

SCHOOL UNION 76

BROOKLIN – DEER ISLE-STONINGTON CSD – SEDGWICK

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Office of the Superintendent

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"It takes a whole community to educate a child."

Superintendent's Memo

To: CSD 13 Parents & Guardians

From: Christian M. Elkington

Re: Next steps to better support our students!

Date: 6-1-18

The arrest of a former teacher last Friday for alleged sexual offenses with a student has led naturally to much speculation and distress, putting additional stress on our students, parents and guardians. Since then, I have contacted other school leaders and health care professionals to determine the best possible steps for assisting students, their families and the community move through this situation. After much review, we have determined that our best course of action consists of a three-pronged approach. Our plan is as follows:

Next week we will:

Hold meetings on Monday with students in Grades 5-12, in appropriate age groupings, to offer them a place to speak, ask questions and get answers. An alternate meeting date will be made for 8th grade students who will still be on their class trip on Monday. Having supported students in many difficult emotional difficulties previously, I will lead these meetings with Social Worker Roberta Johnson at DISES and with Principal Ed Hatch at DISHS. Guidance Counselor Tim Godding is and will be available and on call if needed at DISHS. A trained professional from Aroostook Mental Health Center (AMHC) will assist us and be available to students if needed.

During these meetings, we will:

- Make clear that student safety is what is most important at this time.
- Review the truth that we know and can report about the ongoing situation with students.
- Allow our students to ask questions and express their concerns appropriately.
- Answer questions we can while protecting confidentiality and explain why we are not able to answer all questions.
- Make it clear that students/staff need to be sensitive to those directly affected by these events and that staff will end conversations in class or hallways and forward them to Administration or Guidance or ask for assistance in class.
- Remind students that those who are directly or indirectly involved need to be thought of and their privacy respected before making any comments or writing anything on-line.

- Also remind students that humor or jokes about the ongoing situation are never appropriate!
- Let students know who is available to support them if they have further/future questions, concerns and fears. That we will also set up and make available smaller groups or one-on-one time as needed.

Between now and the end of this school year and, as needed, at the beginning of next school year we will:

- Work with AMHC to offer additional opportunities for group discussions, one-on-one or small group meetings and other resources proven to help in this type of situation to students and their families.

During 18-19 and beyond we will:

- Review and add in if necessary to the K-12 Health, Social Emotional Learning Curriculum important pieces about consensual vs nonconsensual relationships, safe-touch and not safe-touch (younger students), what constitutes sexual harassment, and how to protect yourself and/or your friends in difficult circumstances as recommended by health professionals.
- Create an on-going, year-to-year series of grade level appropriate workshops and speakers to give students information about appropriate relationships, the law, and sexual harassment along with opportunities to discuss questions and concerns with trained professionals.
- Develop needed support for staff, through increased training and/or coaching to build skills that will enable them to identify inappropriate student/staff relationships and to protect students as they deal with these delicate situations.

In closing we need to be cognizant of the fact that:

- The State Police are actively investigating this case and we cannot interfere with those efforts.
- We need to respect and protect the privacy of those presently involved with this case along with any other individuals who might come forward.

Thanking you in advance for your concern and care for those directly involved, for the many questions and concerns that have been shared with me and for the respect that must be shown in the difficult work ahead.