



School Administrative Unit 21

March 31, 2020

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Dear SAU 21 Families and Employees:

I am writing to provide you with an update relative to how COVID-19 and the current emergency situation are impacting our schools and communities. Specifically, this letter will focus on six (6) important topics for our students, parents, educators and support personnel: Remote Instruction Expectations, School Calendar, Special Education, Social Emotional Needs, and our next Online Forum.

Remote Instruction Expectations

SAU 21 educators have now completed ten (10) days of remote instruction. We are very proud of the work that our educators have done in quickly responding to New Hampshire's move to remote learning. We are equally appreciative of the efforts of families in balancing the demands of school with addressing the needs of loved ones during this pandemic.

Now that Governor Sununu has closed school buildings until at least Monday, May 4, 2020, we need to consider what remote instruction looks like in the long-term. Our conversations have been guided by five (5) important principles:

- The need to focus on essential learning for students (“Less is More”).
- The need to be flexible and ready to adapt when needs arise.
- A realization that, despite the best efforts of our amazing educators, we will not be able to replicate the learning that would be happening in our physical buildings right now.
- An emphasis on ensuring relationships with our students and families in this learning environment.
- A focus on extending grace to all in these unique and trying times.

Remember, remote learning tools include large group video or audio conference calls, 1:1 telephone or video calls, email, work materials, projects, reading lists, online learning platforms, and many other ideas.

We are also looking to streamline our methods of delivery. SeeSaw and Google Classroom are two highly recommended platforms where parents can be added and participate in learning. Also, in order to balance core instruction with enrichment opportunities, teachers have successfully created “must do” assignments, balanced with a menu of weekly enrichment options.

Lastly, we recognize that a long-term closure of our buildings carries with it a considerable amount of stress and anxiety. As a result, in the coming weeks we will look to increase the opportunities for our students to connect with their teachers in real time. This may involve video conferencing or even an old-fashioned phone call. Likewise, these connections may involve counselors, social workers and other school supports.

All of us will continue to work to ensure that relationships with our students is the top priority of our remote learning plan.

Serving the communities of:

Hampton Falls

North Hampton

Seabrook

South Hampton

Winnacunnet High School

School Calendar

Earlier today our School Boards adopted a calendar that we will use through May 4th and, if the remote learning period is extended, through the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

This calendar provides continuous learning opportunities for students through remote learning for Monday through Thursday (four days) each week, beginning on March 30, 2020. Teachers will utilize Fridays through May 15, 2020 to work on outreach, planning, preparation, learning or to attend to other needs as they arise in a remote instruction and learning environment. This schedule will continue through what would have been the traditional April vacation.

Remote instruction for students would end on Thursday, June 4, 2020. Educators would have an additional four (4) days of professional development, finalizing of assessments, grading and reporting, identifying needs of their students, and other related issues that need to be addressed. Therefore, the final day for teachers would be Wednesday, June 10, 2020.

We have partnered in this calendar work with SAU 90 (Hampton), who will recommend a similar schedule to their Board later this week. In addition, the leadership of our Seacoast Educators Association (SEA) has worked collaborative with us on this calendar.

Finally, we are working with the Winnacunnet administration on what this calendar would mean for high school seniors. We expect to provide more information on graduation and their other important events in the coming weeks.

A complete calendar will be posted on our website at www.sau21.org.

Special Education

The transition to remote learning certainly has implications for the needs of our students with educational disabilities. Our priority is to provide our students with educational disabilities a Free Appropriate Education through creative programming and accommodation while preserving the health and safety of staff and students. At no time in the history of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) have we ever experienced a full-fledged pandemic. In this difficult time, it continues to be our goal to put the needs of our students first. Special Educators are designing remote instruction and services based on our best understanding of the current law and guidance from federal and state educational agencies. It is very possible that the federal and state governments will issue further guidance in the coming weeks. We will do our best to keep you informed of any changes of the law which may change these procedures.

Social Emotional Needs

In this challenging time, we understand that it can be difficult to acknowledge your own stress and emotions while tending to those of your children. It is important to explore and address our social emotional learning (SEL) needs during times of uncertainty in particular. For resources for parents, caregivers, and anyone who works with children, go to <https://casel.org/covid-resources/>. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides guidelines regarding how to talk with children in a crisis, planning SEL activities at home, and coping with stress and anxiety.

Online Forum

While we will continue to keep you informed through these updates and telephone calls, we are also very interested in addressing questions that you may have about this remote learning period. To that end, our SAU administrative team will hold our second online forum on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. You can join this forum through the link provided at www.sau21.org.

Finally, we have attached a fact sheet to this letter which addresses meal distribution, wifi access, and school building access and sanitizing.

Our goal is to make certain that every SAU 21 family has the support that you need during this unprecedented event. Please contact your student's teacher(s) or principal with any school-related questions and feel free to contact me directly at blupini@sau21.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Lupini".

Bill Lupini
Superintendent of Schools

SAU 21 Coronavirus / Remote Learning Period Fact Sheet

Meals

We continue to provide meals for all SAU 21 students at Seabrook Elementary School and Winnacunnet High School. Breakfast and lunch pick up is available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. at both locations. Two days of meals will be provided for each student on each distribution day. Families from any District may pick up meals at either location on any given distribution day. No sign-up is required to receive meals.

SAU 21 is also delivering meals during distribution days. You may meet the bus at any stop to receive meals as you do not have to sign up for pick up or delivery of meals.

Please note that families do not have to qualify for free/reduced lunch to participate in the meal distribution. We would like as much participation in the meal distribution program as possible. Please see the COVID-19 Page on the SAU21 website (www.sau21.org) for the meal delivery schedule and other resources for meals including the Meals4Kids program.

WiFi Access

We understand that some families do not have access to reliable WiFi in the home. We have posted no-cost WiFi options on our website including free hotspots in the community, hotspots from cell carriers, and instructions to apply for Comcast Internet Essentials for qualified applicants. SAU 21 has ordered mobile hotspot devices and will have them available for families. Please leave a voicemail at (603) 926-8992 x101 if you do not have reliable WiFi despite all other attempts utilizing these resources and would like someone to assist you in accessing WiFi for remote learning.

School Building Access and Sanitizing:

All SAU 21 school buildings remain closed during this state of emergency and period of remote learning. Access to buildings is strictly limited to essential personnel to perform specific necessary tasks.

Comprehensive sanitizing and disinfecting of all SAU 21 buildings was performed by a professional remediation company the first week of the school closure. Execution of a second professional cleaning will occur 48-72 hours prior to staff and students return and school re-opening.