



School Administrative Unit 21

November 4, 2021

Dear SAU 21 parents and guardians,

I hope you are enjoying our first frosty mornings. My household enjoyed record numbers of Trick or Treaters on Sunday evening. My favorite costume was a homemade juice box. I was simultaneously impressed by the effort, and a little grateful that my children are of an age where I don't have to assist with making costumes. I think the best part of Halloween is always the smiles and joy children find in putting on their costumes--even those in high school.

Joy is one of four elements I talked with staff across our districts about this August before school opened. In a time of stress and crisis, joy is something that can get lost and forgotten. The research on resilience--something I've been thinking a lot about this school year--tells us that even small moments of joy (finding beauty in our surroundings, ourselves, or others; doing something that makes you smile; experiencing a small success) can help us to recover from the physiological effects of stress. Experiencing joy can also help us find meaning and purpose and better recover from crises. It's ok for all of us, even in these challenging times, to do some things just because they make us happy.

Earlier this week, a few of our school campuses were secured due to a shooting incident in the Seabrook community. Our building administrators have been meeting regularly with police, fire, and school board representatives from all of our communities over the last few years to be prepared for a variety of emergency situations which could unfold in our schools and communities. Local police departments make the determination to advise the schools to secure their campuses based on the information available to them. A secure campus is utilized when there is a potential threat to safety occurring outside of the school. In a secure campus situation, exterior doors and windows are closed and locked and no one is allowed into or out of the building. Instruction for students otherwise continues as normal. We do our best to share information with parents in a timely manner, but you should know that the communication to you will almost always lag somewhat behind the actions we take. Our first priority is to take the necessary actions for safety. Once that is done, we can shift our attention to the communication to you, our parents and guardians. If you have questions or concerns about our emergency procedures, you can always reach out to your school principal, to me, or to our Assistant Superintendent, Dr. David Hobbs, who coordinates our Safety and Security Task Force.

On Tuesday, the CDC recommended that children 5 to 11 years old be vaccinated against Covid-19 with the Pfizer pediatric vaccine. The NH Department of Health and Human Services shared today that pediatric doses are being received in the state and that families will soon be able to access those vaccines for their children from some pediatric offices, family medicine and urgent care clinics, pharmacies, hospitals, and regional public health clinics. Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Caroline Arakelian, recently shared a survey regarding vaccinations for children in this age group on behalf of our regional public health network. We expect details from them in the coming days regarding clinics in our area. The [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) site should also be updated in the coming days with a feature that allows you to search for local options for obtaining a pediatric Pfizer dose. The pediatric

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Pfizer vaccine is reported to be 90.7% effective in preventing Covid-19 in children aged 5 to 11. From the CDC's press release: "*COVID-19 vaccines have undergone – and will continue to undergo – the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. Vaccinating children will help protect them from getting COVID-19 and therefore reducing their risk of severe disease, hospitalizations, or developing long-term COVID-19 complications. Getting your children vaccinated can help protect them against COVID-19, as well as reduce disruptions to in-person learning and activities by helping curb community transmission.*" We will provide further information on this topic in the near future.

One of the most important pieces of competency-based learning is increasing student ownership for their own learning. As the first trimester comes to a close, this is a great opportunity to review school reports with your child. Ask your child to tell you about a success they had with their learning this trimester and to identify an area they want to improve upon in the next trimester. No matter how well we are doing in school, there are always areas in which we can grow. And, if we are struggling in a particular area, it is never too late to make growth in that area either. You can support your child in developing their own plan for growth.

Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour this weekend as Daylight Savings Time comes to an end. As a reminder, there is no school next Thursday, November 11th, due to the Veteran's Day Holiday, and school will be closed from November 23rd through 25th for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Best wishes for a joyful and happy Thanksgiving!

Meredith

Meredith Nadeau, Superintendent of Schools
School Administrative Unit #21

At times like these, the world can seem...Too big. Too loud. Too hard. Too much. While you feel...Too small. Too quiet. Too tired. Not enough. On those days, look deep inside to find the courage you need. It might be hidden away, but... If you close your eyes and breathe, you will see it--shining its light in the dark. Warm. Steady. Safe. Your light might be small to start--just a spark--but you can turn it into a flame. ...No matter what happens, you'll be all right.

--from the children's book When You Are Brave (2019) by Pat Zietlow Miller.