March 9, 2020

Dear RSU 23 Community,

I am providing you with an update on the steps the school department has taken in response to COVID-19. I am also writing to remind you of steps, recommended by the CDC, that you can take to protect your children and your family from contracting the virus and where to go to get official information about COVID-19. As of today, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 in Maine.

This past week, our nurses, central office staff, building-level administrators, and I have participated in at least one or more teleconferences and conferences; one held by the York County Emergency Management group, one held by the Maine Department of Education, and a superintendents, CDC, and DOE conference last Friday in Augusta. The school department has been invited to participate in future teleconferences and will do so. Moreover, based on the information received from the conferences attended, the school department updated its plan: “Action Steps for Pandemic Illness”. This plan is available for review on your child’s school website and on the school department website: http://rsu23.org/.

The key messages from the conferences are:

- Our community should remain calm.
- Your local hospital and officials are on top of the situation.
- RSU 23 is actively engaged in coordinated efforts.
- The school department is following CDC recommendations for schools (e.g., school building cleaning, having a plan for pandemic illness, meeting with local emergency and health officials).

I want you to know we are concerned about the health and wellbeing of our students. We are especially concerned about how they are dealing with the media reporting about COVID-19. Here is the link to an article on talking with children about infectious diseases: [https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4886.pdf](https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4886.pdf). Please use this resource with your child/children.
The school department is working on plans to ensure educational continuity for our students. If school should need to be closed, we intend to provide alternatives such as remote learning for older students and lesson packets for younger students.

This is a very fluid and changing situation. The Maine and National National CDC websites are updated as needed throughout the day. Local, state and national experts suggest these websites for our community members to get official information, Maine CDC: https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/ and National CDC https://www.cdc.gov/.

Finally, The school department will work with our local, state, and federal partners to keep students and staff safe. Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

RSU 23 Superintendent of Schools