

RSU 19 Families,

Over the past several weeks I have been working with the district administration and the school board to determine our return to school plan for this fall. We began from the position of wanting as many students to receive as much in-person instruction as possible while keeping our students, staff, and communities safe. We will continue to examine our ability to implement our plan and keep our families informed if any changes are necessary.

At this point we have determined that a hybrid learning plan with a combination of In-School and Virtual Learning will allow us to safely return while balancing the benefits of in-school, in-person instruction against the safety requirements issued by the Maine DOE.

The commissioner and governor will be reviewing the conditions regarding transmission of the virus in each county every two weeks. We feel that a hybrid plan allows us to adjust quickly to either add additional students to in person learning or to transition to our remote learning plan.

The details of our hybrid plan are as follows:

- In this hybrid model, grades PK-6 will attend 4 days per week in person (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) and grades 7-12 will be divided by 50% and scheduled 2 days per week in person (one group Monday and Tuesday and the other group, Thursday and Friday) of face to face instructional time each week. Wednesdays will be used to support virtual learning, small groups of targeted need students, office hours, parent contact, and staff professional development to make remote/virtual learning the best it can be.
- Parents may elect not to send students to school for COVID-related reasons. Students who do not return to school and are on a virtual learning plan will be provided support from school staff. To ensure continuity, students on a remote plan will be committed to staying on remote learning through a period of 4 weeks.
- Schools will communicate grading and feedback procedures appropriate to the learning and development of students in each grade span.
- RSU 19 will also be following all of the following requirements issued by the Maine DOE and Maine CDC.

## 6 Requirements for Safely Opening Schools in the Fall

- Symptom Screening at Home Before Coming to School (for all Staff and Students) - *Students (parents/caregivers) and staff members must conduct self-checks for symptoms prior to*

*boarding buses or entering school buildings each day. Any person showing symptoms must report their symptoms and not be present at school. Schools must provide clear and accessible directions to parents/caregivers and students for reporting symptoms and absences.*

- *Physical Distancing and Facilities - Adults must maintain 6 feet of distance from others to the extent possible. Maintaining 3 feet of distance is acceptable between and among students when combined with the other measures outlined in this list of safety requirements. 6 feet of physical distancing is required for students while eating breakfast and lunch, as students will be unable to wear masks at that time. A “medical isolation room” (separate from the nurse’s office) must be designated for students/staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. Adequate ventilation is required for classrooms, with schools having flexibility in implementation such as using properly working ventilation systems or outdoor air exchange using fans in open windows or doors. Groups in any one area, room, or classroom must not exceed the Governor’s gathering size limits.*
- *Masks/Face Coverings - Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear a mask/face covering. Students age two and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth. Masks/face coverings must be worn by all students on the bus. Face shields may be an alternative for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. The same applies to staff with medical or other health reasons for being unable to wear face coverings. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears.*
- *Hand Hygiene - All students and staff in a school must receive training in proper hand hygiene. All students and staff must wash hands or use sanitizing gel upon entering the school, before and after eating, before and after donning or removing a face mask, after using the restroom, before and after use of playgrounds and shared equipment, and upon entering and exiting a school bus.*
- *Personal Protective Equipment - Additional safety precautions are required for school nurses and/or any staff supporting students in close proximity, when distance is not possible, or when students require physical assistance. These precautions must at a minimum include eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles) and a mask/face covering. Classrooms and/or areas that have been used by an individual diagnosed with Covid-19 must be closed off until thorough cleaning and sanitization takes place.*
- *Return to School after Illness - Sick staff members and students must use home isolation until they meet criteria for returning to school as outlined in our Pandemic Response Plan.*

Please know that we continue to work with a team of teachers and administrators to make our remote learning more rigorous and enriching than it was last spring. Some of the details regarding remote learning are in our [Pandemic Response Plan](#) that is posted on the district website.

**Please note:**

**\*\*Choosing remote learning is a commitment for a specific amount of time**, at least the first month of school and then periodic re-entry points every 4 weeks after that. It is important for us to set up specific learning conditions for in-school students, classes, groupings, bus runs, food service and other services that are established very clearly for student safety.

We will continue to communicate with you over the coming weeks regarding all aspects of our return to school plans. Be on the lookout for a **Frequently Asked Questions** page on the website as well.

You will be receiving personal phone calls late next week, from our schools, regarding your specific return to school plans. These calls will help us establish bus runs, class sizes, remote learning plans, and other important information.

Zoom information sessions, videos, and other specific details relating to your school will be provided.

Please realize that we are doing the best that we can with the information that we have at this point in time. If the number of Covid cases climb, we will respond accordingly, by shifting to other, less transmission risk plans

Lastly, with your help in adhering to our plan and the safety expectations established within it, we can keep our students in school. If we do not take the plan seriously, and we have a spike in cases of Covid 19 in our district, we will have no other choice than to close our schools.

We appreciate your support in these ever difficult times.  
Thank you,

Mike Hammer, Superintendent RSU 19