

SCHOOL UNION 76

BROOKLIN – DEER ISLE-STONINGTON CSD – SEDGWICK

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Office of the Superintendent

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"Public Schools not only serve the public, they make the public"

Dear Parents and Guardians of Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School:

December 17, 2019

It is my hope that this note finds you and your family well! As we reach mid-December I have a few items to update you on. Please take a few moments to review the following:

Academic Results in English Language Arts (ELA) are improving! Over the last two-plus years the staff at Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School (DISES) has worked hard to implement changes to our curriculum and instructional practices through focused planning, professional development and working more closely across all of School Union 76. While making these changes our staff has also developed a robust Intervention Program to help students who are struggling. I am very happy to report that through these sustained efforts we are starting to see much needed improved growth across multiple grade levels reflected in all three of our major assessment tools: NWEA Scoring, Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Scoring and through the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA Tests). The staff and I know we have much more work to do, but are certainly pleased to see that the commitment and work already completed and in process is making a difference. Special thanks go to the staff of DISES for their multiple efforts in and out of the classroom and to you, our parents and guardians, for your support and patience as we have turned our ship in this new and positive direction.

As you probably have heard, these same efforts are now underway in Math where our overall results have been poor. Staff has been working since last spring to implement changes to our curriculum and instructional practices in Math. With immediate improvement needed, we investigated and chose to implement the Eureka Math Curriculum across grades K-8 this year. It is our hope and belief that this new curriculum, supported by planned professional development along with using the lessons learned in making improvements to ELA will support our overall efforts in Math. Continued academic improvement will give our students a stronger belief in their own abilities, more pride in what they know and can do and improved self-esteem. As our students continue to improve their learning it will help reduce many learning frustrations (we see this happening now), which can and do lead to behavior difficulties in the classroom. I look forward to our future efforts continuing to improve school and student results!

If a student is injured at school, won't the school pick up the medical bill? Accidents and injuries can happen to students at any time even though we keep our school buildings and grounds as safe as possible. When accidents happen, bumps, bruises and injuries may also happen. When this happens, we support our students as needed. When more serious injuries occur, we do our best to assess the problem using the expertise of our school nurse and decide if we should call rescue. In the event that rescue is called, we look to them to give us and the parent the best advice on next possible steps.

If a student is injured at school or at a school related event and requires medical attention requiring transportation by ambulance CSD 13 also does not pay for those costs. With the high price of health

insurance, we know that not everyone is able to have their own insurance for their children and so medical bill costs can become a financial hardship. This is why we share School Insurance Forms with parents/guardians each year from Commercial Travelers who provides some lower cost coverages. We recently spoke with their agent to see if families can still take part in their program and were told that anyone can sign up anytime during the school year. Coverage begins the day after the postmark date of payment. If you don't have insurance please ask our school for a brochure and contact information.

Early Release Day adjustment. Starting in January, if there is a one or two-hour delay on a Friday that we have Early Release we will now have school for the rest of the day like it is a Monday – Thursday, with buses leaving school by 3:00 pm. We will not be dismissing at the earlier time. Other districts in Hancock County have made this change finding that the school day is much more worthwhile for their students and so we will be making this same change. Hopefully, it will not need to happen very often.

Winter Recess Expectations. There are no national standards for when not to send students outside for recess. It is a local decision made by administration, whose responsibility it is to keep students safe. Since there are no set standards we look at medical evidence to set a standard as there are many factors that need to be taken into account around outside recess. We have set the following standard to be implemented based on local conditions, including the combination of temperature plus wind chill:

Recommendations for COLD:

Temperature/Wind Chills	Outdoor Practice
Between 50-30 degrees Fahrenheit	Regularly scheduled outdoor play times
Between 29-20 degrees Fahrenheit	15-20 minutes maximum
Between 10-19 degrees Fahrenheit	Limited or no outdoor play time
Below 10 degrees Fahrenheit	No outdoor play time


When setting these standards, I looked at the following:

- Health recommendations from medical organizations around Hypothermia & Frostbite
- Children's bodies are not to be considered small adults, they are children and children's bodies don't have the same protections as adults
- Children's bodies do not make heat like adults (need to avoid reduced circulation and shivering)
- Children's skin reacts differently than adults (reaction times outside are different and reduced)
- Conditions below 20 degrees have too many factors that make it potentially too dangerous for extended stays outside.

The above does not mean that when it is too cold recess won't happen, but that recess will be inside using whatever spaces are available for students to move in, spend time with friends or just relax.

Lastly, attached to the email with my letter is a short article, **7 Things Children Wish Their Teachers and Parents Knew**. It shares wonderful insights from an elementary teacher, that we all need to remember as we work together to help each one of our next generation be the best that they can be!

Thanks for listening!


Christian M. Elkington
Superintendent of Schools SU 76