

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: Ride safe and other important FYIs!
DATE: 11-4-2025

What does the Federal Government's shutdown mean for RSU 9? There are multiple answers, depending on the focus. First, most of our funding comes from the state combined with our local taxes. These resources continue to come in, so we do not see any immediate financial concern. Second, the longer the shutdown continues, the greater my concern for the additional 2 million dollars we receive from the federal government for specialized instruction in Reading, Math, and Special Education. I am concerned that if the shutdown goes on and on, the federal government might reduce funding we expected to receive despite the best efforts of our Senators Collins and King, and Representative Golden. Third, we should all be concerned for those in our communities who rely on programs supported by federal funding. At the end of September we were told by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that they were going to continue program funding during a government shutdown that is aimed at helping families through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. We have now been told that that funding is no longer available. There is no way of predicting what the final answer will be. We have concerns about the impact the elimination of this funding will have on our families, students and staff.

Will the school lunch program still run? The Maine Department of Education (MDOE) has assured us that Child Nutrition Programs will continue to operate as usual. SNAP benefits that may not be issued for November do not affect school meal programs because they are administered separately. Additionally, the Child and Adult Care Food Program's (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Program will continue for those Maine schools currently enrolled. Existing program rules remain in effect; meals must be consumed on-site and in a congregate setting to ensure that students receive the full benefit of these services.

An update on RSU 9's Literacy work in our elementary schools. Over the last two years we have been working to apply several peer reviewed studies of Neuroscience (brain and nervous system) in our efforts to adjust and improve literacy skills learning and improvement in our PreK-3 programming. The [RSU #9 Literacy Purpose Document](#) shares our goal and commitment to improve what our students are able to do in Reading and Writing. Please go to this [link](#) for additional information. Thank you!

The shift into autumn brings cooler weather and holiday excitement, making this a good time to review key practices and expectations along with reminders that help to support students and staff in RSU 9. A safe, consistent and respectful experience for all students on our buses, in our schools' classrooms, at lunch, and during recess (grades PreK-8) helps to improve each student's ability to learn. Working

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"Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all."



together (students, staff, and families) for a positive school experience is key to our students' and district's success as we move through the 2025-2026 School Year!

- **A safe and respectful experience on each of our buses** for every one of our students is our daily goal in Transportation. Under the leadership of Transportation Director Richard Joseph, we strive to achieve this goal by fostering a level of trust and respect, using clear behavior expectations (a brief overview can be found [here](#)) and through meaningful communication among all members of our school and general community. As we move into the late fall and winter it is most important that students, families, and staff continue to work together to maintain an appropriate atmosphere on our buses as our roads become more challenging with cold weather. Thanks in advance to everyone for your efforts to keep our bus trips safe!
- **Please know that we are** committed to supporting every student and family within our schools to the best of our abilities. Our staff works hard with the resources provided to us to support the needs, strengths, and potential each student has. Even though this is hard, sometimes time-consuming work, RSU 9 staff is committed each and every day to this work and if a mistake happens, as they sometimes do, we are committed to working towards correcting our errors.

We make this same commitment when you bring a concern to our attention. We act on it, either at the teacher or administrative level as quickly as we can. An important part of our mutual work together is two-way, honest communication. If you feel you need some information, or an answer to a question *please* do not go by "hear-say". Please contact your child's teacher or school's principal so that you can get the information you need "straight from the horse's mouth" as we used to say. Thank you!

Our country is going through difficult times - And unfortunately this impacts daily life in Maine as it has changed the way some adults speak with or towards each other. Some have less patience when trying to problem solve or to get to the bottom of a concern etc. We are also seeing this happen in our schools as the frustration and concern some have, can come across in their words or lack of respect shown towards RSU 9 staff. This is somewhat understandable given today's difficulties but we ask for patience and courtesy as we work to be as supportive and helpful as we can to your children and to you. Our commitment to problem solving can be found [here](#).

Quote: *"The six most important words in our language are: 'I admit I made a mistake.' The five most important words: 'You did a good job.' The four most important words: 'What is your opinion?' The three most important words: 'If you please.' The two most important words: 'Thank you.' The single most important word: 'We.' And the least important word: 'I.'"*