

Kittery

School District

Truth & Knowledge

Eric F. Waddell • Superintendent of Schools • ewaddell@kitteryschools.com • (207) 475-1334

September 10, 2021

Good afternoon Kittery...

This has been a somber week leading up to the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. I was in my first days as a brand new high school principal on that day, and I remember the swirl of emotions I had that morning--confusion, panic, worry, sadness, disbelief, anger. I was responsible for a school of 700 students, and I found myself moving from one television to another as I tried to wrap my head around the events of that day. I'm sure you all have similar stories. It was a low point for our country.

On the other hand, there were shining moments as well. I wonder if you experienced the swell of kindness that everyone seemed to have for each other that day and in the days and weeks that followed? I saw acts of heroism and compassion...and pride. It was a period in my career and in my life that I'll always remember. I suspect we can all say that about September 11, 2001.

It is my pleasure to offer this weekly communication. I hope you find it useful.

- Remember; all my communication is archived on the District website linked [here](#). If you click on the '**From the Superintendent**' tab at the very top, you will see all my communication archived there. It is all very organized! You may also be interested in the '**Meet Our Leadership Team**' tab at the top. If you click on that tab, you will see photos of me and the team, and if you click on our names, you can read all about us! Each of us has shared a little biography. Enjoy!
- And while you're on the District website, I also want you to find this icon on the homepage (toward the bottom).

The District has a [Quick Tip Link](#) that allows school community members to send an anonymous safety-related message to our School Resource Officer, Officer Valenti. While we prefer you that reach out to your principal or to the SRO directly via telephone or email, we also understand that sometimes, an anonymous tip is all that you are comfortable doing. Each school website has the same link.

- And since we are on the topic of communication, I wanted to let you know about the crown jewel of communication tools that I use. It's School Messenger, but you'll know it better as the mechanism I use to send early morning phone recordings, text messages, and email messages about weather-related school cancellations/delays. **I have scheduled a 'test message' through School Messenger for Thursday, September 16th, 4:30 PM.**

Why test School Messenger? When we conduct the test (well before the first snow falls!), we often discover that some families have:

- *Changed cell phone numbers.*
- *Gotten rid of their landline.*
- *Moved out of Kittery.*
- *Changed their email address.*

School Messenger is configured to contact the guardian listed first in Infinite Campus (our student information system). If you would like to expand your own contact list, you must contact our Data Management Specialist, Nancy Embry, via email, and she will take care of you. Her email address is linked [here](#).

- I am pleased to inform our staff and families that 430 students and staff at all three schools (and the Central Office too!) will participate in the first round of our **Pooled Testing Program** Monday morning. Did you forget to register and submit your consent? It is too late for this first round on Monday, but you can be added for the following week by clicking [here](#) for your student or [here](#) if you are an adult staff member. **Deadline to join in is always Wednesday at 3:00 PM.** Once you sign up, you will be in the program each week. If you'd like to opt out at some point, simply email your student's school nurse, and you'll be removed from the pool. Weekly testing is an effective way to keep the virus from being transmitted in our schools. It will also certainly uncover asymptomatic positive cases, so you should be prepared for that news. **BUT THAT IS GOOD NEWS!** By identifying asymptomatic positive cases of COVID-19, we diminish the risk of transmission substantially. It is a proven mitigation strategy, and I thank our school nursing team led by Shay Stathoplos for making it happen.

How can you prepare your student for Monday's test? First of all, make sure your students know they are part of the program. Secondly, you can practice swabbing this weekend using a basic cotton swab. click on this [video](#) to see how it's done.

- An even better COVID-19 mitigation strategy is **vaccination**. By order of the Maine DHHS, we have gathered our staff data related to COVID-19 vaccination. This will be updated monthly, and I'll always share it with you. I've attached a chart with all the details. Let me share a few highlights:

~ We have 261 staff as defined by DHHS and DOE.

~ 9 unvaccinated staff out of 261 is an overall vaccination rate of 96.6%. All staff at Traip Academy are vaccinated; it's 97% at MPS and SS. Only 3 of the unvaccinated are full time employees of the District.

~ We'll work on 100% by October.

- Remember to commit to the **Daily Self Check** before arriving at school or before getting on the school bus each morning. I've attached the **Pre-Screening Tool For School Attendance** here for your reference. I've also ordered some magnets with the tool on it which Officer Valenti and I will hand out to families during drop off and pick up soon.
- I am so pleased to announce that Shapleigh School has been chosen as a site to host a set of 60 large framed photographs by **National Geographic photographer Steve McCurry**. Principal Ellis received notice that they are arriving any day now. Take a look at this short video linked [here](#) to see what the students and staff at Shapleigh School will soon enjoy!
- Speaking of cool learning opportunities, Rice Public Library here in Kittery has announced this opportunity on Wednesday, September 15th, 5:00 - 6:00 PM. It's called **Artemis: Returning to the Moon with Apollo's Twin Sister**. NASA plans to land the first woman and the first person of color on the surface of the Moon with NASA's Artemis missions. Then, NASA will use what they learn to take the next giant leap – sending astronauts to Mars. Join Patricia Moore, Communication Strategist for NASA's Artemis Program and learn about their return to the Moon and future missions to Mars. This event will be hosted on Zoom and live-

streamed to Rice Public Library's Facebook page. Live Q&A will follow the presentation. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register for this event!

- **Project Graduation Mums Fundraiser** ends next week! Deadline to order (or just donate!) is Wednesday September 15th. Pick up mums at Traip Academy Friday, September 24th, 2:30 – 5:00 PM. Here is the [link](#) to order your mums and support a great cause.

Finally today, I want to wish our Jewish friends an easy fast on Yom Kippur which begins Wednesday, September 15th. And to all, enjoy the weekend! I'll reconnect next Friday.

Sincerely,



Eric Waddell
Superintendent of Schools

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100

10