

July 23, 2021

Dear Staff, Families, and Community Members,

Reporting COVID-19 cases over the summer

All elementary students participating in summer school should report cases to Poland Community School, regardless of your hometown school. The number is 998-4915 and the nurse is Louise Robinson. Whittier Middle School and Poland Regional High school students should report to WMS/PRHS at 998-5400. The nurses are Lisa Storer and Pam Tracy. For student athletes that are enrolled in summer athletics, please report positive COVID-19 cases to Don King, athletic director, 998-5400.

Fall 2021 (5 days a week)

Our draft Return to School Plan will be emailed in a separate email today, July 23.

It will be posted on our website and Facebook page for review.

The timeline for approval of plan is as follows:

1. July 27 is a staff Listening Session to hear feedback regarding the draft plan.
2. July 28 is a community and families Listening Session to hear feedback regarding the draft plan.
3. July 29 Amy and Ken meet with Dr. Nirav Shah, and others from the Maine Center for Disease Control (ME CDC) and Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
4. August 3 is when all RSU 16 administrators and directors will review all new information and update the Return to School Plan to have a final recommendation for the School Board.
5. August 6 the recommended Return to School Plan will be published in our summer update.
6. August 9 is the School Board meeting at Poland Regional High School auditorium at 6:30PM to approve the Return to School Plan. This is an in-person meeting with no option to join remotely.

Save the Dates

Our next summer Family, Community, Staff Updates will be published on August 6, August 20

July 27 will be a Listening Session with RSU 16 Staff at **6-7PM via Zoom Webinar** regarding the Return to School Plan

<https://zoom.us/j/97883535393?pwd=MDlidUNaSmYxOXNHVFhFYIFsYUFZZz09>

Passcode: 577516

July 28 will be a Listening Session with Community and Families at **6-7PM via Zoom Webinar** regarding the Return to School Plan

<https://zoom.us/j/97883535393?pwd=MDlidUNaSmYxOXNHVFhFYIFsYUFZZz09>

Passcode: 577516

August 3 will be a Parent/Caregiver/Student webinar about the details of Reel for K-6. Reel replaces our VL5 program. At this webinar participants will learn about Exact Path courseware that will be used, the role of Seesaw, and the expectations of the adult who will oversee student learning M-F from 9AM - 2PM at home.

6-7PM via Zoom Webinar (link will be sent later)

August 9 is the School Board meeting at Poland Regional High School auditorium at 6:30PM to approve the Return to School Plan. This is an in-person meeting with no option to join remotely.

Transportation

Watch your email for an electronic form that will be sent to all families on July 30th. Transportation will **only** be provided for students whose families reply using this form to opt-in to transportation on or before August 6th.

For those families who opt into transportation **and** who also want their children's bus stop to be located someplace other than at their residence, Daycare/Alternate Transportation Request Forms are available from school offices and from our transportation director, Fred Barlow (fbarlow@rsu16.org). If you choose to return this hard-copy form, it must be received on or before August 6th to enable the different daycare/alternate bus stop to begin on the first day of classes. All Daycare/Alternate Transportation forms from previous school years have expired.

Pooled Testing

In RSU 16, we seek to maintain a safe environment for employees, students, families, and the community. To support those goals, we have partnered with [Concentric by Ginkgo](#) to provide an optional and free pooled testing program. Currently, we are piloting pooled testing with our summer school programs.

What is pooled testing?

Pooling can test 25 people using one test. All students in a class, pod, or cohort swab their own noses and place their swabs in a single tube (that's the pooling step). The samples in that tube are then run as a single sample, using one test. [See it in action here.](#)

Why pooled testing? Why should my student participate?

You know the old saying: "knowledge is power." Tools like pooled testing empower us to make great decisions. Without knowing the specific prevalence of COVID-19 in our school, it's tough for us to make informed decisions about safeguarding our school community, returning to school, or continuing in-person learning.

Only students with completed consent forms are able to participate in testing. If you do not want your family to participate, your student will not be included in the testing program. Though, we hope you do!

Testing empowers us to make these informed decisions about in-person learning and allows students, teachers, and staff to come to school with peace of mind.

Why are we asking all families to complete the Meal Application Form if meals are no charge?

By completing the Meal Benefit Application, you are directly investing in your child's education and the children and families in your community.

Specific programs that are funded by the data collected from Meal Benefit Application:

- [Title 1](#) schools
- [Elementary & Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#)
- [Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\)](#)
- [Essential Programs and Services \(EPS\) funding allocated directly to Maine Schools through the Maine Department of Education](#) (State funding)
- Before/After School Programs
- Summer School Programs
- Special academic programming, and grant opportunities initiated by the Maine Department of Education (DOE)
- Teacher student loan forgiveness

If you have any questions please contact Ellen Dore, RSU 16 Food Service Director, edore@rsu16.org, 207-998-5400 ext 107.

American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund, authorized under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, provides over \$411 million to Maine to support schools in safely reopening and sustaining safe operations while meeting the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

RSU 16's allocation is \$3,150,761.12 in federal stimulus funds through the American Rescue Plan. Of the ARP-ESSER total allocation of \$3,150,761.12, 20 percent of the total funding or \$630,152 must be earmarked to address student learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining portion of the allocation can be used to support our district, particularly in areas most impacted by the pandemic.

The funds allow for us to:

- Safely return students to in-person instruction
- Maximize in-person instruction time
- Operate schools and meet the needs of students
- Purchase educational technology
- Address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, including the impacts of interrupted instruction and learning loss and the impacts on low-income students, children with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students experiencing homelessness
- Implement evidence-based strategies to meet students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs

If you have any questions about the ARP-ESSER 3 funding plan, please contact Superintendent Ken Healey at khealey@rsu16.org or by phone at 998-2727.

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger