

July 31, 2020

RSU 16 Staff, Families and Community,

This week we highlight the **second required health and safety measures for all schools: Physical Distancing and Facilities**. You can download the full document, [Required Health and Safety Measures for All Schools](#), or visit the Maine DOE website at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework/part-I>

1. Adults must maintain 6 feet of distance from others to the extent possible. Maintaining 3 feet of distance is acceptable between and among students when combined with the other measures (masks) outlined in this list of safety requirements.

RSU 16 staff have removed all non-essential furniture from classrooms to maximize space available. Moveable tables will be replaced with student desks. In grades PreK and K, other flexible seating is being reviewed as we consider the developmental needs of our youngest learners.

2. 6 feet of physical distancing is required for students while eating breakfast and lunch, as students will be unable to wear masks at that time.

At PRHS/WMS, the circular tables in the Cafe have been replaced with 6 foot tables, so a student can sit at each end and maintain the 6 feet of distance required during meal times. Other seating locations for lunch will be explained by Principals Shawn Vincent (WMS) and Cari Medd (PRHS) at a later date. At the elementary level, meals will be brought to the classroom at a designated time, where students will maintain a 6 foot distance. Our full meal service plan will be included in a future communication.

3. A “medical isolation room” must be designated for students/staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the school day.

In each of our school health offices, a separate area has been designated for students/staff exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to remain while waiting to be dismissed. The nurses will have close enough proximity to see and hear the student/staff and respond appropriately to their healthcare needs. Additionally, these areas are being equipped with medical grade ventilation systems to improve air quality.

4. Schools should evaluate their existing ventilation capabilities and ensure that they are maximizing their current capacity. Adequate ventilation is required for classrooms, with schools having flexibility in implementation such as using properly working ventilation systems or outdoor air exchange using fans in open windows or doors.

Siemen Industries sent ventilation experts to survey our old faltering elementary school ventilation systems on Wednesday and we are awaiting pricing to get these ventilation systems functioning properly. Additionally we are exploring options to completely revamp and modernize the existing elementary school ventilations system, hopefully we have this option priced out by next week. Our goal with this option is to modernize the ventilation systems before the end of December 2020. The bottom line is that we will be able to meet the basic requirements outlined by CDC and DOE for ventilation in all our school buildings when students and staff return to in person instruction.

5. Groups in any one area, room, or classroom must not exceed the Governor's gathering size limits.

We often get the question, how can we return to school if the Governor's order limits the size of gatherings to less than 50 people? The Commissioner of Education provided clarity on this last week. In schools, there can be no more than 50 people in a defined space. A defined space examples include an auditorium, cafeteria, or gym. We *can* have more than 50 people in the school, but cannot have gatherings of more than 50 in any one defined space in the school.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

On Monday, August 3, 2020 at 6:00PM, Ken and Amy will host a webinar to update our staff and community about our proposed plan for the return to classroom instruction for the fall. It will be via Zoom Webinar and streamed live to Poland Knights YouTube station. If the Webinar fills to capacity, use Poland Knights YouTube station to watch the livestream or a link to the video will be posted on our website and Facebook page.

Click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/96846052728?pwd=dDlhaFVpZ3NoS3dmWGE1YitHNW9mZz09>

Passcode: 336984

Parent/Caregiver Survey

For the question, "If we were to utilize a hybrid model (some at school learning, some at home learning) for our initial return to school, would your preference be?"

42% selected "Child attends school every other day."

44% selected "Child attends school for 2 consecutive days - such as Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday."

14% selected "Child attends school every other week."

Please be assured that RSU 16's administrators and staff are working very hard on a plan to get all our students back to school in the safest and healthiest educational environment possible. This unfortunately can not and will not happen overnight.

Sincerely,

Amy Hediger and Ken Healey