



School Administrative Unit 21

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Serving the communities of:

Hampton Falls

North Hampton

Seabrook

South Hampton

Winnacunnet High School

March 13, 2020

Dear SAU 21 Families and Employees:

I am writing to provide you with an update relative to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the impact that the current situation is having on our schools and communities. As of today, we understand that there have been six (6) cases in New Hampshire, with three (3) of those cases located in Rockingham County. My understanding is that, as of today, there are no cases of the virus associated with SAU 21 communities or schools.

We are continuing to actively monitor updates from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE), and other SAUs in our region and throughout the state. As always, our priorities include the safety of our students, clear communication with parents, guardians and community members, and maintaining a sense of normalcy for our staff and students.

Following are some important changes in our protocols related to school activities, which are effective immediately:

Student Trips/Events:

- All out-of-state and overnight student trips and events are canceled for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.
- In all cases of trips that include cost(s) to families, we are actively working with vendors and travel agents that facilitate these trips to secure maximum reimbursements with respect to insurance and cancellation policies.
- In-state field trips and other student events with more than 25 attendees are also canceled. This includes plays, musicals, choral concerts or any other event that would typically be performed in front of an audience. We will, however, work to find alternatives, including small group settings and virtual events.

School Visitors/Facilities:

- For the most part, only students, employees, and volunteers who have been serving the school on a regular basis will be permitted building access.
- School visits will be limited to parents and guardians who are in the building for a specific purpose. Parent/teacher conferences and special education meetings will not be canceled, however, we are encouraging that these meetings take place online or by phone whenever possible and appropriate.
- We are working with outside groups, including contractors, vendors and those who rent our facilities, to revisit all outside activities that are scheduled to take place in our buildings for the remainder of the school year.

Other Considerations:

- There is currently no recommendation or intention to cancel schools. However, we are in active conversation with the NHDOE and DHHS to monitor and continually assess this rapidly evolving situation.
- School lunch will continue to be served in the cafeterias, which may include gatherings of more than 25 students. There is no reasonable alternative at this time, and our lunch program is the safest and cleanest venue for food service delivery.
- We have yet to make any determination with respect to spring sports. We hope to receive guidance from the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) regarding these upcoming events.

As we continue to deal with unfolding events, we are receiving a number of inquiries about certain topics. We have shared much of the information that follows in previous updates and have included additional detail that may be useful.

When would SAU 21 consider a school closure or multiple school closures?

The decision to close schools is not made lightly. If we were to consider closing a particular school building, we would do so if a student or staff member is diagnosed with a presumptive positive case of COVID-19 and the potential exists for exposure to others. We would not consider school closure for people who choose to self-quarantine and are asymptomatic (i.e. show no signs of illness). We would consider SAU-wide closure if DHHS or the CDC indicate that residents should limit contact due to COVID-19.

What are the elements of a long-term school closure plan?

While we continue to refine a plan that could be used to address a long-term school or SAU closure, the final plan is intended to address:

- instructional continuity for all grade levels (k-12);
- availability of technology and connectivity for all students and staff;
- specialized instruction, supports, and services to accommodate students with disabilities to ensure access to remote learning during a school closure;
- meals for students who depend upon the National School Lunch Program; and
- childcare for students whose parents will be required to continue working.

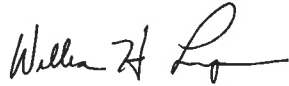
Who is at risk?

COVID-19 is most dangerous to the health of the most vulnerable in our communities, including our elders (people over the age of 60), people with compromised immune systems, people with pre-existing diseases, and others with health vulnerabilities. We are suggesting that our community decrease the potential for passing the virus to these people by increasing handwashing and social distancing when interactions are necessary. We recognize that there will be contact – our strategy is to limit this contact, where possible.

Most importantly, we ask that you follow guidelines around keeping students home who are not feeling well. Please see the CDC's workplace, school and home guidance on keeping your environments safe (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>).

Thank you for your understanding and support during this developing situation. We remain committed to student and staff safety and wellness as our priority in all SAU 21 schools. We will continue to update you regularly as this situation evolves. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or your school principal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Lupini". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a stylized "L" at the end.

William H. Lupini, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools