

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON
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“Public Schools not only serve the public, they make the public.”

TO: Parents and Guardians
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: 11-5-2021 Updates
DATE: 11-5-2021

Veteran’s Day – Along with Memorial Day are two of the most important national holidays that occur during the school year. They are days set aside for us to remember and celebrate those that serve, have served, fought, were injured or died to keep the United States of America a democracy, where everyone’s opinion matters and where everyone has the right to representative government determined by each person’s individual vote. As President Abraham Lincoln so eloquently said *“that these dead shall not have died in vain– that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”*. As we take time next week to recognize our veterans it is important to note that the current US Armed Forces represent many differing Americans from every part of our country with 57 percent who are white, 43 percent who are people of color and 14 percent who are women. A “true” representation of who WE are as a NATION! Please join me in thanking our past and present US Veterans. Thank you!

[2021-2022 RSU 9 Calendar Changes](#) – Have been made. At the October 26 School Board Meeting, the board voted to make some needed adjustments to our school calendar related to our student academic quarters and the 2nd semester resulting from the school year starting later than originally planned. Also, please note that the Jan 14th Early Release Day has been moved to Jan 21st and the March 25th Early Release Day has been moved to April 1st. Please visit the above link for the updated calendar. Thank you!

Update to COVID-19 Communications Process – We have received feedback that the almost daily COVID-19 communications are causing unnecessary stress for some who are not directly impacted. We have also heard that the sheer number of messages are causing people to ignore what is being sent. Moving forward, RSU 9 Health Notices will be emailed *ONLY* to families and students in schools that are directly impacted by the positive cases in the notice. There will be *no more text alerts*. For those interested in what is happening at other RSU 9 schools we will continue to post all Health Notices on our district [COVID-19 Information Page](#), as well as post them as News items on district and school website news feeds, and share them on our [Facebook page](#). Thanks for your feedback.

Congratulations go to - The Mt. Blue High School Girls’ Cross Country Team for taking first place in the Northern Maine Class A Cross Country Championships in Belfast this past Saturday. Our boys’ team also advanced to the state meet, grabbing the 6th qualifying spot. **The Mt. Blue High School boys’ and girls’**

cross-country teams were also both awarded sportsmanship banners for Class A North! Well – done COUGARS!

Are Gaiters - Allowed in Grades 6-8? Our apologies for the confusion and the answer is yes. Upon review and discussion, two-ply Gaiters, approved by the CDC are also allowed to be worn by students at Mt. Blue Middle School. Because younger students can have more difficulty with eating and drinking along with mouth fluids which will soil them quickly, gaiters are not allowed in Grades PreK - 5. Sorry for the confusion and thanks for your understanding.

Extra Support for Quarantined Student Needs - Has been and is a concern of ours. It is our hope to be able to start an extra service for students and families who have to quarantine after the Thanksgiving Break. More to come!

Filling staff vacancies - Continues to be a concern of ours as we still have approximately 47 positions to be filled with full-time staff in RSU 9. At present we are fortunate that several of our regular subs are working every day as we continue to search for new staff. We have multiple openings for custodial staff, bus drivers and Educational Technicians who work closely with teachers and students. We are changing how we advertise, how our [website](#) works and trying to make it easier for people to apply. The best thing that you can do to help us is to let your friends, family, etc. know about our openings. Please know we are willing to hire people to take parts of positions or to Job-Share. Thanks!

Unfortunately, a large number of our families - Have still not returned or completed their start of the school year Student Paperwork in PowerSchool. If you have not yet done so or been contacted to do so, please take some time to assist us with this task. Having up-to-date student information is key for the safety and well-being of our students, increases communication between home and school, and allows students to take home and use district technology. Your immediate assistance is greatly appreciated!

We really do miss your involvement – In your district schools, but unfortunately, with more activities moving inside, and some people refusing to follow the practices put in place which are proven to reduce COVID spread, we will not be able to change our present restrictions on visitors in our schools. Like you, it is our hope that, by working together, sometime in the not-too-distant future, COVID will be beaten. When that day happens, you will be welcomed back as volunteers with open arms! Thanks again for your understanding!

Maine School Immunization Updates – For those students and families who have been contacted by us about completing state-mandated immunizations -- your information is due to us soon! As stated when we contacted you, a new state law requires that we see proof that your student has received any missing immunizations, or has a scheduled appointment to do so, for your student(s) to continue to attend school. The information must be provided to us within 90 school days from the start of school. In our district, the deadline for the 2021-2022 school year is December 7th. Students who are not in the process of finalizing all expected immunizations by that date will be excluded from school. ***This is not about COVID vaccinations as that is a choice.*** If you have not updated your child's information or need assistance in setting up the needed shots, please contact your school's nurse ASAP! Thanking you in advance for your assistance!

*In closing let me again share with you we have great kids in RSU 9! The best time I get to spend as your superintendent is when I am in schools or at school events seeing our students and staff in action! I always try to speak face-to-face to every student I meet no matter how old or young they are, and I am continually impressed with how friendly and respectful they are! I am also quite impressed with the learning focus I see in many classes. Lately, I have not been able to spend as much time as I would like and need to redouble my efforts because **our students and staff are what we are all about!***

Thank again for taking the time to review the above!