



School Union 69
Office of the Superintendent
Hope, Appleton & Lincolnvile

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Superintendent's Report for: September, 2021

Hope School Committee

District Goals:

Usually, I begin my Superintendent's report with a review of the School Committee's Goals and the District's progress in meeting those goals. At this time, the Board has not yet developed Goals for the 21-22 school year.

Ongoing Superintendent Professional Development:

- Midcoast Superintendents' Meeting: continues weekly for now, may become monthly once the need for frequent updates has passed.
- Commissioner's Briefing: The Commissioner of Education, Pender Makin, has been holding briefings for school superintendents, sometimes weekly. This gives us a chance to ask questions and get up to date information regarding the pandemic and management of the mitigation strategies we need to use to keep our students in school.
- Cultural Competency Institute: The five person team from SU #69, including Danielle Fagonde and Superintendent Clark will begin the monthly professional development will begin next week. We will update you on what we are learning as the year progresses.
- Upcoming webinar on the changes in the law for restraint and seclusion. I will be joined by the entire administrative team, or a representative from each school.

Classroom visits:

Classroom visits will resume in the month of October, once the teachers, staff and students have established their routines and have begun to develop a strong sense of classroom culture. Last year, I was unable to see the Hope PreK-2 classrooms, so I will start there. As I did last year, I will work my way through each building, seeing a cohort of classes during a single week, and then move on to the next building. I will not need to take a two week break between each visit as I did last year because due to mitigation measures and my vaccination status, we know there is little risk of transmission of the virus from me.

Midcoast Curriculum Leaders

This year, the Midcoast Curriculum Leaders will meet on a monthly basis and I will be representing the district. As always, I will be working closely with the principals to make sure they are up to date on any news and to keep abreast of the ways in which our practice in each school is aligned with Maine Learning Results.

SU #69 Central Office news:

At the Joint Board meeting in June, the fact that the lease at our current office was up for renewal was discussed. At that meeting, the Joint Board formed a subcommittee, made up

of members from each town, to work with me on negotiating the contract with the subcommittee. On doing the research, the subcommittee found another space available that could be rented at a significant discount. This space was also compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and can be accessed by anyone in the public easily. Therefore, per the decision of the Joint Board, the subcommittee agreed that moving the Central Office would be the prudent decision. The new office will be on Atlantic Avenue in Lincolnville. This location is not central to all of the towns, so not ideal in that respect, but the cost savings outweighed any inconvenience to the Central Office staff in regards to extra driving. The space does require some updating. The landlords are painting the entire space and we have negotiated a cost sharing agreement on the flooring. The flooring will cost the district approximately \$6,000. We do not have an estimate on the move as yet, the pandemic and the ongoing shortage of materials and employees are challenges that certainly impact costs. However, even with these costs, we most likely will not exceed what we would have paid in rent if we stayed in our current offices. After this year, we may realize a savings of approximately \$7,000 per year by moving to the Lincolnville offices, we have negotiated a 5 year lease, which means an overall cost savings of approximately \$30,000 during the life of the lease. We anticipate that we will be moving mid-October.

Coronavirus:

To focus on the positive, the following are mitigation measures that we have been able to relax or do away with as we have learned more about keeping school open during a pandemic:

- We do not need to mask outdoors.
- We do not need to socially distance ourselves outdoors.
- Vaccinations have provided an extra level of protection.
- We are able to reduce social distancing indoors, therefore reducing the risk of needing to provide schooling in a hybrid setting.

At this time, the collaborative planning team is meeting monthly to review the above information and any new information or advice that comes out from the Maine DOE, CDC or the US CDC. As of this writing, Maine, as well as other states across the nation, is experiencing a surge, largely due to the Delta Variant. Key elements of this surge include the following:

- Since Sep 1, 2021 there have been 800 school-related cases, per the MDOE
- Knox County has not seen a significant increase in cases in the last two weeks, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- Vaccinated people are far less likely to contract or transmit the virus, but it is not unheard of.
- This variant is far more contagious than the original Coronavirus.
- Thankfully, children do still seem to be less likely to get very sick from the virus, although cases among younger people are on the rise.

In addition, we now know, based on our own experience and the advice from medical experts, that the following mitigation measures are extremely effective in reducing the spread of the virus and keeping us all in school in-person for as long as possible:

- Daily health screening.
- Strong, frequent communication between families and the school, particularly the nurse, has been a very effective tool for reducing the risk of transmission.

- Masking when indoors.
- Minimizing physical contact and maintaining some distance between others.
- Frequent hand washing, proactive hand hygiene and cleaning protocols.
- Vaccinations when eligible.
- Using outdoor spaces whenever possible.
- Maintaining an effective ventilation system.

We have only had 5 days of school thus far, but we are confident that if we can continue to be careful and adhere to the mitigation strategies, we can meet our goal of continuing to offer in-person learning for all of our students.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate

Kate Clark