

Good Morning!

It has been brought to my attention that a recent article published online led some in our community to think and then to write/share that our district and/or *School Union 76 was planning for learning to be online again for 20-21*. I have shared many times with you over the last several months that these are trying times and we in SU 76 understand people are stressed (rightly so), and because of that sometimes jump to conclusions out of fear or worry without gathering more information or sending an email to ask a question. Although I understand that people will assume things and jump to conclusions, I am concerned that no one contacted my office or emailed Principal Magoon or myself directly to ask if what they read or were told was true before sharing concerns on Facebook and other like formats. Please understand that nothing has changed in regards to communicating with you. I promise I will keep you updated and unless you hear it from me or read it in something that I send out, don't assume something is true unless you get it from me directly or from a school committee member.

The article in question talked about our three districts within School Union 76 working together to purchase new, updated and upgraded technology. The CSD and Brooklin Boards have now voted and agreed to this purchase with the Sedgwick School Committee to vote this coming Tuesday Night. The purchase I am asking the board to make is for this year and future years not just for 20-21. It is based on multiple needs we have, not just the possibility, I repeat the possibility of remote learning being needed during the up-coming school year. Other considerations for this purchase include: Our overall technology is older and needs replacement, that we want to continue to build our capabilities for remote learning at home during snow days and that we have too many differing pieces of equipment presently being used and the problems that multiple use in a household brings to parents.

**In regards to 20-21 Planning, it is the School Committee's and my hope and wish that we will start the school year with students coming to Sedgwick Elementary School.** That is the mindset we have as we develop our plans for 20-21. **You need to also know that the staff I have spoken with are looking forward to returning to school with kids in the classroom.** The key will be doing it safely!

In order to be prepared for whatever comes our way we must make preparations for many differing possibilities coming this fall and year. That is what you should expect we are doing and is in fact what we are doing. All of these plans will stay as drafts as more information becomes available this summer. The State Dept. of Education has shared with us to not expect any final guidelines or directions until the middle of August, but that we should be planning for a return to in-person school as one option. If the Governor and Commissioner deem it unsafe for us to return this fall then we will follow their direction. I know for a fact that they both want students and staff to return to school and that they are giving us guidance needed to do so!

In the Town of Sedgwick, just like in other Maine towns, we also need to realize that some of our parents, no matter what we are able to do as a district to prepare our school, will want to keep their children home until there is a vaccine. In the end it is a family decision and since it is, we need to also plan for how we will teach students whose parents make the very personal, family

decision to keep their children home. This is an added responsibility we must and are planning for.

You have my word and that of our school committee that we will do all we can to plan as safely as possible for returning to in-person, at school learning this coming September. We will do this following direction from our Governor, Commissioner of Education and Maine CDC, making sure that students and staff can return to a building that is kept as safe as possible.

**ZOOM?** Lastly, it has also been brought to my attention that some in our community have shared that they have had some problems with trying to use ZOOM to join School Committee Meetings. Please send Principal Magoon or myself an email and we will see what we can do to give you further support and direction in using ZOOM. We will do what we can to try and take this frustration off your plate. Sometimes ZOOM can have problems with connectivity based on the number of people in your home's area who are online. If it is a connectivity issue you can always drive to Sedgwick Elementary School and sit outside the building and use our WiFi, just like you would have if you attended the meeting in person.

Thanks for reading the above!

My best,

Christian M. Elkington  
Superintendent School Union 76