

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT NO. 1

Castle Hill - Chapman - Mapleton - Presque Isle - Westfield

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November 22, 2021

Dear Students, Families, and Staff,

I am writing to address concerns raised at the MSAD 1 Board of Directors during the public comment period of our meeting on Wednesday, November 17. At the meeting, the majority of district citizens who spoke during public comment shared concerns related to the district's approach in handling a positive case of the virus within our schools.

As many of you know, all Maine schools are required to follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for responding to a positive case of the coronavirus within a school, established by the Maine CDC. The primary concern of these citizens was related to the 10-day quarantine required for students and staff who were within 6 feet of a positive case of the coronavirus for 15 minutes or more. MSAD 1 has seen many more cases of the coronavirus in our schools in the 2021-2022 school year as compared to last year. We have also required more students to quarantine for 10-days, outside of school, this year compared to last year. For the 2021-2022 school year, we have had 79 positive cases in our schools and 660 students and staff quarantines. Some students have had to quarantine on multiple occasions. Despite the high numbers of cases and quarantines this school year, we have not seen many examples of the virus being transmitted at school.

Parents who spoke at the meeting on Wednesday shared their frustration about the negative social, emotional and academic effects that quarantine and being out of school for an extended period of time has on students and families. The MSAD 1 Board of Directors have asked me to provide information to the Board at our next meeting regarding specific details of the SOP, pooled testing, MSAD 1 data on coronavirus cases and close contacts, and potential alternatives to quarantine like "test to stay" programs that other states have adopted.

I will be presenting this information to the MSAD 1 Board of Directors on Wednesday, December 15 at 5:30pm in the PIHS cafeteria. At this meeting, the Board will have the opportunity to ask questions of the superintendent and determine possible next steps. This meeting will be open to the public and MSAD 1 citizens are encouraged to attend. There will also be a public comment period as there are at all school board meetings, for people to share their concerns with the Board.

I am hopeful that this in-depth look at our COVID policies, data and procedures will allow the board and the community to gain further insight into how MSAD 1 is operating during this pandemic. I am also hopeful that this information will allow the district to better plan to meet the health, safety, and educational needs of our students as we continue to educate our students in this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Greenlaw', written in a cursive style.

Ben Greenlaw
Superintendent