

March 25, 2020

Greetings RSU 16's Most Captive Audience,

We are now into our second week of social distancing or what feels like captivity. Each, and everyone of you, are **desperately missed**. Your smiles, your morning pleasantries, your kind gestures, and yes, even the gloomy glass half filled types are missed.

We must all collectively fight and conquer COVID-19. Our new normal has us all avoiding, killing, or trying to outsmart every Coronavirus germ we can get our Lysol wipes and briskly washed hands on. We have no doubt we will be victorious in our battle, but we all must be patient and work as one to have the long-term effect needed to slow the spread of this virus. Together as one!

It is so important that we continue to **maintain the CDC guidelines on physical/social distancing and staying home**. As tempting as it can be to visit with your students and each other, you must keep your distance, not only for your own sake but for our student's and co-workers' sake. You only know who you've been in contact with (and that is not always a 100% certainty), but you definitely do not know who your students or co-workers have been in contact with. If you have concerns about students or families surrounding food insecurity, essential supplies and/or wellness, you need to contact your principal. Do not attempt to solve these on your own.

Well-meaning people everywhere continue to spread this virus, we cannot allow this to continue to happen. No high fives and no student hugs (for now). When you say no to today's hug you might be saving their, your own, or a family member's life. It will be hard to do, but we must so we can all be back together again doing what we love to do the most, shaping and inspiring young minds.

You might also be wondering what the work expectations are for you during school closure. We would love to say we whipped out the RSU 16 Teaching Staff Handbook for Pandemics, but as you know no such thing existed. [Click here](#) to view the Teaching Staff Expectations Handbook. Once you have reviewed the handbook, your principal will offer additional clarification on what this looks like for your school and your role.

Today is sunny and in the 40's, get outside for a few moments, or go for a walk or run to soak up some of the sun's warmth and receive it's natural rejuvenation energy. Continue to reach out (figuratively not literally) to your colleagues and see how they are coping and most importantly continue to engage our students in academic enrichment to keep their minds thinking. The Maine DOE has 15-minute virtual mental wellness sessions bookending the beginning and end of each day. The sessions provide a time to bolster resilience and a chance to connect and share space with school professionals around the state in response to the care and wellbeing of *YOU* during the COVID-19 crisis. Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/689251005>

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger