

# MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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TO: RSU 9 Families  
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent  
RE: January 2025 Updates & FYIs  
DATE: 1-13-2025

I hope this memo finds you having enjoyed a sunny January Maine day yesterday! We are fortunate to live in a beautiful state where neighbors help neighbors and communities care for each other! As your superintendent some of my hopes for the new year are based on continuing the positive efforts we saw from 2024 throughout 2025:

- **Much appreciation goes to the following for all their hard work. THANK YOU!**
  - Healthy Community Coalition, Farmington Rotary, and all other school and community-based organizations who helped hundreds of families with food baskets and clothing needs in December!
  - Our All-Sports Boosters for a record-breaking fall season at their concessions stand and to those who purchased goodies! The funds raised by these dedicated volunteers go right back into our sports programs purchasing uniforms and other items for our teams which reduce potential tax increases.
  - To our Mt. Blue Student-Athletes who again demonstrated high standards and represented us all with distinction by earning three sportsmanship banners during this past fall season from the Maine Principals Association. Girls & Boys Cross Country along with Golf earned these honors! Super Job COUGARS!
  - To our new student teachers who are with us this winter and spring. We wish each of you a great experience and thank you for taking on the challenge of becoming a teacher!

**The Maine Dept. of Education wants your feedback** and is asking parents and caregivers to respond to this survey. Please give 5-10 minutes to share your thoughts! [Maine Family Engagement Survey with Parents and Caregivers](#) Thanks!

**We all want our students to come to school and return home** at the end of the day safe and in the best spirit possible. Parent assistance supporting the following expectations is critical! [RSU 9 District Transportation expectations.pdf](#)

**I worry that the sharing of social media concerns will** start to fall on deaf ears the more info we share with you. I HOPE NOT as it continues to be one of the biggest problems affecting our students and their learning. We get more complaints and concerns caused by social media in grades 6-12 than anything else. With most of these interactions either starting or continuing when students are not present in school. YOU, our parents and families will be the biggest reason

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why the negative effects of social media will reduce. In continuing to ask for your support, please find time to read the following:

- [10 things to know about how social media affects teens' brains.docx.pdf](#)
- [How Technology and Loneliness are Interlinked - The New York Times.pdf](#)

**During the fall and early winter, we unfortunately experienced a series of emergency drills** which necessitated the use of our lockout and hold-in-place procedures. These events, while necessary to ensure the safety of our students and staff, can be stressful for everyone involved. We can't emphasize enough the importance of remaining calm and following the instructions of our staff whose primary goal is to keep everyone safe. We ask that you please refrain from coming to the school during these events as such actions can inadvertently escalate situations and hinder our ability and those of law enforcement, if needed, to respond effectively. If RSU 9 staff and law enforcement also must spend time with you, they cannot focus on the issue at hand and to keep our students safe.

We understand your concern for your children, and we share that concern. However, please trust the procedures and protocols we have in place. These procedures are carefully reviewed and approved by district, county, and state emergency management officials. As a reminder, please review the [RSU 9 Safety Letter](#), which is available on our district website. This document outlines the specific procedures we follow in various emergency scenarios. Also, part of our safety procedures and expectations are in Policy KI: Visitors to the Schools During School Hours which states:

*"F. Persons entering the school building without authorization from school officials and who fail to report to the main office upon arriving on campus or entering the building are considered "unauthorized persons" and will be requested to report to the office immediately to sign in.*

*School staff shall then report unauthorized persons on school grounds or in school buildings to the building administrator/designee. Unauthorized persons who refuse to follow protocol shall be directed to leave the premises immediately."*

Your cooperation on the above is essential to our safety efforts!

**Maine is one of a handful of states in the United States that has a state sponsored universal meals program.** This will again be coming up before the legislature to decide if it will continue. The following article shares concerns from those districts and states that don't have what Maine does. [With universal school meals gone, districts and families take on more debt | K-12 Dive.pdf](#) As your superintendent, knowing the importance of a good breakfast and lunch for every one of our young people and their learning, a young person's success should not be based on what a family can afford. Please share your opinion with legislators as it matters.

**Which health concerns students are or are not allowed to bring into schools** is dictated by the Maine Dept. of Health & Human Resources. We follow guidelines from the Maine Dept. of Education and the Maine CDC, as do all Maine school districts. Our nursing staff do continuous education with our students and staff about frequent handwashing, not sharing snacks and drinks etc., which we hope our parents are reinforcing at home. If we have what is considered an outbreak of any contagious illness, we consult the Maine CDC and take direction from them about next steps, including communication with families. Please refer to the following [link](#) for specific information. If you have any questions, please contact your school's nurse. Thank you!

***Thanks for listening and here's hoping for a superb 2025 for each of our students, families, and staff in RSU 9!***