

Kittery

School District

Truth & Knowledge

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January 8, 2021

Good Friday afternoon!

The sun is bright; the sky is blue, and I'm feeling optimistic today! I hope you are as well. I suspect most of you, like me, watched the tumultuous situation in Washington DC unravel on Wednesday. It will be something I never forget; however, what is most memorable for me is the display of resilience by the lawmakers as they returned to the floor and resumed their important work later that evening. It was an inspiring scene for me after watching such abhorrent behavior throughout the afternoon.

The scene reminded me of the resilient spirit that all our employees, families, and students have shown during these past 10 months. I know that the same can-do spirit will carry us through the pandemic. Thank you for keeping us moored during these trying times.

Several weeks ago, 250 of you completed a **Family Check-in**...10 questions about your student's educational experience this year. We have already begun using the data at the building level. Principals are digging in and have found your written comments especially helpful. We have a little over about 20 weeks to go as we operate under our **Reopening Plan**, so there is plenty of time for improvement.

Here are a few highlights:

- 85% of respondents feel well supported by their school.
- 75% of respondents say that the amount of 'face time' with staff is just right.
- 91% of respondents feel that the District has their student's best interest at heart.
- 70% of respondents feel that the rigor of their student's school experience is just right.

We also learned that our families are **most concerned about** their students:

- Developing and maintaining healthful friendships.
- Managing their emotions (anger, sadness, anxiety).
- Adapting to remote learning.
- Learning at grade level while making up for lost learning last spring.

To address some of these concerns, the District has partnered with experienced and talented social workers (LCSW) to offer four **virtual sessions** over the next four Wednesdays to give families an opportunity to share concerns, hear from each other, and get advice from mental health experts. In an separate earlier email, I shared all the details about this opportunity for our families, so take a look! I hope many of you will decide to join in! The information is also on our homepage.

I'll continue with the COVID-19 theme...

- If you haven't visited our [website](#) recently, you may not have seen our **COVID 19 Parent, Student, &**

Staff Dashboard. It is filled with important information about the pandemic and its impact on the District. Take a look!

- The Kittery School District is working with the Maine CDC to get consent from families for Maine's close contact self-reporting tool. It's called **Sara Alert**, an automated system that allows you to complete a quick daily symptom check through the entire monitoring period of your quarantine. To assist you with the quarantine process and symptom monitoring, we would like to provide the Maine Dept. of Education with your cell number and name if your student is identified as a close contact. This will allow the Maine DOE's Contact Tracing Team to enroll the close contact into **Sara Alert** using the cell number we have on file for your family. **Of course, you may opt-out if you have objections to this resource by contacting your school nurse by Friday, January 15th.** An email or phone call will work. Here is the [link](#) to the site which offers more details.
- Because of the pandemic, the USDA is providing **school lunches at NO COST** to all students 18 years old and under. This program has been extended through June 30, 2021. Therefore, you needn't worry about lunch money for the remainder of this school year. Bon appétit!
- Phase 3 is fast approaching. If you want to **change the current status of your student** for Phase 3, you need to contact your principal no later than Friday, January 15th. Phase 3 begins on Monday, February 1st. We'll need the two weeks to make the necessary adjustments to keep your student safe at school and on the bus.

And for a few non-COVID-related items...

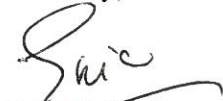
- The next **School Committee meeting on January 19th** is also designated as the meeting when our constituents may offer some views on the FY22 school budget. If you'd like to offer your thoughts, ideas, or suggestions, please keep an eye on our website with instruction on how to either submit a written statement to be read at the meeting by the Chair or to actually join the Zoom meeting for this portion of the meeting. We always appreciate hearing from you!
- Speaking of hearing from you, I hope you will plan to join us for the next step towards building a new Kittery School District Vision. The **Kittery Visioning Event** is slated for Thursday, January 28th, 6:00 - 7:30 PM. It's a virtual event, so you need to register in advance in order to receive the event link. Registration instructions are included on the flyer which is attached. Please join us!
- Are you and your student feeling especially appreciative of a Kittery teacher this year? Why not show your appreciation by nominating him/her for the **Maine Teacher of the Year Program**. All the details are included on the site which is [linked](#) here.

That's all for now. Next Friday, I'll have an update for you from Maine's Health Advisory System. Until then, York County (and the Kittery School District) continues in a Yellow Classification and Status Yellow.

Please take care, remember **The Kittery Promise**, postpone unnecessary travel if possible, avoid large groups, and continue your spirit of resilience that has served us so well.

Proud to be at the helm.

Sincerely,



Eric Waddell

Superintendent of Schools