

May 7, 2021

Dear Staff, Communities and Families of RSU 16,

### **School Calendar**

The last day of school for Cohort A is Monday, June 7 (full day)

The last day of school for Cohort B, Cohort C and VL5 is Wednesday, June 9 (half day)

A downloadable copy of the school calendar can be found on our website, [www.rsu16.org](http://www.rsu16.org)

### **Masking During Outdoor Activities**

Due to the recent Maine Department of Education (MDOE) change in masking requirements while outdoors, “schools may decide to eliminate or make optional the use of face coverings in outdoor settings where students and staff are able to maintain the physical distancing requirements of 6 feet or more. This flexibility would apply during recess and outdoor classrooms if physical distancing is maintained. Maine's public health guidance does not differentiate based on who is, or is not, vaccinated.” effective as of April 28, 2021 all schools in RSU 16 will allow staff and students, who are involved in outside activities, to voluntarily unmask during these activities, provided they can maintain physical distance of 6 feet or more.

### **New Travel Guidance in Maine**

**What are Maine’s policies for visitors traveling from out-of-state or Maine residents traveling to other states?** As of May 1, 2021, Maine no longer requires proof of a negative test or quarantine for travelers to the state. If one or more states see a spike in cases of highly contagious COVID-19 variants, Maine will apply its test or quarantine requirement to travelers to and from that state. The Maine CDC will publicly announce any such states when they are identified.

**What is Maine’s policy for international travel?** All people who arrive in Maine within 7 days of entering the U.S. must quarantine for 7 days from arrival in the U.S. AND get a COVID-19 molecular or antigen test 3-5 days after arrival in the U.S. Even if the COVID-19 test is negative, individuals must complete the 7-day quarantine after travel. If the test is positive, [individuals must isolate](#). Individuals arriving from international travel who do not get a COVID-19 test should quarantine for 10 days after arrival in the U.S. Individuals who arrive in Maine more than 7 days after arrival in the U.S. should follow guidelines for domestic travelers arriving in Maine from non-exempt states.

### **Return to 5 Days in the Fall**

RSU 16 is readying plans to return to full 5 days in person instruction in September 2021 within the CDC and/or DOE guidelines that exist at the time. Each leadership team in each school is currently developing a plan that will return our students five days a week reestablishing a more traditional vibe to our public education. There of course are and will continue to be obstacles we will face. The three major obstacles are classroom size, transporting and feeding (spacing limitations) of our students. Without some CDC or DOE adjustments to the distancing limitations our schools will need to be very creative with developing their plan. To defeat these obstacles, it is very likely we will need parents to consider transporting their students as we did this school year. Lunch and snack time may need to be spread out in classrooms, cafeteria and hallways. Maximum classroom limits might force us to consider out-of-the-box ideas such as multigrade classrooms in an elementary school or we might even have to consider sending a few elementary students to a different elementary school because of the need to balance class sizes, so not to exceed the authorized class capacity.

None of this will be easy, but with cooperation and compromise from everyone, the RSU 16 family can make a 5 day a week in person instruction a reality for the Fall. Stand by for more details as the plan development continues.

### **Vaccinations**

PRHS will be hosting a COVID Vaccination Clinic for all students 16 years old or older. The Pfizer Vaccine, the only vaccine approved for teenagers under the age of 18, will be administered at the clinic. PRHS Students and families should refer to the email sent by Principal Cari Medd for more information.

First Dose of vaccine:

- Tuesday (5/11) 8am --11am
- Thursday (5/13) 8am – 11am.

Second dose of vaccine:

- Tuesday (6/1) 8am --11am
- Thursday (6/3) 8am – 11am

### **District Highlights**

#### **Poland Regional High School:**

The week before April break, juniors and seniors from our PRHS Jobs For Maine Graduates (JMG) program competed in the annual JMG statewide Career Development Conference. This year the event took place virtually, and was the first year PRHS competed. There were **over 300 submissions from JMG students across the state** for a variety of competitions. Our students took **first place** in the JMG Career Association Presentation category and the Mock Interview competition, **second place** in Decision Making competition and **third place** in the JMG Photo Contest. Congratulations to our students!

#### **Whittier Middle School:**

We held the Whittier History Day in a virtual format this year. Fifty-one students received recognition and the opportunity to compete at the state level. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> annual event for Whittier, and the staff and students did an excellent job managing the challenges of cohorts and remote learning. Special recognition should be noted for teachers Logan Landry, Erica Swenson, Jamie Karaffa, Sean Galipeau-Eldridge, Shannon Shanning, and Kelly Adams for facilitating this extremely valuable full-school learning experience.

#### **Elm Street School:**

\*Since January ESS Pre-K students have been on an alphabet safari. Each day the students learned a new letter and sound starting at A and ending all the way at Z! They also practiced their fine motor cutting skills by making a silly hat to go with each letter they learned! In March, the children celebrated their hard work with a Pre-K Fashion Show! The children got to strut their stuff down the runway and show off their personalized letter vests to family and friends that attended via Zoom!

\*Our third graders have been writing petitions as part of their persuasive writing unit, “Changing the World”. They celebrated their writing by hosting a zoom meeting with their classmates and families to share their writing. It was wonderful to hear our students share their ideas of ways we can improve our school, our town, and our world!

\*Our sixth graders completed their mini-National History Day projects. They were able to present their projects to the staff at ESS and the fifth grade students in a hallway gallery.

**PreK-6 VL5:**

We recently celebrated our April Student of the Month at our monthly Dragon Pride Assembly. Our first grade students shared a habitat and animal during our assembly. Our Kindergarten students celebrated the end of their reading unit by showcasing their reading skills to some fifth grade students. Students in grades 3-6 are reading books by author Chris Grabenstein for a surprise (well, maybe not surprise anymore) author visit via Zoom in early June! The students have loved his books, so they will be very excited about this opportunity.

**Minot Consolidated School:**

Spring is here, and with spring has come the Minot Consolidated School garden! We have been so fortunate to have a number of local businesses and families donate supplies that have allowed us to prepare our raised beds. Students have been busy helping to clean out the boxes, prepare the beds, and plant seeds. We are so fortunate to have an outdoor learning space that allows for our students to have hands-on learning experiences. A big thank you to Mrs. Goss for coordinating with all stakeholders in order to make this opportunity happen!

**Poland Community School:**

Sixth graders at PCS spent several weeks this semester learning research skills. Students chose a famous Mainer and tried to prove how he or she “made a difference.” Students used a variety of primary and secondary sources to support their thesis. Each student created a google website to showcase their research. In addition, students continued to develop their writing and technology skills. This project has become a critical part of the sixth grade curriculum as we work to prepare students for middle school. It is amazing to see students’ confidence grow in their ability to research, write, and use technology to teach others.

**Special Education:** The Special Education Team has been hard at work this year meeting the needs of all of our learners, whether it’s been in person or virtual. We are so proud of how the students have responded to safety practices and protocols-they are real troopers! IEP meetings on zoom have offered a new level of convenience to many parents and we will continue to offer meetings via zoom as we move into the next school year.

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger