



Regional School Unit No. 18

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41 Heath St. Oakland, ME 04963

Carl Gartley
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Asst. Superintendent

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What a gorgeous Maine weekend we are having to wrap up the school year. OK, so Monday will be a little warm, but considering the year we have had this will be easy to handle.

I am sure many of you have read articles or seen discussions on the news about what schools will look like in the fall. One lesson I have learned this year is that trying to plan three months ahead is difficult, if not foolish. I will be meeting with my administrative team throughout the summer to make sure we are ready for the fall. Here are some of the issues still up in the air that you may have heard about:

Masks: Masks are still required inside schools. I am hopeful this restriction will go away for the fall, but again predicting ahead is difficult. No masks are required outdoors, even on school grounds. Some people have asked me how they can express their opinion on masks (or any other COVID issue). I tell everyone to reach out to your local legislative representatives. This can help.

Spacing: As of now the guidelines are 3 feet between students, no spacing required for adults, and at lunch 6 feet between any two people. This last one is still a huge challenge in schools. It makes having a normal day very difficult. The ability to be outside for lunches has obviously helped, but the schedules in schools must be altered to meet this lunchtime requirement.

Cleaning: Many of the requirements from the state have been relaxed, basically back to normal requirements. This is based on studying how COVID-19 is passed from person to person. In our district we have kept most of the increased cleaning guidelines in place all year, but our plan is to return to our normal procedures in the fall.

Schedule: Unless something major changes that we do not expect, we will again be in session five days a week. Our goal will be to have school look as normal as possible in every way. With trends going the way they are in the state there is no reason this should not happen. Over the summer we will continue our conversation with state officials in attempts to move in this direction.

Remote: We still need more conversation on this topic. Our goal is to have all students in person, but some of the other restrictions could impact this topic. More to come on this one.

Communication: I will not be sending weekly updates throughout the summer. I will send an update at least one a month if there is new information to share. You can always email me if you have questions.

Pool Testing: This is something new the state is offering. Basically, a group of students do a swab test. All the samples are submitted as one test. If the large sample comes back positive, then everyone in the group takes an individual rapid test, but they do not have to quarantine. If we participate in this process, then some of the state requirements will be relaxed. I do not know if I will recommend pool testing yet. To me it depends on what restrictions the state is willing to relax. Spacing at lunch, the need for contact tracing, and masking would be some of the requirements I would be looking to be relaxed if I was going to recommend this procedure. More to come on this one too.



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School Budget: The final step in the RSU 18 budget process for next year will take place this Tuesday, June 8th. On that day you will have the opportunity to vote in your town to approve or reject the school budget. Please take a few minutes to vote. There is not a lot else on the ballot this year, so I know this means a special trip to the polls, but I ask for your help with this. The budget for next year is only up 1.7%.

I will end with a sincere thank you to our school community. At the beginning of the year, I told everyone we have two goals: 1. Keep all kids and staff safe, and 2. Continue to provide the top rate education that people are accustomed to in our district. I can now say, with your help, we met both goals. Parents, thank you for being flexible, adjusting to quarantines with almost no notice, for helping us transport students, and for your support. To the entire RSU 18 staff, you are amazing. With so much uncertainty, you stepped up and did what you do best: you educated, transported, fed, cleaned our facility, and most importantly took care of all students. There is no better staff anywhere. To the students, wow... what a year. You did it. You put up with wearing masks, eating at different times in different places, remote learning, things being cancelled, and the list goes on. I am so proud of our district.... THANK YOU ALL.

Have a great summer.

Your Superintendent of Schools
Carl Gartley