

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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*Our learning community
creates structures that
support students'
achievement.*

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August 25, 2021

Dear RSU 9 Community,

Per last night's (Tuesday, 8/24/21) RSU 9 Board of Directors' meeting RSU 9 will now require indoor universal masking for all students and staff in our schools to start the upcoming school year. Students or staff with a current documented medical need or an Individual Ed. Plan (IEP), that specifically mentions the use of shields rather than masks, will be allowed to wear face shields. Masking or the use of shields is one part of our layered approach to combat COVID-19 and the variants now spreading in Maine and within our communities.

An additional layer of safety that RSU 9 is happy to provide to all students and staff is the option for students (w/parent/guardian approval) and staff to participate in Pooled Testing. Pooled Testing allows for early detection of COVID-19 and also can give assurance that an individual participating at the time of the test is COVID-Free. Pooled testing is one of our risk-reducing strategies to help our students and staff stay in school and participate in sports and extracurricular activities.

What is pooled testing?

- A group of students or staff who wish to participate are tested as a "pool" on a weekly basis.
- If there is no positive test, then all in the pool are determined to be COVID free.
- If a positive case shows up in the "pool", each person is then tested again, and the person(s) who test positive will then be expected to quarantine.
- All others in the pool will not quarantine unless they have symptoms.

What are the benefits of pooled testing?

- The ongoing testing allows for early detection of the virus and, therefore reduces the likelihood of spread within the wider school community.
- There is a reduced need for quarantining. Pooled testing participants are not required to quarantine if there is exposure within a classroom at school where distancing of 3 ft or more has been maintained.

We will be hosting two family and staff Q and A nights for pooled testing via Zoom:

- Wednesday, Sept. 1st at 5:30 pm. Please follow this link to attend the Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82312693784?pwd=WTFtakYxL2NHL0Z5YUQ5Vk1UbDdSQTO9>
- Thursday, Sept. 2nd at 6:30 pm. Please follow this link to attend the Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87228307600?pwd=T001WUIRandsNWWhJSVdUTWZwMmE1UT09>

Additional resources on pooled testing: [Pooling Overview](#), [Pooled Testing Vendor](#), [Pooled Testing Resource for Schools and Districts](#)

All participants in the schools' pooled testing program must "opt in". If you or your student is interested in opting into pooled testing, please complete this [survey](#). We will share consent forms with all that sign up. Participants can opt-out at any time.

We look forward to seeing you at either ZOOM Mtg.

Christian Elkington, Superintendent & Laura Columbia, Director of Curriculum