**, Oxford and Somerset counties all have new case rates that exceed the state average, and both Oxford and Somerset counties have two-week positivity rates that exceed the state average.*

The [RSU 12 Reopening Plan](#) approved by the RSU 12 Board of Directors in August 2020 and updated in November 2020 states that “A categorization of “yellow” from the Maine CDC means that a county in RSU 12 has an elevated risk of COVID-19 spread and that a hybrid instructional model should be **considered** in order to have fewer students in the building at one time. ... All RSU 12 students **may** be split into two groups and follow an alternating model of instruction. ... The county-level color designations are advisory for administrators. Administrators may consider local conditions and make their own decisions.”

Upon close review of why Kennebec has been designated yellow, the reason for the yellow designation is that the two-week state average positive case rate is 4.45% of the population while the two-week Kennebec county average positive case rate is 4.46% of the population. This is a very small .01% difference between the statewide average and Kennebec county. [You can find this data here.](#)

Also, despite the Maine CDC’s yellow designation for certain counties, the [Department](#)

[of Education's accompanying guidance](#) still strongly encourages schools to continue their current in-person learning instructional programs while maintaining safety protocols, supporting vaccinations for adults, and taking advantage of the recently launched voluntary COVID-19 testing program in schools. The guidance also states that case rates are far lower in schools than in the general population.

RSU 12 schools are now fully equipped with ionization filters as well as high-capacity ventilation systems constantly bringing in fresh air. Many staff members have taken advantage of the recently available COVID-19 vaccines for educators. RSU 12 is in a good position to prevent COVID-19 spread in our schools.

For all of these reasons, **RSU 12 will continue to provide in-person learning five days a week and will monitor the case rates in Kennebec County. RSU 12 will not initiate a hybrid learning approach at this time.** Much has changed about the understanding of COVID-19 in schools since August 2020 and the Maine CDC and the Maine DOE have been encouraging in-person learning as much as possible; something RSU 12 has done all school year with great success.

It is clear that the [RSU 12 Reopening Plan](#) should be updated again to reflect the changing conditions and the updated information about schools and COVID-19 transmission. The RSU 12 Reopening Plan will be reviewed and updated in the near future to reflect current conditions and guidance from the Maine Department of Education.

Sincerely,



Howard Tuttle  
Superintendent, RSU 12