

RNeSU learners are logged out

Some remote students are MIA

By LEE J. KAHR

BRANDON — You can lead a student to the laptop and provide them with free WiFi, but you can't make them log on.

That is the bottom line for the handful of Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union students who are learning remotely, but not logging on or connecting with teachers during a very different pandemic education.

There are roughly 1,500 students in the district. RNeSU Superintendent Jeanne Collins said that of the 200 district students that are learning remotely full time and not entering the school buildings at all, 22 are not connected or engaging with teachers and staff

for their education.

Of those 200 students, 151 remote learning students are at Otter Valley Union High School, and 17 of those students are not connected or logging on regularly, Collins said.

And lack of internet access is not the reason. RNeSU pays for WiFi access, gave students in need hotspots at home or near home, and pays for the data.

The remaining five students not logging on are at the elementary level. Collins said many efforts have been made across the board to engage these students and their families.

"The teachers have tried to reach out to the parents," Collins said. "(Neshobe Principal) Judi Pulsifer has gone to the homes and driveways and asked, 'What's in the way? How can we help you?'"

And the meeting may go well, but not the follow through (on the part of the students or parents)."

Collins said the reasons behind the absenteeism are as varied as the families involved. Often, parents and guardians are working and the students are home alone.

"Some parents are working two jobs and don't have the bandwidth to also do the education piece," she said. "Some adolescents don't want to tell parents what's going on. Some kids prefer to work and make money. In some cases there just isn't the supervision there."

But despite the reasons, what the students are missing is what they can get out of in-person learning, Collins said, even in a pandemic wearing a mask and seat

connected to the school," she said. "Every student should know they have an adult in their corner, someone to advocate for them and to push them."

But it could be so much worse. A recent article in the *Bosion Globe* found that roughly 40% of high

school juniors and seniors in Boston were chronically absent last fall. That's 2,900 high school juniors and seniors who were missing at least 10% of their classes from September through December. The *Globe* reported that number was 500 more students than was typical before the pandemic.

Causes of this disparity included economic challenges posed by the pandemic, forcing students to work to support their families, mental health challenges or lack of access to reliable internet or laptops.

Many states, however, are soon poised to re-open schools to full-time, in-person learning, including Vermont.

Gov. Phil Scott said the state could reopen schools possibly as early as next month. That would solve the problem of students not logging on remotely, even though Collins said she would not make in-person learning mandatory this year.

"I feel I need to honor those that want to stay remote," she said. "It's a pandemic year. Everyone has different comfort levels with what works."

Using the federal COVID relief money the state has coming, Collins said she is looking at building intensive summer programming paired with a recreation component to help students who are behind catch up.

"For the older kids, it's about recovering (academic) credits," she said. "For the younger kids, it's the skills they might be missing or rusty on."

The superintendent said she is looking at what the staffing needs will be this summer, and expects to do some hiring. Either way, all of the kids in the district are on her radar and she's waiting on funding.

"Public school is about having a wide variety of ability levels in the classroom," she said. "What kind of COVID staffing and funding are we getting to support that? That's the question."



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All Woods in Middlebury this past Saturday

Photo by Paul Dahm

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Mindy Goodrich
Collector of Delinquent Taxes

TOWN OF SALISBURY NOTICE OF TAX SALE

The resident and non-resident owners, lienholders and mortgagees of property in the Town of Salisbury, in the County of Addison and the State of Vermont, are hereby notified that the taxes assessed by such Town for the tax years of 2018 through 2019 remain unpaid, either in whole or in part, unpaid on the following described property in such Town, to wit:

It being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Hilton W. Foote by Warranty Deed of June Marie Mitchell and Jason E. Mitchell dated January 28, 2005 and recorded on February 1, 2005 in Book 58 at Page 91 of the Town of Salisbury Land Records. [E911 Address: 1932 Leland Road, Salisbury.]

And pursuant to 32 VSA § 5254, so much of such property will be sold at public auction at the Town of Salisbury Town Office, a public place located at 25 Schoolhouse Road, Salisbury, Vermont, on the 29th of April, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., as shall be requisite to discharge such taxes with costs, unless previously paid.

Dated at Salisbury, Vermont this 18th day of March, 2021.
Recorded in Salisbury Land Records book ATT-2 Page 409

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It being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Pauline Trudeau, Rebecca Fisher, Randolph Trudeau and Theodore Trudeau and Joint Tenants with Right of Survivorship, by Warranty Deed of Hanaford G. Davis, dated June 27, 1977 and recorded on July 1, 1977 in Book 28 at Page 368 of the Town of Salisbury Land Records. [E911 Address: 30 Trudeau Drive, Salisbury.]

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

Separate sealed BIDS for the construction of: Cady Road Culvert No. 1 Replacement Project will be received by The Town of Middlebury, Public Works Department at: 1020 South Route 7, Middlebury, VT 05753 - PREFERRED until 10:00 am on Thursday, April 1, 2021, or by mail to the Public Works Department at 77 Main St. and then at Middlebury Public Works Dept. building, opened and