

Regional School Unit 1

34 Wing Farm Parkway, Bath, ME 04530

Patrick Manuel, Superintendent
Debra Clark, Business Manager

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Think - Care - Act

September 22, 2020

Dear PreK-5 families,

Since the beginning of our planning for this coming school year, the district reopening committee made all decisions with three priorities in mind:

1. Ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and community
2. Provide the best possible education to every student
3. Recognize the importance of family and work schedules

Our original intent was to go 100% in person on September 28th after spending three weeks in a hybrid model. The hope was that this would allow the staff and students time to learn and practice all of the new safety protocols and procedures, along with becoming familiar with our new digital technologies. Last week, elementary staff were surveyed so the administrative team and School Board would have adequate quantitative and qualitative data to determine if the initial plan to move to 100% attendance on the 28th felt safe and aligned to the original goals set forth.

Last night the RSU 1 School Board did review the results of the PreK-5 Teacher Survey. The majority of administrators and elementary teachers who responded felt they were not prepared for the return of all students. The main concerns that were discussed and shared by teachers and administrators were all focused around our ability to meet state-required safety procedures. As the people on the ground experiencing and monitoring social distancing, mask wearing, eating, and movement breaks, we value the feedback received by teachers and administrators that moving forward with our initial plan to be 100% on September 28th would likely compromise the safety of students and staff.

After a long discussion weighing the safety of students, it was decided by the School Board to continue in the current hybrid model until further notice. While staff and administrators all agree and desire to have students in the buildings five days a week, the health and safety of our students and staff needs to continue to be the measure by which we make decisions. We understand this adversely impacts some families especially given the challenge of acquiring daycare on at-home days. We are working with our community partners to see what additional childcare options they can provide families. We recognize the timing of this decision is challenging for families, but we did not want to make the decision until we had experienced at least two weeks of school to assess protocols and procedures. Right now, we feel maintaining the hybrid model is the safest option but we will continuously monitor and revisit this situation.

Thank you for your continued flexibility as we make decisions that best ensure the safety of students, staff, and the entire RSU 1 community.


Sincerely,



Patrick Manuel
Superintendent



Katie Joseph
Assistant Superintendent



Steve August
Board Chair

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