



**Sheepscoot Valley RSU 12
September 2021
Superintendent's Report
Information, Recognitions, and Celebrations**

Superintendent Report

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year. We have had a successful start to the school year in RSU 12. Thank you to staff who worked throughout the summer getting our buildings and programs ready for the first day of school. We currently have an unofficial count of 1515 students registered in RSU 12. Last year at this time we had 1418 students registered. This is a significant increase in our student count over last year. It is clear students at all grade levels are coming back for in-person instruction.

COVID-19 is on the rise again in Maine to start the school year because of the Delta variant primarily. The RSU 12 School Board voted to follow CDC recommendations and require universal masking of all staff and students during the student day. Masking has the added benefit of quarantining only a small number of students during a COVID positive exposure instead of quarantining entire classrooms like we did last year. We have already had several exposures in the first few days of school and have been relieved that we only had to quarantine a very small number of students.

We look forward to a successful year and we will continue to monitor the COVID situation and make adjustments as conditions change.

Curriculum and Technology Report

RSU 12 is continuing its pilot of the Illustrative Math K-5 program in the 2021-22 school year. This is a student-centered, problem-based approach to mathematics that emphasizes mathematical discourse. We will continue to provide professional development and support as teachers implement this program.

Thanks to COVID-related grant funding, RSU 12 has been able to offer one-to-one devices to students at all grade levels. For the most part, students are using chromebooks, though there are some iPads and macbooks still available for use when needed. These technology enables students to engage in technology-rich learning experiences supported by their teachers and our Learning Commons staff.

Westport Island Student Count Information

Student Count information will be available in November

Alna Student Count Information

Student Count information will be available in November

Somerville Student Count Information

Student Count information will be available in November

Chelsea Elementary School Report

Happy start of school! We were so excited to welcome back 287 students to Chelsea Elementary this year! The building feels more alive again and kids are forming friendships with new students and students who have returned from last year's remote learning. We are all slowly getting back into the routine of school and are looking forward to more continued days of relative normalcy.

We have kept our arrival and dismissal procedures the same as last year and while it was a busy couple of days as we learned who our new students and parents are, the driveline is getting smoother and starting to flow more quickly again. I have amazing staff members outside every morning and afternoon to help all of our kiddos get to and from their vehicles safely.

We are continuing to strengthen our PBIS expectations here and students have been learning the expectations for different areas each day and they are getting excited to earn Pride Cards. All staff members are on PBIS committees this year to keep everyone informed and to keep the momentum going during the school year. We're looking forward to a great year!

Palermo Consolidated School Report

We start the year with an increase in our student population to a 129! The students have been excited to get back to school to see their friends. The staff have been equally excited to see them. Everyone did a fantastic job adhering to the mask wearing guidelines. We will continue to stay up to date on safety precautions while we work to get back to a normal school week.

Palermo School is also very excited to have added a childcare service from the Boys and girls Club. This program was put in place only a few weeks after we heard that three day care centers were closing at the end of August. We have amazing staff to run this program and we are lucky to have this support for the community.

The teachers started their first few days of school with restorative circles to help build a strong community and provide a sense of support. Restorative circles allow students and teachers the opportunity to get to know each other. We will continue to learn more about Restorative Practices to address behavior issues. This approach helps us teach students to take responsibility for their choices and to build skill in dealing with issues.

Whitefield Elementary School Report

WHES begins the year with 165 registered students, a slight increase from last year. We have only two students who were doing remote learning last year choose to move to homeschooling this year with all of the other remote students rejoining our ranks. We had a typical summer with the number of families moving away to different school districts and I am pleased that we did have a good number of students who had either been homeschooling or were in private schools around the area choose to join our school community. All students proved adept at meeting the mask mandate (many being solid veterans of mask wearing from last school year) and, after having visited all the classrooms on the first day of school, they clearly understand the purpose of wearing the masks as well as the opportunities that were not available last year that we can now allow with the universal masking. I received cheers from all K-6 classes when they were told that they would be returning to the cafeteria, albeit with some specific expectations and formats and even the older students (who don't express their delight with cheers...uncool at that age) were happy to be returning to some semblance of previous normalcy. Outdoor recess without masks and with the ability to play with schoolmates from different classes was equally acknowledged happily by the student population. I was particularly pleased that students, from oldest to youngest, understood and accepted that universal masking within the building was being done to provide for the safety of all our school community.

As a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) district. Staff here at WHES has spent the beginning of the school year acquainting (reacquainting) students with the clear expectations PBIS establishes to promote appropriate student conduct. We post and explain what we expect from students in all venues of the school so that there is clarity of expectations in all places and situations. Once set, those expectations become the foundation from which we operate the school and communicate and support all children. Our PBIS goal is that a student is never failing to adhere to a school standard because he / she didn't know about it ahead of time. It also provides the platform we use to recognize and celebrate those many students who make clear choices to abide by the expectations set. PBIS works well with the entire Pre K - 8 population and dovetails with our Restorative Practices philosophy and practices. Combined, they are powerful tools for good within the school.

Our Gardening Program is now reaping a prodigious amount of vegetables and we are now both providing crops to our nutrition staff as well as offering a new garden stand to parents and staff. From Swiss Chard to summer squash to peppers and tomatoes galore, we are experiencing a supreme harvest! Stop by on Monday, Wednesday or Friday after school and, for a small donation to the WHES Garden Club, you can reap the bounty as well!

Windsor Elementary School Report

Windsor School opened on Tuesday to 314 smiling faces who were excited to be back to school. The first two days have gone smoothly, as we have gone back to some things that we hadn't seen for a year, and kept things that went well during social distancing. For example, we are back in the cafeteria, but 1/3 of the students are still in the classroom for lunch. Also, we have such a smooth and easy drop-off and pick-up situation that many families have opted to continue. Teachers have also opted to bring their students out to recess at different times of the day, which we found to work well last year.

Our staff had two days of workshop days prior to school starting, during which time we looked closely at the district vision and how it pertains to Windsor School in particular. We are planning to continue looking at how to connect the vision to what we believe our students need.

In an effort to continue our efforts at building PBIS in our school, we have implemented a new restorative form to help students with positive behavior. We are excited to change some of the language we use with kids to help them learn to restore relationships. Thanks to Karen McCormack and Niki Mathews for training the administrators in Restorative Practices.

Everyone at Windsor is excited for the new school year, grateful to be in-person and five days a week.

Operations Report

The RSU 12 buildings started the school year looking great. The custodial staff did an amazing job getting the buildings ready for opening day for the students. The buildings were very busy this summer and the staff was able to clean and put the schools back together for August 31st.

We were able to pave the front parking lot and road that goes to the parking lot in Palermo. We were able to restripe the parking lots for all the schools.

The custodial staff is working diligently to keep everything sanitized and disinfected while following all of our safety protocols.

RSU 12 was able to purchase 3 new busses, which helped keep repair costs down. We still have one opening for a bus driver in Chelsea. We have a candidate and the candidate is working on getting their license.