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

July 31, 2020

Dear RSU #57 Community (Mustang Nation),

As we approach August, the start of a new school year is just a few weeks away and we understand that you have been patiently awaiting information from us on our plans for reopening schools. First, we are now planning to open school for all students after Labor Day, beginning the week of September 8th, with specific details regarding phasing in of all grades/programs to be outlined in the re-opening plan. This is a change to the adopted calendar and the Board will adopt the new calendar at the August 5th meeting (Meeting Link: <https://rsu57.zoom.us/j/84923814205>).

I know you have many more questions and concerns about how we will reopen our buildings safely in light of COVID-19 and I'm sure you too can understand that traditional school and routines will be forever changed. However, our commitment to school safety for students and staff will not change and we will adhere to the [Maine Department Of Education Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction](#) guidelines as they are presented.

On Wednesday evening, August 5th, I will present the RSU #57 basic guidelines of the 2020-2021 school year plan to the RSU 57 School Board. The plan is devised from the guidelines established for us from the DOE, which includes recommendations from the [Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The RSU #57 administrative team is assembling our general guidelines which will be shared with constituents throughout the District. Our schools will accommodate all students in a daily program, with families choosing to access the classroom either in person or remotely with a common start and end time for both. We will continue to review our plan as adjustments may be required based on the Maine DOE guidelines as well as the conditions of staffing and safety in the district.

We will receive guidance from the State regarding the rating for our county, which will dictate how we will proceed with the reopening of school and the continuance of the school year. It is our current understanding that there will be biweekly State updates regarding the rating of COVID-19 spread in our county. As a result of this procedure, we will need to be responsive to any changes that would affect our current plan. This changing information will necessitate flexibility in all operations of planning. We will do our best to keep you well informed.

The ratings are as follows:

- Categorization as “red” suggests that the county has a high risk of COVID-19 spread and that in-person instruction should not be conducted.
- Categorization as “yellow” suggests that the county has an elevated risk of COVID-19 spread and that hybrid instruction models should be adopted.
- Categorization as “green” suggests that the county has a relatively low COVID-19 risk and that in-person instruction can be adopted – although a SAU may opt for hybrid instruction if its buildings or readiness make adhering to the Required Health and Safety Measures for All Schools a challenge.

RSU #57 will offer online and in-person learning throughout the school year, unless ordered (red rating) to close our facilities. Our online learning program will look and run differently than in the spring. Students will participate in the same schedule as the in-person students run at the school (Synchronized Learning). Our teachers will instruct students in both environments in order for all students to experience similar educational programming. Daily class attendance will be required and recorded. Grading will be reflective of the current grading structures of the District.

In-person learning will require adherence to the safety guidelines, which currently include distancing and the mandatory wearing of a mask/face covering by all students and staff. Current guidance per The [Maine Department Of Education Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction](#), states that face shields are not an alternative to mask/face coverings unless there are “medical, behavioral, or other [documented] challenges.”

It should be noted that there are significant limitations on the number of students we can place on the bus at any given time. The required safety measures include: daily pre-screening, the wearing of a mask/face covering, hand sanitizing, and assigned seating. We are encouraging families to transport daily if possible.

Our nutrition department will continue to offer breakfast and lunch programs. Details of how to receive these services for those in the online learning setting will be forthcoming. Those participating in the in-person setting will be required to maintain aforementioned safety measures. Self-service options will not be available and meal choices will be limited.

The 2020-2021 school year will be divided into segments of school days, after which each family can revisit their personal choice of in-person or remote school options based on the changing conditions and the risk mitigation strategy employed by the district.

The family survey is linked below asking that families select a choice of an educational plan for each of their children, as well as information regarding transporting their children to school daily. **It is very important for our planning that all families complete this survey for each school-aged child in their household:** https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1a1jelFYI5Bb_1Q1wRK15I45KPBCBMx0tsiBFnCUMJrA/edit. We ask that you help us by sharing this information with your friends and family.

A community information night will be held Tuesday, August 11th from 6:00 - 8:00PM. We will use this opportunity to share our most current guidance and planning as well as take questions from the community. A link for this event will be shared via the District Facebook page, RSU #57 website, and the RSU #57 app.

The upcoming year will present challenges for all of us. That being said, we look forward to working with your child(ren) and providing them with quality educational opportunities.

With appreciation,



Larry Malone