

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"

December 21, 2019

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

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

By focusing on the whole child, including Social Emotional Learning, progress is being made! Academic and Social Emotional Learning supports go hand-in-hand in helping each one of your sons and daughters grow as a student, as a young adult and in building their self-esteem. The stronger the belief and trust our students have in themselves and in their own abilities, the more pride they have in what they know, what they believe they can do and what they will achieve! Helping to build a student's self-esteem not only comes from a student's academic success, but is also being developed through DISHS Staff's:

- daily interactions with our students
- ability to spot and help a student make a better behavior decision
- and student use of caring and kind, actions and words.

During "Mariner Time", in a re-teaching moment within a class period or when a student stays after school for extra-help our students and staff work together to help our students improve their ability to think, problem solve and build trust. These interactions along with special assemblies and a focus on the whole child are reducing some of our students' frustrations which can sometimes come out in negative interactions at our school. Thanks go to our staff for these positive efforts, to our students for their efforts at working with our staff and to you our parents for the trust you show in supporting the whole child at DISHS!

Great Schools Partnership (GSP) is ready and willing to help lead our next level of school

improvement. Over the last two months our school board has been discussing and then approving new planning efforts for DISHS. As part of this work I have sat down and been in contact with the Head of the Great School Partnership, David Ruff. GSP are education leaders who work with schools throughout New England to help make, long-lasting improvements and changes in schools and districts for the last twenty years. We look forward to them working with our staff, students, parents and community to assist us in our future planning efforts or as we are calling it Phase Two of our Future of Our School efforts. You our parents will be an important part of this process as we look at "what if" possibilities for learning and teaching that could be replicated at Deer Isle-Stonington High School and within our two communities. I say within our two communities as it will take a community effort to improve and build our future program at DISHS. A program that incorporates who we are and who are students will need to be if we are to sustain the growth our students, your children need have in order to be successful in

the years to come. This planning work will help us set a clear and focused direction which will continue to help turn our ship in a stronger and longer-lasting positive direction for student success. The School Board, staff and I are looking forward to the journey ahead as we look for evidence-based strategies and programming to help improve overall student and staff success at DISHS. More information will be shared with you in the months ahead.

If a student is injured at school, won't the school pick up the medical bill(s)? 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 occur. 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, deciding 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 possible next steps. If a student is injured at school or at a school related event and requires medical attention requiring transportation by ambulance CSD 13 does not pay for this cost and/or any related 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 our Friday Early Release Days 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.

In closing let me say thanks for the positive efforts you make to support our students and staff each and every day! I hope you and your family have an enjoyable break!

Thanks for listening!

Christian M. Elkington
Superintendent of Schools SU 76