



Regional School Unit 1

Serving the Communities of Arrowsic – Bath – Phippsburg – Woolwich

*Patrick M. Manuel, Superintendent
Debra J. Clark, Business Manager*

*Katie Joseph, Assistant Superintendent
Justin R. Keleher, Director of Special Services*

Think – Care – Act

September 2nd, 2020

RSU1 Families,

This message provides updated information about student devices, our new learning management system, video conferencing, and how to obtain technical assistance if you need it while supporting your student this school year. Hopefully not too much information, but enough to address common questions, and get everyone off to a good start.

Brightspace

We are pleased to announce that RSU1 will be using the Brightspace Learning Environment (BLE) to help students and families more easily access the materials and information they need for school. This new product will address the feedback that we received after our experience with distance learning last spring, that we needed a single starting point for announcements, assignments, classroom discussions, events, and resources that was well organized and easy to use. BLE will replace such tools as Moodle, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, and many others. While BLE will look slightly different in the elementary school than the middle and high school, we are confident that you'll be able to better navigate your child's learning environment whether in school or when remote learning is happening.

Getting started in Brightspace for Parents/Guardians

Our teachers have created this one-page starter providing resources and steps to getting going in Brightspace. You can view the document here: <https://bit.ly/3hQWBAt>

Students in Brightspace

Students will access Brightspace using their school issued Chromebook and their @rsu1.org account. Details will be provided during the first days of school.

Chromebooks for K-5

Last spring many students in K5 were able to take a Chromebook home to use during distance learning, and then retained it over the summer. These students will continue to maintain possession of the devices loaned to them for the start of the 2020-21 school year. Students who were unable to obtain a device last spring will be issued with one near the start of this school year.

Grades K-2 students will be issued a Chromebook if they do not already have one. These devices will be delivered to the classroom, along with the parent paperwork and a brown paper bag. The device and paperwork can be placed into the bag, the bag folded around the device, and then slid into the student backpack for the trip home. These devices are intended for use at home during the school year.

Additionally, the K-2 classrooms will be provided with sets of Chromebooks. This will allow K-2 teachers and students access to a device at school.

Grades 3-5 students will need to bring their devices home at night, and then back to school the next day, charged and ready for classroom activities. We understand that this is not ideal, but we do not have enough devices to provide all students in grades K-5 a device for home and for school. We have ordered carry cases for grades 3-5 but they are back-ordered and will not arrive until the end of September. We will be providing brown paper bags so Chromebooks can be protected while inside student backpacks. This is a little like

covering a textbook and will provide about the same level of protection, but at least it should keep debris and pencils from poking into the ports on the computers, or getting between the screen and keyboard.

While this deployment model poses some challenges, having students in all grades with ready access to a device at school and at home allows us to teach and learn during the day, but ready to pivot to distance learning as it becomes necessary. This could be due to students being absent for illness, quarantine, or if we need to transition to full distance learning.

Chromebooks for Grades 6-12

Most students in this grade span have their Chromebooks already, but if your student does not, one will be made ready for them and delivered to their classroom. These Chromebooks should be taken home nightly, and brought to school each day, charged and ready.

Chromebook Care and Use

Please use the Chromebooks at home in a common area, placed on a hard flat surface. Drinks and food should not be near the computer, and sticky or food coated fingers should be washed before using the computer. Pets have broken more devices than you would believe, so keep the devices away from wagging tails, and do not leave them open on a soft couch cushion or bed (where they really should not be anyway).

Internet Filtering

LightSpeed Relay is an industry leading filter that protects students from inappropriate content while using their RSU1 issued Chromebooks, in school and at home, or anywhere they are on the internet. No filter is perfect, but Lightspeed provides is built for education, and is very responsive to categorizing emerging content.

Families Who Need Technical Help

Families needing technical assistance with their RSU1 issued Chromebooks or educational resources used in our classes can email techsupport@rsu1.org. This will generate a ticket in the RSU1 Helpdesk. The district tech team will address technical requests about the device and connections, and about accessing our core apps such as Brightspace, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Meet, etc. Questions about classroom resources such as ConnectEd, Keyboarding without Tears, Tumblebooks, forgotten passwords, etc., the types of guidance a teacher would normally explain to the class if they were together in the classroom, will be directed to their teacher at each school.

Swapping Damaged/Non Working Devices

If the device loaned to your student breaks, or stops functioning, please email the tech team at techsupport@rsu1.org so we can have a replacement device ready for you.

Notification of Video Conferencing

Teachers in RSU1 will be using Google's Meet video conferencing tools in order to extend the classroom learning experience to all students. Video conferences may be recorded in order to allow students who cannot access the class remotely, at the time it is happening, to view the recording of the class at a later time. These video conferences and recordings will only be available to students enrolled in the class, and will be deleted within 14 days of the conclusion of the course, or when the recording is no longer needed for educational purposes.

-RSU1 Technology Department