

February 11, 2021

Dear RSU 16 Staff, Families and Communities,

Last week was School Counselor Week and RSU 16 has the best school counselors! Thank you to our outstanding school counselors: Corey McFadden, Carrie Rhoads, Hillary Bush, Bonnie Robbins, Abby Rines, Julie Martin and Andrew O'Connell Shevenell!

Household Cases of COVID-19 during school vacation

Please report **any** household cases of COVID-19 over vacation by calling: **(207) 740-0791**. **Please leave a message at this number with contact information to receive a call back.** Even though we are not in school, it is important to report **all** household cases. The school nurses are required to report all student cases to the Department of Education (DOE), and a positive case within your home may impact close contacts within our schools.

If you/your student test positive: Please [isolate](#) immediately. Do not wait for a call from the Maine CDC to isolate. You should stay in isolation until you meet criteria to leave. If you have close contact with a positive case, please [quarantine](#) at home for 10 days from your last exposure to the positive case. You should stay in quarantine until you meet the criteria to leave.

Travel during school vacation

Rules really haven't changed much since the last holiday break. For students and staff that may be traveling during the holiday break, please remember to inform the school of upcoming travel plans.

There are two options for Maine residents traveling to a non-exempt state (currently this means any states besides NH and VT) and returning to Maine per the governor's Executive Order mandate: EITHER Quarantine for 10 days upon return to the state OR provide a negative COVID-19 test result within 72 hours of return to the state before being able to return to school.

The one change that was made to this rule was for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days. If a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days and is outside of the required isolation time frame you are not required to quarantine for 10 days or provide a negative test. You would, however, have to produce documentation of the positive COVID-19 test result within 90 days in order to return to school.

International travel

Upon return to the United States, staff and students must quarantine. International travelers can return to school after they: 1). Get tested 3-5 days after travel, and receive a negative test result AND stay home and self quarantine for 7 days after travel. 2). Do not get tested and stay home for 10 days after travel. 3). Avoid being around people who are at increased risk for severe illness for 14 days, whether you get tested or not. Any staff or students who have travelled internationally will not be permitted inside the school building for a minimum of 7 days, even if a negative test has occurred.

Returning to work or school after travel is not dependent on the length of time spent within the restricted states or other countries, meaning that a day visit still requires any person to quarantine and/or test as described above. All members of the household who travel must test or quarantine if over 12 months old.

COVID-19 Vaccines

Now that there are authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, accurate vaccine information is critical. If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, visit the [CDC website for information about vaccines](#). It describes in more detail the vaccines and provides answers to commonly asked questions. Also, your health care provider is a resource for information about vaccines.

- **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine**. This vaccine has an efficacy rate of 95%. This means that about 95% of people who get the vaccine are protected from an infection with the COVID-19 virus. This vaccine is for people age 16 and older. It requires two injections given 21 days apart. The second dose can be given up to six weeks after the first dose, if needed.
- **Moderna COVID-19 vaccine**. This vaccine has an efficacy rate of 94.1%. This vaccine is for people age 18 and older. It requires two injections given 28 days apart. The second dose can be given up to six weeks after the first dose, if needed.

Here are two Fact Sheets about the current available vaccines: [Moderna](#) and [Pfizer](#) Fact Sheets

District Highlights

Adult Education: If you or someone you know is thinking about a job change or wants to finish high school, Adult Education is providing in-person services for both career exploration and high school completion. Recently, we have also learned of several free, or low-cost, career and training opportunities through partner programs and community colleges in our region. Contact us at 345-3217 for more information!

Poland Regional High School:

Congratulations to Amy Fryda and Sophie Patenaude for being accepted into the Maine Music Educators Association All-State Chorus. Congratulations also to the students who participated in the first ever virtual drama performance for PRHS. Hats off to Ms. Robinson and Mr. Poulin for the effort to produce such an event. Finally, our winter athletes have begun practicing! It is great to see kids get back in the gym with their teammates. Coaches have been able to stay connected with them through Zoom, but we all know it is much better to be in person.

Whittier Middle School:

Whittier Middle School Spelling Bee Results: Eighth grader Niko Theriault went the distance without making any spelling errors, and Connor Neal survived a very talented group of challengers to finish as runner-up. Both will have the opportunity to represent Whittier at the Androscoggin County Bee, likely on Zoom in February.

Elm Street School: We held our January Wildcat whole school assembly via Zoom for both Cohorts A and B. The character trait for the month of January was “Courage”. Teachers nominated one student from each cohort to receive their award during our virtual assembly. Families were also able to attend the assembly virtually to see their child receive their award. For the month of January, fifth grade teacher, Destiny Merrill, was selected to receive the Hootie Award. Mr. O’Driscoll nominated Destiny for this award and noted her flexibility, commitment to her students, and her ability to work with a team to support her students as reasons he selected her to receive this award.

Minot Consolidated School: We had our January Mustang Pride Assembly. Two Students from each class received a Mustang Pride Certificate from their teacher. We had 3 students receive Books-A-Million cards for their work on PBIS. Thank you to the Minot Community Club for their donation of the gift cards each month. Each month, one staff member is recognized for their contributions to our school community. This award is sponsored by Horace Mann. Congratulations to Katherine Hiss for receiving the Hootie Award from Aaron Gagnon for her many contributions to the MCS community!

Poland Community School: PCS held our Panther Pride classroom assemblies. Two students from every classroom in grades K-6 received a bracelet and pencil for demonstrating acts of kindness. Mrs. Burns and Mrs. Comeau provided a school wide read aloud and bookmark for our February school-wide PBIS award. Classrooms decorated doors for The great Kindness Challenge. Thank you to the PTA for purchasing *Kindness Matters* bracelets for students and staff.

PreK - 6 VL5: There are many great events happening in PreK-6 VL5. At our recent VL5 Dragon Pride assembly, Mrs. Bartlett's second grade students presented their research on a self-selected animal. In a different event, 4th grade students showcased their creativity in a Charlotte Web diorama, while 3rd grade students shared their Mr. Limoncello Library Olympics projects. Mrs. Beaudoin's kindergarten class had their Super Power reading celebration with Ms. Harlow's 3rd grade students.

Special Education: There are District openings for educational technicians and substitutes. Apply for certification and fingerprints at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/cert>. Apply for a substitute or ed tech position at <https://www.rsu16.org/> or call Special Education at 998-2762 for more information.

Support Resources

The increased isolation and anxiety caused by the pandemic can have a significant influence on the mental health of students and families. Listed below are some resources that you may find valuable.

call 211: for COVID19 related information, how to access behavioral health and social service resources

Maine's Statewide Crisis Line: 1-888-568-1112 available 24/7

Maine's Intentional Support Warm Line: 1-866-771-WARM (9276) (peer support)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) ([or online chat here](#))

National Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Trevor Project LGBTQ Crisis Line: 1-866-488-7386 ([online chat here](#) or text TREVOR to 1-202-304-1200)

Teen Text Line: Text 207-515-TEXT (Not a Crisis Line- 12pm-10pm, peer supported)

Please continue to follow best practice safety protocols: wear a mask, keep physical distance, wash your hands and monitor for symptoms, and help protect our schools and neighbors.

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger