

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 1

Castle Hill - Chapman - Mapleton - Presque Isle - Westfield

79 Blake Street, Suite #1 • P.O. Box 1118 • Presque Isle, Maine 04769-1118

BENJAMIN J. GREENLAW
Superintendent of Schools
e-mail: greenlawb@sad1.org
Telephone: 764-4101 Fax: 764-4103

JENNIFER BOURASSA, Ph.D.
Curriculum Director
e-mail: bourassaj@sad1.org
Telephone: 764-4101 Fax: 764-4103

HOLLY VINING
Business Manager
e-mail: viningh@sad1.org
Telephone: 768-3441 Fax: 764-4851

August 25, 2021

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff,

I am writing to provide you with an update on the district's plans to safely provide in-person instruction while addressing the impact of the coronavirus in our community. Our high school has been in session for a week and our elementary schools and middle school will be opening doors to students on Tuesday, September 7.

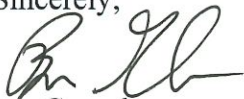
As you know, I indicated to the community in a "Return to School Update" on August 4 that masks would be optional for students and staff due to the low number of positive COVID cases in our community. Since that time, we have seen a significant increase in the 7-day average of new cases in Aroostook County, and the CDC has classified Aroostook County in the "High Level" of community transmission. Additionally, we had four individuals associated with Presque Isle High School test positive for the coronavirus and 30 students who were required to quarantine for 10 days as close contacts. Twenty-nine students who were close contacts did not have to quarantine since they were fully vaccinated.

I stated in my August 4 letter that we reserved the right to change our plan if we had an increase in cases in our schools and community. I am concerned about the number of close contacts who have already missed 10 days of instruction for quarantine. Also, our students under the age of 12 are not eligible for the vaccine for the foreseeable future. **Effective on Thursday, August 26, masks will be required for all students and staff while indoors at all MSAD 1 schools.** We will continue with other CDC health recommendations including regular hand washing, contact tracing, encouraging students and staff to stay home when they are sick, disinfecting of spaces and ventilating classrooms. Masks will continue to be required on school buses and we will maintain three feet of distancing in the classrooms and at meals. This recommendation to require masks for all students and staff is supported by the Maine CDC and the Maine Department of Education.

In an August 12 update for schools, the CDC recently announced a quarantine exception for students identified as close contacts in the classroom setting. The new exception states if masks are universally required in schools, the masked close contacts of a positive case do not have to be quarantined as long as students remain at least 3 feet apart. This is welcome news for our students as it potentially eliminates the possibility of a 10-day quarantine for some of our students.

Information regarding the coronavirus and its impact in our schools and community can change rapidly. We will continue to monitor local case counts and transmission in our schools and reserve the right to make mask wearing optional in the future. I will continue to communicate with the MSAD 1 community as necessary during this challenging time. Best wishes and good health to you and your family.

Sincerely,



Ben Greenlaw
Superintendent