



School Administrative Unit 21

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Good afternoon SAU 21 families,

It definitely feels like fall, and I have been slowly coming to terms with the shortening of daylight hours. And, though I'm not quite ready to give up my sandals for close-toed shoes, I did throw on some socks before my feet hit the cold floor this morning.

It has been a busy month in SAU 21 schools. Covid-19 continues to present us with some challenges, and we remain enormously grateful for the opportunity to continue with in-person learning. As of today, 10/1, thus far in the school year we have had a total of 6 cases at Lincoln Akerman, 6 at North Hampton, 4 at Seabrook Elementary, 11 at Seabrook Middle School, 3 at Barnard School, and 15 at Winnacunnet. The state maintains a [dashboard of school cases](#) and the data on that site often lags behind the information reported by the school, sometimes significantly. Most of New Hampshire remains in the [substantial transmission range](#) though those numbers are trending downward overall. We will notify families via our School Messenger system when the transmission levels change as per our reopening plans. We appreciate your continued support with keeping children home when they are sick.

More importantly, our schools are most focused on teaching and learning. Classroom routines and expectations are in place, and, as I have walked through our schools, I have seen students working with the foundations of literacy including identifying letters and sounds, rhyming, sequencing sounds, and writing stories. Yesterday, a very ambitious second grader shared with me her story about obtaining a pet goldfish: "I asked Mom if we could get a goldfish and she said yes!" It wasn't until after she shared that she admitted it wasn't a "true" story. She is hopeful that when she shares the story her mom will agree to get her a fish. She plans to name the fish Tom if her plan works out as written. At the middle school level I learned from students working on invasive species projects who were beginning the study of a local eco-system. Students were preparing to gather data and evidence about invasives in their local communities and observable environmental impacts. At the high school level, I spent time reading some six-word memoirs and learning about Sherlock Holmes' use of the scientific method. I've also seen students participating in ROTC, taking Running Start courses for college credit, and developing extended learning opportunities in areas of interest. Students are generally enthusiastic about school and learning and seem to be enjoying the opportunity to interact with peers and friends, but that may not be the case for all children.

I've heard from a number of parents about their child's anxiety/stress/worry/depression. You and your child should know that they are not alone. Each of our schools is heavily focused on providing social and emotional support to students this year. The pandemic has been stressful for everyone--including teens and younger children. It has affected each of us differently, but it has had an effect on each of us. The disruption and change to everyday life that it caused has left many of us a little

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North Hampton

Seabrook

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more on edge, some of us angry, some of us fearful, and some of us just plain tired. This is no less true for children and young adults. We, as adults, may have the benefit of better access to supports and better language to describe how we are feeling. In children and young adults, those same feelings may only be expressed through changes in our behavior--more tired, more acting out, less interested in being with friends or going to school, etc. If your child or young adult is struggling to readjust to pre-pandemic routines and expectations and might benefit from some support, please don't hesitate to reach out to your school counselor. Sometimes we, too, are seeing similar changes in student behavior, but sometimes they do really well at school and only display those behaviors and emotions when they get home. We want to partner with you in supporting your child/teen to be socially and emotionally well so that they can be their best for learning and growing across home and school. Our very-skilled and caring counselors and social workers are here for all of our students!

Substitute coverage remains a challenge in all of our schools, and we still have some [open positions](#) in multiple areas across our districts. Please contact our [Human Resources department](#) if you have questions about any openings and feel free to send people our way. My six-word memoir, "Working in schools fills your heart."

Best,

Meredith

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Meredith Nadeau, Superintendent

