



# MARANACOOK AREA SCHOOLS

*A Caring School Community Dedicated to Excellence*

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Dear Students, Parents, Caregivers, and Community Members,

I am reaching out to you today to share information about the progress we are making on our Return to Learn planning here in RSU 38. There is understandably a lot of anxiety and nervousness about the specifics of our plans. While we are not at a point where we have complete answers and plans ready to be laid out, there are some givens that we can share with you at this time. Before we get into specifics I want to remind everyone that we are following the Maine Department of Education's [Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction](#). Please revisit this document online often as it continues to be updated as new information and guidance becomes available.

It has been stated that our goal for the fall is to safely bring back as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs. With the designation from the DOE that Kennebec County is "green" based on health metrics, this opens the door to full in person instruction or to use a staggered schedule of partial in person instruction and partial remote learning based on our unique needs in RSU 38.

The teams that have been working on *Returning to Learn* will be finishing their work this week and carrying forward recommendations to the administrative team and the School Board. **A special meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 12 in which our plans will be presented to the school board.** The approval of the plans by the school board is a necessary step to beginning the reopening process.

Several "hard and fast" mandates are included in the plans and are included here:

- Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be increased with a rigorous schedule being developed for each building.
- Signage for traffic flow and hand washing/hygiene will be installed.
- Hand washing protocols are being developed for all levels along with appropriate supplies of hand sanitizer, soap, and wipes being ordered.
- Bussing capacity will be limited based on social distancing requirements and as such we will be encouraging parent transportation whenever possible. Families should consider alternatives to getting to school including car, walking, biking where possible. Carpooling with a stable group of people is recommended. Face coverings should be utilized in the car.

- Face covering/masks will be required of all students and staff at all RSU 38 facilities. (Mask breaks will be planned as part of this requirement.)
- All students will be working at individual desks. (DOE's framework of 3 feet or more will be exceeded based on individual building room capacity. Currently 4 feet or more at elementary and 5 feet or more at the middle and high schools.)
- A self screening tool for students and staff is being developed and will be implemented before school officially begins.
- Visitors to all buildings will be limited.
- A medical isolation room is being prepared at each building should there be a suspected covid positive case. (We will follow Maine CDC requirements in the handling of such cases.)
- At meal times (breakfast, snack, lunch) a space of 6 feet will be maintained. (Masks will be removed during meals.)

There is still much work to do to be ready for the return of students. I have asked the school board to move the student start date to Tuesday, September 8 and they will take up this recommendation on Wednesday, August 12.

We will be holding a virtual Zoom Town Hall meeting on **Thursday, August 6th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm** where we will review parental survey results, discuss more specifics of our Return to Learn plans, as well as answer questions raised through the parent survey. The link to the meeting will be shared late Wednesday afternoon (8/5) on the district website.

As we get closer to reopening our schools we will make every effort to provide regular communication throughout the month of August. I encourage you to look for communication from my office as well as from building Principals as your main source of information. Information will be posted on the district's website [www.maranacook.org](http://www.maranacook.org) or our district accounts on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/MaranacookSchools>) and Twitter (@maranacookRSU38). Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we ready for the start of the upcoming school year. We've got this everyone - *you can't stop the Black Bears!*

Sincerely,

Jay Charette  
Superintendent