Happenings in RSU5
By Dr. Becky Foley, Superintendent

Happy February to each of you!

On January 22nd, I presented the superintendent’s recommended budget to the Board.

We decided to prioritize four core areas to move student achievement forward: maintaining class sizes, creating equity across the District, increased student support, and increase the number of buses we have to transport students. The budget includes the following requests focused on those target areas:

- FHS - 1.0 math teacher
- FHS - .5 sped social worker
- FHS - .5 ed tech
- PES - .1 PreK teacher
- MSS - .1 elementary librarian
- DCS - .5 guidance counselor
- FMS - .5 RTI ed tech
- MLS - .2 RTI teacher
- Tennis Court Reserve Account
- 3 additional buses

We believe that each one of these requests will increase student support. Our projected enrollment for next year continues to grow. Since 2014 we have added 186 students to the RSU. We are expecting 2034 students in the fall which will be the highest number of students enrolled since the RSU was formed in 2009. The greatest increase will be at the high school with 618 students expected to attend.

Currently our proposed budget is a 3.80% increase in expenditures compared to this year’s budget. There are still unknowns including contract negotiations, so the final recommendation is likely to change before the Board adopts the budget. I believe this proposed budget is both fiscally responsible to taxpayers, and creates a stronger organization that will support increased student learning.
The complete budget powerpoint presentation may be seen HERE

We want your input on the budget. Please use one of the following opportunities to make your voice heard:

- **March 18:** FHS “Q & A” 6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Public Input/ Deliberations
- **March 25:** Adoption of FY 21 Budget @ FHS @ 6:30 p.m.
- **April 8:** DCS “Q&A” 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.
- **April 29:** PES “Q&A” 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.
- **May 13:** FHS “Q&A” 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.
- **May 27:** Annual Budget Mtg. (DCS)

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A reminder for interested staff, parents, and community members,
Superintendent Foley and Assistant Superintendent Alexander will be "hanging out" at three upcoming events. This is just a time to stop by and chat about whatever topics are of interest to you regarding our schools and educating our students! Dates/times are below!

- **Mugs & Muffins:** February 27 at PES from 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- **Dessert & Discussion:** March 10 at FHS from 6:00-7:00 p.m.
- **Afternoon Tea:** April 9 at DCS from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

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**Curriculum Updates**
By Cynthia Alexander, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

**Strategic Plan Underway**

On September 25, 2019, the Board approved a 5-year Strategic Plan for RSU5. If you lived within the RSU5 community during the past two school years, you likely participated in the survey that invited all employees and multiple community stakeholders to complete open-ended questions about our district and hopes for its future. The analysis of the survey results and the work of the Strategic Planning Committee led to the development of a Strategic Plan that has four goals. Each goal is underpinned with objectives and action strategies to assist us in achieving our vision and the implementation and assessment of the plan. We further established a timeline to help us focus the work in a logical way.

The two objectives we are concurrently focused on from the Strategic Plan are Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Student-Centered Learning (SCL.) The work on Social Emotional Learning thus far has been around identifying the SEL strategies we currently have in place in each building. Each administrator has worked with a building leadership team to capture what we are doing at the school,
classroom, and individual level to support SEL. They also captured how nurses, guidance counselors and other specialists support students in this way. Our next steps this spring are to review the data from all of the schools and identify any gaps in practices we may have in order to create a plan to address identified needs.

The work on Student-Centered Learning began this fall at the committee level by defining what Student-Centered Learning means. This process included using all of the open-ended responses from the surveys and capturing its meaning. Here is the agreed upon definition:

*In RSU5, student-centered learning has a high degree of student engagement, challenge, enthusiasm, and joy. There is an observable blend of individual learning, small and large group collaboration, within which students receive meaningful feedback about their own academic and/or social-emotional growth. The varied and individualized approach to learning allows students to develop skills at their own pace and provides opportunities for students to explore self-interests that lead to deeper levels of understanding. Academic and social structures, partnerships, parental involvement, and community are evident in the learning opportunities.*

Our next step this spring is to identify our current practices that align with this definition and identify areas for growth.

Thank you for the input you provided in supporting our students in the areas of Social Emotional Learning and Student-Centered Learning.

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**School Nutrition Program**

RSU 5’s Nutrition Program is continuing its commitment to sustainability with the rollout of reusable flatware at each of its Freeport schools. Supplies were purchased with the help of a generous grant from the Freeport Sustainability Committee, along with another EcoMaine grant awarded to Freeport Middle School.

Student members of Freeport High School’s Earth Club placed posters around the school and supervised the October 12 debut of the new initiative, helping direct students to the appropriate sorting bins for rewashing.

Freeport Middle School students, led by their Green Team advisor, Kathleen Brown, promoted their rollout, which took place on February 5. Team members helped the kitchen unwrap, count and sort almost 500 new pieces of flatware, and the Nutrition Program and Principal Grogan are offering up the promise of a sundae party for the school if students and staff can keep their utensil inventory loss at under 10% by the end of the school year.

Mast Landing School and Morse Street School are slated for an upgrade of their already reusable flatware in the coming month.

We appreciate the support of the community in making RSU 5 as environmentally friendly as possible.

Erin Dow, School Nutrition Director
A Message From Your School Physician

Hello everyone! As the RSU5 School Physician I wanted to take a moment to offer information about LD798 and Question 1.

What is LD798:

LD798 is a Maine law that was passed in the fall of 2019 and will take effect September 2021. This new law removed philosophical and religious exemptions to school-required vaccines. Under this law, medical exemptions are still permitted. Those seeking a medical exemption must provide a written statement from a licensed physician or nurse practitioner stating that a required vaccine is medically inadvisable. The list of school-required immunizations did not change. Adults working in schools must also have had these vaccines, or show immunity to these infections.

The school required vaccines are:

Kindergarten entry: 5 DTaP (or 4, if the 4th was given after 4 yrs old), 4 Polio (or 3, if the 3rd was given after 4 yrs old), 2 MMR and 1 Varicella (or proof of past infection)

7th grade entry: 1 TdaP & 1 MCV (meningococcal)

12th grade entry: 2 MCV (meningococcal)

Under LD798 parents can still choose to “space out” vaccines. In addition, before a new required vaccine can be added to this list it must be approved by the Maine legislature. This law was enacted in light of Maine having the highest rate of Pertussis (whooping cough) in the nation and a non-medical exemption rate that is triple the national average.

What is Question 1:

Question 1 will be on the March 3rd ballot and is an attempt to veto LD798.

* A “Yes” vote is a vote to overturn LD798 and once again allow non-medical exemptions to school-required vaccines.

* A “No” vote is a vote to uphold the new law and only allow medical exemptions for school-required vaccines.

Stephanie Phelps, M.D
RSU 5 School Physician
Mid Coast Parkview Health - Pediatrics
Our Community Programs team is excited for the new season ahead, and happy to offer the February-August program catalog that you should have recently received in your mailbox.

I’d like to draw your attention to a handful of new programs of which we’re particularly proud:

Our Laugh & Learn offerings are growing for our youngest learners, as we open an afternoon care operation at Pownal Elementary School. This program is for 3-5-year-olds, and intended to complement the morning Pre-K beginning at PES in 2020-21.

Camp Seaside, our traditional summertime camp for K-5 students, has been retooled in an effort to recapture its roots. We’ll be getting back to nature and engaging in more outside activities, all with the theme of Explore Your Own Backyard. I’m looking forward to a fun and more educational environment for our summer campers.

The Joan Benoit Samuelson Track & Field will be hopping this summer with an awesome recreational track program for young athletes up through their middle school years.

Our teen programming is increasingly vibrant, with innovative and fun activities during the school year and over the summer months. If you have a teen or tween who could benefit from some activity and creative interaction, take a good look at our Teen Treks and PORT Teen Center offerings.

For adults we’re offering a wide array of enrichment and Lifelong Learning opportunities -- lots of established annual standards and a full range of brand new classes alike. There are far too many to list here, so go to the catalog to see all the great, fun things that you can do and learn.

Our Learning Lab is always welcoming new adult learners. We’re ready to work with those looking to earn their high school equivalency degree or to benefit from an advisor on accessing college or career opportunities; we also offer English classes for New Mainers who seek to improve their language skills and/or more fully acclimate to life in Maine. If you or someone you know could benefit from these services, please help them connect with us.

You need to get out there! This season we have more than a dozen trips for you to enjoy. There are amazing places to explore right here in Maine, like Malaga Island, the world of the Wyeth artists, Boothbay & Cabbage Island, Eagle Island, Mount Katahdin, Baxter State Park, and Acadia National Park. And for those looking for adventure in more far-flung locations, we also have trips to Iceland, Germany, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton Island. Our trips have received rave reviews.

Our friendly Community Programs’ staff is committed to serving residents of all ages from Durham, Freeport, and Pownal. We sincerely hope to have you join us in one of our many programs, and we value your input, ideas, and feedback. Be in touch with us at 207-865-6171 or rce@rsu5.org, or find us online at rsu5cp.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

For a better community,
Peter Wagner, Director of Community Programs
Data Privacy and Phishing (Pharming)
Jim Grant, Technology Director

Data is valuable and is considered a currency of the 21st Century. Often, we are not even aware how much data is being collected and being used by companies offering us "free" services. When you agree to a new device, like a voice controlled blender, you are most likely giving the manufacturer and others access to some of your personal data. They will use this information to plan how to be more profitable and what items to advertise to you and people in your demographic. This is all legal.

However, there are also nefarious people out there trying to trick you into gaining your information or to cover their illegal activities. At one time a "virus" would be used, but it's easier to use tricks to gain the information. The term is Phishing and is a play on fishing. Like fishing, the angler drops a hook and a fish takes the bait. Phishing is when a targeted victim is contacted by someone posing as legitimate to lure the individual into providing sensitive data such as personal information and passwords. The most common way of phishing is by email, where an illegitimate email is sent looking like it's from a coworker. The second is Pharming, where a website looks legitimate, but isn't. The only defense is your knowledge.

There are ways to protect yourself. Look at the email header for additional information. Confirm the names are spelled correctly and the addresses looks correct. Often spoofers will misspell words or send them from other domains such as such as name@yaho.cn, instead of name@yahoo.com.

Be Wary of Pop-Ups! Pop-up windows often masquerade as legitimate components of a website. All too often they are phishing attempts. Many popular browsers allow you to block pop-ups; you can allow them on a case-by-case basis. If one manages to slip through the cracks, don't click on the “cancel” button; such buttons often lead to pharming sites. Instead, click the small “x” in the upper corner of the window.

Think Before You Click! It's fine to click on the links when you're on trusted sites. Clicking on the links that appear in random emails and instant messages that you are unfamiliar with could be dangerous. Hover over links that you are unsure of before clicking on them. The address is usually displayed that the link will take you to. Do they lead where they are supposed to lead? A phishing email may claim to be from a legitimate company and when you click the link to the website, it may look exactly like the real website. The email may ask you to fill in the information, but the email may not contain your name. Most phishing emails will start with “Dear Customer” so you should be alert when you come across these emails. When in doubt, go directly to the source rather than clicking a potentially dangerous link.

Make the call if you're not sure. Don't click links or respond to any emails that request personal or financial information. If you are unsure, pick up the phone and call them using a known number, not the one in the email. Even though a link or phone number in an email may look legitimate, scammers can hide the true destination. Make it a habit to check the address of the website. A secure website always starts with "https" and there should be a closed lock icon near the address bar.

The earlier a compromise is detected, the less damage is done. Reach out as quickly as possible to fix the breach. If you have questions or would like to talk to a tech, RSU 5 offers walk in sessions at Freeport High School’s cafeteria every Tuesday from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Thank you for taking the time to help protect data. Here are some good sites for further information:

www.phishing.org   www.consumer.ftc.gov