

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

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TO: RSU 9 Parents & Guardians
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: Several Important FYIs!
DATE: 5-8-2024

IMPORTANT DATES

- Staff Appreciation Week May 6th - 10th
 - National School Principal's Day (we also recognize our Directors and Assistant Administrators) was May 1st.
 - School Lunch Hero Day was May 3rd (A group that doesn't look for the limelight but who we cherish.)
 - National School Nurse Day was May 8th.
- RSU 9 Annual District Budget Meeting is Tuesday, May 21st, 7:00 pm in the Bjorn Auditorium at Mt. Blue Campus (Please attend!)
- Our Last LAW Day will be Wednesday, June 5th (Wed, June 12th will be a full school day).

The FY25 Budget is posted on the RSU 9 District Website - The link is pinned to the top of our [homepage](#), and the direct link is below. All budget information is available in the digital budget book linked on the page, as well as the Draft Budget Presentation. [2024/25 district budget information](#) (You should receive our budget mailing tomorrow or Friday).

A few FY 25 Budget particulars - Which share efforts by the RSU 9 School Board and Administrative Team to add increased student and staff support, were approved by the RSU 9 School Board and can be found at this [link](#). They will next be voted on at the RSU 9 District Budget Meeting on Tuesday, May 21st, 7:00 pm in the Bjorn Auditorium at the Mt. Blue Campus.

Recognizing and celebrating RSU 9 Staff during Staff Appreciation Week!

Public Education is now being asked to directly support our students facing problems which our communities do not have the resources to deal with without our involvement. Each day our Public School staff are working to educate our young people (a massively important responsibility), while also supporting many of our students and their families who are living with food insecurity, the lack of affordable housing and health care, along with the increased prevalence of student and family mental illness and addiction concerns. All this in an era of major political turmoil and reduced respect for public institutions.

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There are some that say that our schools should stick to educating (reading, writing, and math) and leave trying to help our students through the other difficulties mentioned to social service organizations, community groups, or churches. Anyone who works with these organizations knows that they don't have the resources to do this alone and that it will take the whole community, including Public Schools, to be there for our young people and our families! Providing the necessary support adds a whole extra layer of difficulty and responsibility and requires more from each of our staff, but we cannot tell students to forget about being hungry, housing insecure, or any of the other problems they face and expect them to learn. The best way we can help our students learn is by trying to deal directly with what they need.

For me, and I hope for you, the phrase "Hope springs eternal" has great meaning! As we celebrate Staff Appreciation Week, I hope we all understand that even though the expectations for schools and school staff are immense, our staff - your staff - does their best to answer the call each day! No one can claim to be perfect but the staff of RSU 9 strives to do their best and to "do the public good" each and every day! Their dedication, ability to adjust, learn new ideas, and share positive support for each child and family is to be appreciated and respected by us all!

Please join me in thanking our staff for all THEY do for the students, families, and communities of RSU 9!

RSU 9 will have FULL-TIME PreK - For students entering PreK this coming school year at our Cushing and Mallett Schools (already available at CCHS). As part of our RSU 9 Strategic Plan work (Goals 1 & 10), our focus is for students to "experience a wide array of programs, strategies, & interventions" while "regularly engaging in active, meaningful, student-centered learning." We are very excited to share that our Full-time PreK initiative will start this fall as it will help us better educate and support our youngest learners in building their base for further success! Please watch for more information in the coming weeks and months!

This Saturday at the University of Maine in Farmington (UMF) - Maine Youth Leaders (MYL) and the Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) is hosting a Youth Leadership Summit for students in Grades 5-12. For more information please check out the following link: [Youth Leadership Summit Through UMF, May 11th](#)

Two weeks ago multiple staff from RSU 9 - Went to the National BARR (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) Conference. You may recall each of our schools started introducing parts of BARR in some grade levels this year. BARR is a proven model that helps improve schools by strengthening relationships between staff and students and using individualized student data to target interventions needed for student success. It is designed to create stronger school communities by empowering students, teachers, and families to use data to realign schools' existing resources in ways that support more success for students, both inside and outside of the classroom. A group of staff from our Wilton Schools was asked to present at this conference. At the end of their presentation the Maine Deputy Commissioner of Education texted me saying "Making Maine Proud. Congratulations to your staff on a wonderful presentation!" A BIG "Way to go" goes to our Wilton Schools and staff presenters Sofie Mattens and Gracie Vaughn!

Working with the Farmington Fire Dept. - We developed a new [RSU 9 Flammable Gas Procedure](#) for all RSU 9 facilities based on the questions raised by the problems we encountered at the Mallett School several weeks ago. We need to again recognize how well everyone involved worked together during the evacuation, moving our students swiftly and without a problem, feeding our students, and sending them home early that day! A superb TEAM effort!

In closing I ask that we never forget why Public Education is important!

Public Education started in America in the 1830's. The early goal was to create a literate and productive citizenry with common morals. Today's definition is broader as we serve to develop an informed and productive workforce through a system that allows for social mobility. Although never perfect, repeated studies show that free, universal education for children in grades K-12 can be the greatest factor in addressing inequality in our society. **Our kids are fortunate to have our community's support! Thank YOU!**