

July 22, 2022

Dear Staff, Communities and Families of RSU 16,

We would like to say thank you to our outstanding maintenance and custodial staff who are hard at work preparing the classrooms, buildings and fields for the fall. As they continue to do their work you should all remember you still have plenty of time to do some of the great relaxing summer things that come along with summer vacation. Recharge yourselves and enjoy each other's company and ready yourself for the coming school year.

Summer Communication

Staff and Family Update will be published on August 12.

Classroom and School VOLUNTEERS

If you can consistently give 1-2 hours of volunteer time each week, our elementary schools are looking for volunteers. If you are interested, contact the building principal. ESS - Jessica Madsen, jmadsen@rsu16.org, MCS - Kaitlynn Brown, kbrown@rsu16.org, PCS - Brandi Comeau, bcomeau@rsu16.org

Water Testing Results

We have received water testing results for Poland Community School. Water was tested to ensure water quality is within the threshold of healthy and safe for our students, staff, and community. This process is a cycle and is planned in advance due to the size and quantity of water access points in our facilities.

Upon review of the water sample test(s) results that have come in, we have levels of lead that are too high in some areas. As a result, we have stopped access to those spots because levels exceeded state and/or federal thresholds. These locations require further review and mitigation. Until we know the cause and can remediate, to ensure the water quality is fit for consumption, we will not use it. At this time, this includes some spots at Poland Community. In the meantime, all staff and students are instructed to utilize the bottle fill stations/fountains at all RSU 16 Schools. These stations dispense water that is free of lead.

We do not have any test results that prompt whole school mitigation. These test results are spot specific like a sink, a water fountain, shower, etc. This is not a whole school problem for any of our facilities.

Test results can be found on the RSU 16 webpage: click Departments, click Facilities Operations, click Public Announcements: Lead in Drinking Water. If you have any questions, please contact Director of Operations Craig Worth.

2022-23 School Bus Routes

School bus routes for the coming school year are actively under development. All child care arrangements and bus stop exceptions from the previous school year have expired. Requests for bus stops to be located at daycare or child care provider locations for the 2022-23 school year must be received at the Transportation Office by August 1st. Please visit www.rsu16.org, select the Departments tab, then the Transportation tab, and finally the Transportation Request Form tab to obtain an electronic copy of this form. Hard copies are also available from each school office.

Similar to the 21-22 school year, transportation decisions are based on a single-pick up and drop off location. We know this is difficult for some families; however, the shortage of bus drivers makes it impossible to provide multiple bus stop locations for students at this time.

Given the unprecedented increases in the cost of fuel, we will be making every effort to maximize routing efficiency by minimizing travel on cul-de-sacs and dead end roads.

Fred Barlow, transportation director, is available at fbarlow@rsu16.org to assist with questions or concerns.

Staffing shortage

If you have been following the news you are probably aware that schools across the country are experiencing a staffing shortage. As you may already be aware, RSU 16 too is feeling the effects of this shortage. Our open positions have been posted externally on sites specifically designed to recruit teachers. In addition, we have posted them on our Facebook Pages, and they have been shared extensively by staff who also have a strong network of teachers within the state. While we have been lucky enough to find qualified teachers to fill many of our open positions, some of our vacancies still remain unfilled.

Knowing that it may not be possible to fill all of our open positions by the start of the school year, particularly at the elementary level, elementary level principals, assistant principals, and deans of students have come together to develop a contingency plan for how to address the teacher shortage. During the brainstorming session, members of the team listed all ways we could provide students with instruction and the impact of each option. We eliminated options such as remote learning, a hybrid schedule or AM/PM sessions for certain grade levels.

If the contingency plan goes into effect though, you may see larger class sizes than we have had in the past. You may also see GaTE and Enrichment services impacted for elementary students. The potential exists that we may need to look at combining a grade level from one school with the other grade level classes in the other schools within the district. None of these options are our first choice, but will allow for all of our students to continue to have full-day, in-person learning, and instruction provided by a certified teacher.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership to address our staff shortages while ensuring high-quality, in-person educational experiences for students in RSU 16.

Sincerely,
Ken and Amy