



Regional School Unit 13  
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March 12, 2020

Dear Members of the RSU 13 Schools Community:

I am writing to update you with current information on our preparations for any potential outbreak of Corona Virus, or COVID-19. Over the last two weeks, we have been meeting with State and local officials, including Knox County EMA, representatives from the Maine Department of Education and the Maine CDC, as well as our own administrative team, to plan and prepare for a number of different scenarios. Please understand that the situation is changing rapidly, and though at the time of this communication there are no confirmed cases in Maine, all indications are that there will be in the near future. The following are some recommendations and determinations.

**Prevention: We all can help by** engaging in good personal hygiene, washing our hands thoroughly with soap and water, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home if experiencing any flu-like symptoms. For our part we are continuing daily cleaning of surfaces, tables, doorknobs, sinks and water fountains, as well as disinfecting our bus fleet and all of our buildings on a regular schedule.

**Trips:** We are suspending out-of-state professional development events for our staff at this time. Out-of-state field trips for students may be suspended or canceled with increasing restrictions on travel as directed by the CDC.

At this time, the trips that had been scheduled over spring break, one to Spain and one to Germany/Poland, have been canceled and are planned to be rescheduled. A third trip to Canada in May, is at this time, still scheduled. Please know that we will keep you informed of any changes in these plans.

**School Events:** At this time, all school sponsored, regular school events are continuing as scheduled. The use of our facilities by outside groups is permitted, as long as they are requests from local or in-state groups.

**Travel:** We are asking that anyone who has traveled to a Level 2 or 3 (Japan, Italy, China, South Korea) country in the past three weeks to not enter our school buildings. If you are suffering from a respiratory illness or have flu-like symptoms, we request that you not enter our buildings.

We ask, respectfully, that any family traveling internationally over April vacation consult with their Primary Care Physician (PCP) and follow CDC guidelines at the time of their return before the children come back to school.

If you are a staff member and travel out of state or to a foreign country over spring break, we also ask that you consult with your PCP and follow CDC guidelines before returning to work.

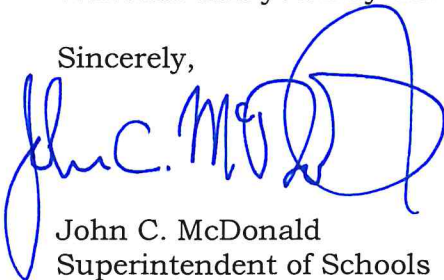
**Closing of Schools:** Should the CDC or Maine Department of Education direct or recommend that we close schools, we will do so. Teachers will provide resources that would be sent home with students to allow for activities and some continuity of instruction over an extended closure.

**Monday, March 16th is now scheduled as an Early Release Day for all our schools.** This is to allow teachers extra time to plan for in the event that we experience an extended closure, in order to prepare materials and resources for students to take home with them. The Maine DOE has assured us that if we must close, the State will waive the required 175 days of instruction.

We are working on plans to be able to provide meals to those families who want and need them. Our initial plans would be both hot and cold lunches, along with cold breakfast. This would take place at locations off-site utilizing a delivery model and our school buses. If schools are closed, it is likely that a number of our staff will still be working. The Central Office will remain open in order to coordinate services, communication and to maintain operations.

I want to assure the parents and our community members, that we are continuously assessing the changing situation and that we have the health and safety of your children first and foremost in mind as we make decisions. We are following the guidance and direction of the CDC and the Maine DOE and will continue to keep everyone updated with the latest information as it relates to our schools. I am confident, that our staff, and our communities of parents and friends can work together to address this situation successfully and safely. Every school in our State, and indeed, across the nation is facing the same situation at this time and we have many partners and partner agencies that stand ready and willing to help us through this difficult situation. Please know that I am always available to answer any questions or concerns that you may have now or in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John C. McDonald". The signature is stylized with large loops and a long tail on the "D".

John C. McDonald  
Superintendent of Schools