

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 and Guardians
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: A few quick updates for 11/7/2022
DATE: November 7, 2022

November is Family Caregivers Month! – If a group of unsung heroes ever deserved recognition for their day-in and day-out dedication, hard work, and determination to support loved ones, it is this group! Thanks to all of you who are helping family members who are in need with your gifts of time, respect, affection, and care. We honor and thank all caretakers and encourage others to do the same for those you know!

Veteran's Day is – This Friday. Very special thanks go to each of you who has served our country and each one of us by defending our nation and democracy. We owe you much service, especially our gratitude!

Please vote if you haven't already! – By voting, we not only honor our veterans but also model for our children something that many in the world wish they had -- the right to vote, be heard, and be counted! By participating in the voting process, we show that we don't take this right for granted, and we continue Maine's tradition of either leading or being near the top in the percentage of people voting by state!

Emergency Procedures and Practice – Are put in place to ensure that we keep our students and staff as safe as possible in all cases, but particularly when fast action is called for. There are no better examples of these efforts than the procedures followed by the staff and students of the Mallett and Cape Cod Hill Schools in the last two weeks. Both situations involved our evacuation plans being immediately followed when the smell of gas was detected. At the Mallett School a hood fan was not working in our kitchen (there was no leak). At the Cape Cod Hill School, a leak was detected outside of the building near the propane tanks. Our Maintenance Staff quickly turned off those tanks following gas company directions. In each case, evacuations occurred without a problem and according to plan. Thanks go to the Fire Departments of Farmington and New Sharon for their assistance in helping us safely secure our facilities. Special



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thanks also go to the students and parents at Cape Cod Hill School for their cooperation as we adjusted dismissal procedures because the evacuation occurred at the end of the school day.

Do you have questions about the new building addition you will be voting on – For Mt. Blue Middle School (MBMS)? We sent home a [document](#) a couple of weeks ago which contained information about the \$2.5 million gift that the Bjorn Foundation has offered RSU 9 to expand and improve our hands-on learning space at MBMS. (Link to the most recent district presentation is also [available here](#).) These funds will be used to add about 5,000 square feet of space (three large multi-purpose rooms and one small classroom) to support technical education opportunities at MBMS. If passed by the voters, this extra space will allow us to expand program learning options to our students in the areas of construction, manufacturing, architecture, technology, and tourism, the details of which are now being developed.

A couple of questions keep coming up as people think about whether they will vote to approve this project:

1. Why do we need to add this space to MBMS? Why don't we just add it to Foster Tech Center?

- We don't have the larger spaces needed to accommodate some of the same kind of project-based learning for students in grades 6-8 which students in grades 10-12 have room for at Foster Tech Center.
- The added MBMS space will provide opportunities for middle school students to participate in larger, project-based, hands-on learning options, allowing them to explore career options, such as some of those offered at Foster Technical Center. Doing this at an earlier age, will in turn help them make more informed choices about both their high school program choices and potential future careers.
- The opportunity for students, some of whom are unsure that continuing to attend school is for them, to participate in these types of experiences increases our ability to engage our students and the likelihood that they will complete their education through to high school graduation.
- Adding these larger spaces will allow middle school students to take advantage of new projects.

2. Will there be additional costs?

- Three staff positions will be needed to fully operate alternative programming options for our students. Two of these positions will come from adjusting present MBMS staffing positions. To fund the third position, the RSU 9 School Board has agreed to add an additional teaching position (approximately \$62,000 in salary & benefits) to support the programming options that will be offered. By adding 5,000 square feet of space, the heating, electricity, cleaning, and insurance costs are estimated to increase to about \$24,000 per year. Our present plan is for these program changes and costs to start with the 2024-2025 School year.

Thanks for taking the time to read the above and have a super week!