



# School Administrative Unit 21

February 24, 2022

Good afternoon all,

First let me start by saying that due to anticipated weather conditions, **tomorrow, Friday, 2/25/22, will be a snow day** for those of you who do not live in South Hampton and who are already enjoying school vacation. For those of you who are traveling during the vacation, I wish you a safe journey. If you are, like many, staying in the area, enjoy what will hopefully be the last of our winter weather. As a side note, if we do have additional storms in March, I anticipate that we will be utilizing remote learning days to avoid prolonging the school year further into June.

This week is Public School week. In New Hampshire, 90% of children attend their local public school or a NH supported charter school. Across the country, those statistics are the same: 9 out of 10 students—over 48 million—attend a public school. Public schools welcome every child—regardless of ability, race, religion, wealth, language, country of origin or needs. Growing up, my dad worked the night shift at a fiberglass manufacturing plant and my mom worked part-time jobs around his schedule to help make ends meet. My mom and her parents didn't have the opportunity to finish college. Without family support and the many opportunities afforded to me by New Hampshire public schools, I would not be where I am in my life. I am a proud graduate of Merrimack Valley High School, and I have spent most of my adult life focused on supporting public education and the students we serve, as well as the dedicated educators, administrators, educational associates and other staff in our system. Over the last two years, I have seen incredible flexibility and dedication from these varied staff members and tremendous resilience from our students and families. The challenges of the last two years also provide us with opportunities to think differently about how to best serve our students as we move forward and to leverage our competency-based system to provide just the right level of challenge and support to each learner.

Public education is not a panacea for all of the challenges that face our country and society, but our public schools are places where people with different backgrounds and knowledge can share common experiences, learn to take perspective, think critically, analyze information, and engage in respectful dialogue with one another. In school we discover that we don't all learn the same way, that we have different strengths, that we can grow and develop our skills, and that we can and do make a difference in our communities. I went into public education for the boy I sat next to in 3rd grade who struggled to master his multiplication facts and for the 30% of my high school freshmen class that didn't graduate. I went into public education because of people like my 7th grade math teacher who I stayed in education for the 8th grade boy with dyslexia who

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couldn't read, for the girl who emigrated from war-torn Serbia at 14 without any English, and for the many students I worked with over the years who came to school every day despite their challenges because school was a safe place where they knew people cared about them. I stay in public education to continue to improve the system for all learners and to ensure that children have access to instruction in a wide variety of disciplines which help to prepare them for meaningful and happy futures. I stay in public education for the compassion of staff members who buy students lunch and snacks and new shoes and who make sure no one's birthday is forgotten and for those who inspire children to take risks and face challenges. I fight for public education because it has the power to change lives.

As we return to school in March, in this next, mask-optional, phase of the pandemic, I hope we can engage in deeper conversation about teaching and learning and the ongoing work to support our learners in creating their futures.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy vacation,

*Meredith*

Meredith Nadeau, Superintendent of Schools  
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