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## Regional School Unit 57

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*RSU 57 prepares respectful, responsible and creative thinkers for success in the global community.*

Dear RSU 57 School Community,

March 27, 2020

I applaud the efforts of our entire community in responding to this unprecedented and unsettling time we find ourselves in with goodwill, generosity, and understanding. I am proud every day of the efforts of our staff when I hear stories about what is happening in our non-traditional “classrooms” across our districts; when I hear how much support parents are expressing for our staff there to support them; and when I see what our nutrition department was able to put together so quickly with the support from the transportation department to provide food and belongings to our students and families. Our staff worked diligently to clean and ready schools for an uncertain return. I couldn't be more proud of how our staff have stepped up during this time of need and know this will continue to be their response throughout and beyond this crisis.

### **Teaching and Learning Update:**

We want to thank all the staff for all of your efforts as we move into this unprecedented time. We know this has been a challenging transition and we greatly appreciate all you have done. Truly, thank you! While this remains a time full of change we encourage you to be sure to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Parents, we recognize the tremendous efforts on your part to support your children while juggling work and home in this time of uncertainty. We applaud you! Please continue to reach out to your child's school and teachers to let us know how we can support your efforts.

We are planning for the longer term of continuing our remote learning plan. In doing so, we wanted to share our sincere appreciation for all of your feedback and suggestions around what is working and what has been challenging. We will be looking for ways in our instructional day to maintain availability for children and their learning while honoring the needs and circumstances of all who are contributing to the success of our remote school day experience. Any scheduling adjustments will be communicated through building administration. Our primary goal is to maintain daily connections between children and their teachers to support wellbeing and sustained engagement for all.

**School Calendar:**

It is my hope that by mid-April, or sooner, we will have a better sense of whether or not we will be able to return to normal schooling this year. I, like you, am hopeful for a return on April 27th; however, every indication out there leans to a non-return. I wish I could give everyone a secure plan, but at this time this is not possible.

In planning for an extended remote learning time frame and the need for school to be completed when these conditions lighten up, in addition to our need to get out and enjoy the summer time, we have taken action to reduce the school year. Prior to the recent notice of waiving the 175 day mandatory student school year, the Board in cooperation with the local educational association agreed to adjust the school calendar to the following:

Reduced the calendar by six (6) days

- April, 21, 22, 23, and 24 will now be school days replacing the originally scheduled vacation.
- Two (2) additional days were reduced following DOE approved snow-day make-up.
- These changes reduced the scheduled student date of June 23rd to a new date of JUNE 15th.

After planning the above reduction we heard from the DOE that a waiver of student days below 175 is allowable. I will be working with the Board and Association to find additional days to reduce these days further, if a return to school-based learning is unlikely to happen this year. We will be looking at setting a new end date to this school year because I do not think teachers, parents, or students can sustain remote learning for an additional 8 weeks after April break, with all the other personal needs that need attention as well.

**Nutrition:**

We are making a change with lunch delivery in order to minimize our staff exposure and ask that you please read the following carefully:

Starting Monday, March 30th the two open meal sites located at Line Elementary School and Massabesic Middle School will be open for pick up on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only. Children 18 and under that are in need of food will have the option to receive up to two days worth of meals, free of charge. Children must be present at the time of pick up.

The meal delivery bus routes will continue to run Monday through Friday. Children 18 and under that are in need of food will have the option to receive breakfast and lunch each day, free of charge. Children must be present at the time of pick up. Meal delivery bus routes are being updated frequently so please refer to the RSU 57 website or App for the most up to date routes and times.

We will continue these services as long as our food supply and staffing needs can meet the demand. If your child is in need of meals and you cannot access the daily bus routes or the open meal sites please call (207) 247-3221 x2257 and we will do our very best to assist you.

I recognize that information can be shared on many social media platforms; however, I would encourage you to refer to information provided directly from RSU 57. We have the most current and accurate details in this ever changing climate. This will help alleviate misinformation and the confusion that may result from misinterpretation coming from multiple sources.

Again, thank you all for your support of the schools and for one another.

Stay well,

Larry Malone