

Regional School Unit 1

Serving the Communities of Arrowsic – Bath – Phippsburg – Woolwich



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Think – Care – Act

July 24, 2020

Dear RSU 1 Community,

We have missed seeing students, staff, and families over the last several months. Since May, we have formed many committees and collected much feedback to ensure we are making the best choices on behalf of families and staff for what next year will look like. Three types of committees have met: the community and school board based distance learning committee, school based fall teacher planning committees at each building, and a districtwide fall reopening committee. We have also surveyed staff and families two times and students once to collect feedback and ideas on this work. Thank you to all staff, school board members, families, and community members who contributed to these efforts. We are so appreciative to have such supportive and helpful participation in RSU 1.

Of these groups, there is one that has continued its work into the summer. The districtwide reopening committee has been meeting on a regular basis with the goal of presenting recommendations to the school board in early August. The committee is composed of teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, public health officials, emergency management personnel, public safety officials, nurses, and a student representative. Committee members have devoted extensive time and their collective wisdom has helped the district consider many different options.

We know you are eager to learn the plan for the fall, and this letter will attempt to outline some potential options. We wish we had all of the answers at this point, but we simply don't. Our plan will continue to evolve as we learn more information regularly from the Maine Department of Education (MDOE), the CDC, and public health officials.

As we discussed the multiple, different options, the following priorities guided our work:

- Ensuring the health and safety of students and staff;
- Providing the best possible education to every student;
- Recognizing the importance of family and work schedules.

As stated previously, the goal is for all students to eventually return safely to in-person instruction. The district learned a great deal from our distance learning experience in the spring and we have worked diligently to improve our structure, resources, and accountability measures. Having said that, we know remote learning will never replace in-person teaching. Beyond the academics, students gain a host of other educational, social, emotional, and health benefits from being in school with their teachers and peers.

Still, we must consider the benefits of in-person schooling against the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Like all public schools in this state, we will be following the health and safety requirements recently released by the Maine DOE. If you would like to read these, the link can be found here:

[Link to Maine DOE Health and Safety Requirements](#)

After our committees analyzed various school models from around the country and the world, the fall reopening committee will put forth the proposal below at a meeting on August 3rd for the Board of Directors to consider:

1. All students in-person 100% of the time for grade levels PreK-5 with health and safety measures in place. Two bus runs will take place to accommodate 50% of students on the buses at any one time.
2. A hybrid model blending in-person learning (2 days per week) with remote learning (3 days per week) for grades 6-12. Morse High School will have a semester course schedule to reduce the number of student groups at one time. Only 50% of students are in school and on buses at any one time.
3. Full-time distance learning for families who are uncomfortable with in-person learning

The Board of Directors will discuss these options and possibly other alternatives. We know this is a difficult and stressful time for everyone during this period of uncertainty. Please reach out to us or your principal with any questions or concerns. We hope you are enjoying the summer and be well.

Sincerely,



Patrick Manuel
Superintendent



Katie Joseph
Assistant Superintendent