

## SUPERINTENDENT'S BLOG



Dear Cape Elizabeth Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to my Superintendent Blog. My intention is to share this blog with you every month in order to update you on what is happening in our schools. I will provide you pertinent information that I think you may want to know and also highlight some of the great things that are occurring in our wonderful schools.

We're back!!! Wow, we have just concluded our third week of school!!! I am thrilled that we were able to have all students and staff back in our schools focused on teaching and learning. I again want to thank all of those staff members that worked so hard over the summer to prepare us to safely open our doors. Those staff include custodians, maintenance, public works, transportation, food service, technology, business office, nurses, athletics, central office, and administrators. It is actually amazing how much work goes on in a school district during the summer in order to close up the previous year and in turn ensure everything is ready for the return of students and school staff.

It was thrilling to watch all of the students arrive at our three schools on the opening day and be welcomed so warmly by our staff. The first day of school is one of the best days of the year. Our teachers and staff are working hard to establish classroom communities, connect with each student, and assess the strengths and learning needs of each child. We are all recognizing that being back full-time and all together is quite an adjustment for students and staff alike. We are encouraging patience and positivity as we regain our traction. We have outstanding school counselors and social workers to help with any struggling student. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher(s) if you have questions or concerns. We certainly will all need to work well together to make this a successful school year. My aim is to continue to *Listen, Learn, and Lead*.

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### Thought Exchange:

As your new Superintendent, what are the most important things I need to know about our community and our schools?

As I enter my third month as the new Superintendent in Cape Elizabeth, I am reaching out to you to learn more about our community and our schools. The focus of my entry plan is to *Listen, Learn, and Lead*. I have had the opportunity to meet with well over 100 staff members, students, parents, community members, and local leaders. Additionally I enjoyed meeting with many of you at my parent forums held in mid-August. However, knowing I cannot possibly have an in-depth chat with all you, I am using this [Thought Exchange](#) as an additional way to gather your input. **Your voice matters to me as I discern what is going well in our schools and determine what could be improved for your students and the staff.** Please engage in this exchange by entering as many thoughts as you like to answer the question, "what are the most important things I need to know about our community and our schools?", and rate the thoughts of other people on a spectrum of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The exchange will be open for 10 days, so please revisit often and continue to participate. Once the exchange is closed I will code the results for themes and then share them with all of you.

### Quick Tips:

- **This Exchange is confidential.** Your thoughts will be shared with other participants, but not your identity.

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- You will see and rate thoughts that others have shared. 5 stars = strongly agree, 1 star = strongly disagree.
- You do not need to rate all thoughts, though it's recommended to rate at least 20.
- Please do not use actual names of staff members

I deeply appreciate your time and your participation. Your collective voices will help me make the district better for your children.



### **Building Oversight Committee:**

On 9/14/21, the School Board endorsed the creation of a **Building Oversight Committee**. The purpose of the Building Oversight Committee is to guide the district to a successful referendum bond vote (targeting June 2022) consisting of the replacement of Pond Cove Elementary School and Cape Elizabeth Middle School and the renovation of Cape Elizabeth High School. The committee will advise Colby Company and Simons Architects in concept design, site selection, phase planning, and community engagement. The committee will inform the School Board when the plan is ready for their consideration in moving the bond referendum forward for Town Council consideration. Please fill out [this form](#) if you would like to be considered for participation on this committee. Meetings will occur in the evenings (likely 1 / month). Thanks for your interest!

The Committee Shall Consist of the Following Voting Members:

~ Two School Board Members (as named by the School Board Chair)

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One of these School Board members will co-chair this committee with Superintendent Record  
This School Board member will provide monthly updates to the School Board at the regular monthly meeting

- ~ Two Town Council Members
- ~ Three teachers (selected by Superintendent Record)
- ~ Three staff members (selected by Superintendent Record)
- ~ Two parents (selected by Superintendent Record)
- ~ Two students (non-voting members) (selected by Superintendent Record)
- ~ Two community members (selected by Superintendent Record)
- ~ Superintendent
- ~ Assistant Superintendent
- ~ Pond Cove Principal
- ~ CEMS Principal
- ~ CEHS Principal
- ~ Facilities Director
- ~ Business Manager
- ~ Others will be invited to participate in meetings as needed
- ~ Subcommittees may be developed and may invite additional participants as warranted



## Covid-19 Update

Our mitigation measures devised by the District Planning Committee this summer and endorsed by the School Board on 8/16/21 are in place. These include the following:

1. Universal masking for everyone in a school facility or transport no matter vaccination status.
  - a. Exception: Staff working alone in their classroom or workstation
  - b. Exception: Students eating at least three feet apart facing the same direction
  - c. Exception: Staff eating at least six feet apart
2. Pooled testing offered to all students and staff on a voluntary basis
3. As much social distancing as tenable on school transportation, in classrooms, and in the cafeteria that allows for full-time access to learning (3 feet distance or more will be used wherever possible)
4. Daily symptom checklist conducted by parents/guardians and for parents/guardians to report absences related to these symptoms per building protocol
5. Continue same hand sanitization practices as utilized during the 2020-21 school year
6. Continue same disinfectant strategies as utilized in the spring of 2020-21 (staff wipe down surfaces at least once per day on top of nightly disinfection)
7. Allow for only outdoor field trips
8. Limit non-essential visitors/volunteers inside the school building

The District Planning Committee will meet again on 10/5/21 to review the efficacy of the mitigation measures and make recommendations if necessary for adjustments based upon new updates from CDC, ME CDC, and Dr. Shah with input from Dr. Sonti, our school nurses, administrators, and staff.

Local Covid data will be used to inform decision making.

Additionally, we are pleased to report 96.2% of our entire staff are vaccinated and 95% of students 12+ are vaccinated. Specifically, 97% of staff are vaccinated at Pond Cove, 100% are vaccinated at the Middle School, and 98% are vaccinated at the High School. Our collective vaccination rate along with our other mitigation measures will help keep our schools open and our students and staff safe. We are most certainly in this together as a school community.

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### **Pooled Testing**

We are thrilled with the participation rates at the three schools. In fact, because of this high participation rate, we have made Jill Young (R.N.) our point person for Pooled Testing this school year ([jyoung@capeelizabethschools.org](mailto:jyoung@capeelizabethschools.org)). We have hired Caroline Conaty (R.N.) to serve as the school nurse at CEMS in Jill's place for this school year.

Pooled testing rates:

- Pond Cove 447 (392 students / 55 staff)
- Middle School 378 (318 students / 60 staff)
- High School 295 (243 students / 52 staff)

Pooled Testing is designed to catch any Covid cases early in order to decrease transmission and keep more students and staff in school.

If you would like to sign your child(ren) up for Pooled Testing please use the following links:

### **CESD Pooled Testing Program**

#### **Consent Forms**

#### **Under 18 (Minor) Consent Form:**

<http://testcenter.concentricbyginkgo.com//minor-consent>

**CESD Access Code: 0C46EP**

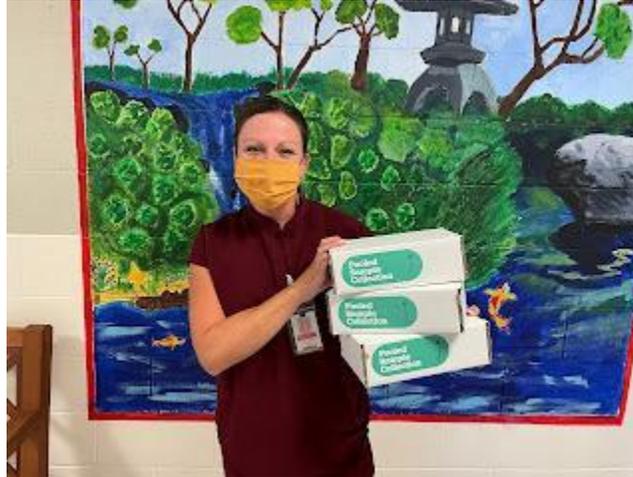
**the first digit in the code is a zero**

#### **Over 18 Consent Form:**

<https://testcenter.concentricbyginkgo.com/invite-by-code>

**CESD Access Code: 0C46EP**

**the first digit in the code is a zero**



### **Quarantined Student Plan**

We have worked closely with our teacher leaders and administrators to ensure we have a plan for any quarantined student. This plan involves communication with students and parents through Google classroom (& email / phone as necessary), planned pick-up of learning materials & devices as needed, connection with the teacher through Zoom outside of class as warranted, an assigned educator beyond the teacher to check-in with the student as needed, and for the teacher to find ways for the student to still have some connection to classmates during the quarantine period. In addition, our administrators will check in with parents and students about how things are going. Our social workers and school counselors will also be available to provide support if needed.

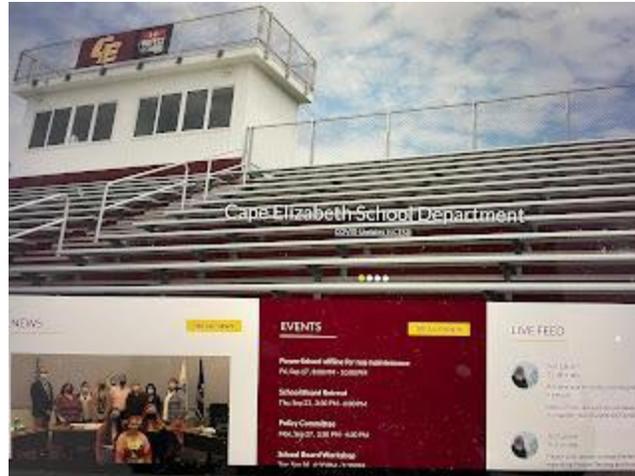
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### **Emergency Planning**

The District Leadership Team recently met with Chief Fenton, Chief Gleeson, and School Resource Officer Galvin to review our emergency planning. We know Covid has been top of mind for most, however we need to be prepared for any eventuality. We are very pleased with our collaborative relationship with the Cape Elizabeth Police and Fire Departments. We also examined the entrance to CEMS and we are actively working to enhance the security of that entrance. In each school our administrators have reviewed our emergency plans with staff and we have sessions planned with Chief Fenton and SRO Galvin to conduct further trainings with staff. Staff in turn are reminding our students of our emergency procedures in an age appropriate manner.

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### Website Update

Be on the lookout for an update to our school website. Our aim is to make it more user-friendly and intuitive. We want to make it easier for what you are looking for to help consolidate our communication. We will also regularly post fresh pictures and features to help you see what is happening in the district.



In closing, I am thrilled to be the Superintendent of Cape Elizabeth Schools. In just three short months I have gained tremendous respect for the staff, students, parents, and community members of

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this special place. I learn every day about what is working well in our schools and also hear about some things that could be improved. I very much appreciate all of your support as we opened school. I will continue to *Listen, Learn, and Lead* in the months ahead. Yes we are all living in a very tough time, however I am a firm believer that things are going to get better. Let's stay united as a community to make this an extraordinary year of teaching, learning, and caring about each other.

Take care,

*Chris*

Chris Record, Ph.D.

Superintendent

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