

# Kittery

## School District

*Truth & Knowledge*

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June 4, 2021

Good Friday afternoon to all!

Imagine that! There is only one more Friday before the end of the 2020-21 school year! I can honestly say that the finish line looked mighty far off back in the fall. It really feels like we've all accomplished something important, and I thank everyone--families, students, staff, School Committee, and our wonderful community--for standing with us and for doing their part to make it all work.

I have just a few items for you today in my Weekly Communication:

- We hosted our **second COVID-19 vaccine clinic today** at Traip Academy and Shapleigh School. We may have another clinic in the fall, particularly if/when vaccines are approved for younger students. In the meantime, if you're looking for a vaccine for your 12+ student, I recommend visiting the Walgreens Pharmacy site. I have firsthand experience scheduling a smooth and easy vaccine appointment with Walgreens, and the location here in Kittery couldn't be more convenient. Click [here](#) for the link.
- **Tuesday, June 8th, is election day in Kittery.** There are lots of items on the ballot (Town Council elections, Town financial questions, etc.). MOST important (in my humble opinion!) is the final ballot question which asks voters to approve the Kittery School District budget for next year. It has already been approved by the School Committee and the Town Council. Maine requires a final approval by voters. That's where you come in! I hope you will go to the polls on Tuesday, June 8th, at the Kittery Community Center. Election hours are 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM.
- You may know a little something about '**pooled testing**' (click [here](#) and [here](#) to watch very short videos about how it works in schools). In short, 'pooled testing' is a quick and efficient method of testing large groups for COVID-19 (the test involves a nose swab as most of you are familiar with).

In the coming school year, pooled testing will be offered to Maine schools as a cost-free strategy to keep the virus (and its variants) out of our schools, thereby keeping the schools open, preventing short-term full remote deployment, and avoiding quarantining for participating students and staff when exposure occurs.

What will this mean for the Kittery School District? Beyond the benefits of avoiding short or long-term remote deployments, and the benefit to families to have students remain at school even after potential exposure, the District would benefit from fewer requirements for in-person learning. For example, as a participating 'pooled testing' school, the 3-foot physical distancing requirement for next year would become a 'recommendation.' That may seem like a small detail, but it's not! Having that flexibility

related to physical distancing will enable us to accommodate all students more easily.

That brings me to my point. In order for a school to be considered a 'pooled testing' participant, it must have at least 30% participation among students and staff. If we can determine NOW if a school will have at least 30% participation in 'pooled testing' in the fall, the Leadership Team will plan accordingly. We also want to make sure our process for 'pooled testing' is well established so we can start immediately in the fall.

I'll have more details about 'pooled testing' as we get closer to August 30th. No student, for example, will participate in 'pooled testing' without a signed parent/guardian consent form. There is lots to do to prepare; for now, I just need to know if we'll hit the 30% participation goal. Thank you for taking a minute to complete this very simple survey (click [here](#) to access the survey). Please complete it for **each of your students who will attend the Kittery School District in the fall.**

- Principal Gamache and an enthusiastic group of families at Mitchell Primary School launched their website this week for the **Mitchell Primary School Project Playground**. You can learn all about the project (and ways to get involved and show your support) by clicking on this [link](#). There is nothing more exciting for kids than a new school playground!
- Maine DHHS and Maine CDC announced today that all Maine counties have a **GREEN classification** of the Health Advisory System. The rate of new COVID-19 cases in Maine schools has dropped to one-third of 1%. I have a feeling this will be the last Health Advisory System classification. If the system re-emerges in the summer or fall, I'll let you know.

That's all for this week. Your homework is to do whatever is in your power to ensure nice weather for the outdoor graduation and promotional events in the days to come!

Sincerely,



Eric Waddell  
Superintendent of Schools