Happenings in RSU5
By Dr. Becky Foley, Superintendent

Fall is definitely here, and I see evidence of the joy of learning that is occurring across the District as students settle into the routines of school. Our five year strategic plan is finalized and adopted and is a very ambitious plan. We have broken it down by year and for this current year we will focus on:

• Identifying current practices to support our students with their social/emotional development systems. Once that is completed, we will identify gaps and/or needed improvements and explore options for filling those gaps. This goal may have a budget impact when building next year’s budget.

• Providing strong support for professional practices that foster collaboration and staff voice, and strengthening instruction to meet the needs of all learners. We are committed to ensuring that professional development is useful for all participants.

• Establishing formalized systems for annual identification of goals for the improvement of student achievement. This goal is to ensure that data is reviewed on a regular basis, and that the data is focused on improving student achievement.

• Expanding avenues used to proactively distribute information about RSU5 schools and seeking feedback from stakeholders about the usefulness of the communication.

• Reviewing and updating the existing capital improvement plan to ensure that all of our facilities are creating optimal learning environments for students.

• Attracting and retaining highly effective staff. We will be negotiating the support staff contract this year. Additionally, we will continue to look for ways to improve protocols for required trainings and additional ways to strengthen our new teacher induction and mentoring programs.

• Assessing current bus runs, and exploring options to provide transportation for all curricular and extra-curricular programs. This may also have a budget impact for the upcoming budget year.

We believe with the completion of each of these goals, it will strengthen the learning for all of our students.
RSU5 Core Learning Beliefs

1. All students are capable of learning and achieving personal success.

2. Students learn in different ways, in different settings, and at different rates for different futures.

3. Relationships are foundational to teaching and learning.

4. Students’ social, emotional and physical well-being are essential parts of their development.

5. Students learn best when learning is meaningful and engaging.

6. Learning is messy; it involves goal setting, taking risks, making mistakes, and reflecting on feedback.

7. Learning is a partnership with families, a community-wide endeavor, and a shared responsibility.

One of our core learning beliefs is that learning is a partnership with families, a community-wide endeavor, and a shared responsibility. We have many recent examples of this in RSU5.

This fall we partnered with Ocean Passages. This partnership resulted in nine of our Freeport High School students voyaging out to sea for five days. “I’ve never been outside this much in my life,” was one of the reflections from a student sailing on the schooner Harvey Gamage, a 131-foot sailing school. During this trip, students learned how to be out of their comfort zone, electronic-free, and fully engaged. The students actively participated in the tasks required to run a ship 24 hours a day. They triangulated their location, acquired and used sailing terminology, tied knots, hoisted and furled sails, read gauges, washed dishes, cleaned the decks and “bowls” (toilets), and staffed the night watch. Students quickly learned how to pull together as a team. A student articulately reflected, “I feel like we are one, and even though many of us may not admit it, this trip has been an eye-opener in many ways.”
This fall we partnered with L.L.Bean to provide our high school students an outdoor learning experience that promoted team building, fostered collaboration, and built better communication skills. For one day, each class chose from a variety of outdoor learning experiences including kayaking, paddle boarding, orienteering, or navigating a ropes course.

With some of our youngest learners, we have community members join them at lunch to interact and model appropriate lunchroom behavior. The police chief of Freeport, Sue Nourse, even joins in on many of these Fridays at Morse Street Elementary. What a wonderful way to create a positive relationship with law enforcement at a very young age!

Our students have rallied to partner with all stakeholders in supporting one of their teammates. The football team has started a fundraiser to help one family fix their home who have been without heat/hot water for a year. This is a great example of our students understanding the power of partnerships and that together we are stronger. [https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/sports/freeport-high-school-football-team-helps-one-of-its-own/97-391d5123-ab1e-4b6e-bec6-71e8fa2408c0](https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/sports/freeport-high-school-football-team-helps-one-of-its-own/97-391d5123-ab1e-4b6e-bec6-71e8fa2408c0)

Mentoring programs are another example of effective partnering. Dede Bennell and Peter Wagner have created a mentoring program at the high school that supports many of our students by connecting them with an adult mentor. If you are interested in being a mentor, please contact Dede Bennell @ bennellld@rsu5.org.

When learning is a partnership, it works to reduce student failures and increase successes, ensuring that our students have the needed resources to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. The communal mindset that all of our children deserve success benefits individual students, and benefits our community. We know that better partnerships with parents and community members will result in stronger student learning.

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**Curriculum Updates**

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

**New Laws Impacting Students**

Last spring, the legislative session was a long one with a record high number of bills that potentially impact education. Two laws may be of special interest to parents. The first law pertains to child immunizations and the second pertains to improving school attendance.

**An Act to Protect Maine Children and Students from Preventable Diseases by Repealing Certain Exemptions from the Laws Governing Immunization Requirements**

Maine is one of three states in the country that eliminated the religious and/or philosophical exemptions from immunizations for students. Beginning on September 1, 2021, schools may not permit a student to enroll in school without a certificate of immunization. The only exception is for students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and a religious or philosophical exemption on file as of September 1, 2021.

As always, medical exemptions for not being immunized are allowed. The law also expands who can provide a note regarding the medical exemptions. Physician’s assistants and nurse practitioners are now
included along with licensed physicians. This part of the law was due to take effect last month on September 19, 2019.

At this moment, there exists a People’s Veto Effort to bring this issue back to the voters. As a result, both parts of the law are now stayed from taking effect, pending certification of the required number of valid signatures by the Secretary of State. If the petition is certified by the Secretary of State, the issue will go before voters on March 3, 2020.

An Act to Improve Attendance at Public Elementary Schools
This law expands attendance requirements to include students who are aged 5 and 6 years old and who are enrolled in our public day school. These students now fall under our attendance and truancy policies.

There is research to show that kindergartners who miss large amounts of school struggle when compared to their peers later on in education. Chronic absence, defined as missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason - including excused and unexcused absences, is typically higher in kindergarten than in any other elementary grade. Nationally, an estimated one out of ten students are chronically absent in kindergarten and grade 1. Using this definition, students who are chronically absent miss up to a month or more of instruction in a school year thus potentially leaving educational gaps.

RSU5 has an active Dropout Prevention Committee that meets regularly and has begun identifying indicators that put students at risk of dropping out of school. One of the top contributing indicators putting students at risk is inconsistent school attendance. Our schools are monitoring student attendance and are working on ways to help ensure that all of our students attend school on a daily basis.

Special Education Updates
By Bonnie Violette, Director of Instructional Support

Exploring Passions

Preparing students for the workforce is the goal of public education. Transition planning, based on career development theory outlined in the table below, progresses through stages of growth and change. Based on home and school experiences children in the early Growth Stage learn about their personal strengths and interests through imaginative play and interactions with others. As children enter adolescence in the later Growth Stage, they develop awareness of their personal values and abilities and begin to learn about different careers.

In the early Exploration Stage, adolescents begin more intensive career exploration from identifying their personal strengths and interests to the later Exploration Stage in which they explore careers that interest them.

Students with disabilities at Freeport High School begin a formal transition planning process in 9th grade which is documented in a transition plan in students’ individual educational programs (IEPs). The process begins with students completing transition assessments to help identify their areas of strengths and interests. The 9th grade year is filled with opportunities that lead to discoveries about self, peers, and community. Students engage in a variety of classroom activities that teach job skills. They learn that good workers ask questions and accept assistance from others, work collaboratively
with peers, show empathy, understand the elements of building relationships, advocate for themselves, mentor their peers, and take on leadership roles such as facilitating discussions in their classrooms. Students are encouraged to read about and experience different careers by talking with people who work in jobs they are interested in. Freeport High School sponsors a career day in which students meet with career professionals to explore the requirements and demands of different jobs. All of these experiences help our students explore careers that may be possibilities for them.

Community based experiences offer students a deeper delve into the work world. Students participate in activities that teach them real-world life skills. Some students volunteer at the Freeport Community Center and Midcoast Humane Society while others are learning job skills in local businesses like the local supermarket, restaurants, and fishing with local fishermen. These opportunities provide them with valuable experiences in which they learn skills to be successfully employed in a job setting. These skills are reinforced in the classroom and school setting. Being involved in the community offers business members an opportunity to get to know our students while students learn about local businesses.

Our students with disabilities are referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) where they are formally assessed to determine their job preferences and skills needed for various jobs. A DVR representative meets with each student individually and helps them find employment in the local area. Based on students’ needs, DVR will coordinate job tours, career exploration, and assist them to locate employment. In determining appropriate employment for a student with a disability, DVR capitalizes on students’ strengths and interests to find them a job where students will be successful and productive.

As we move our students from the elementary grades through high school, it is important to help them identify their strengths and interests. By experiencing a variety of meaningful opportunities, students learn about themselves and leads to making decisions about what they would like to do after high school.
### GROWTH STAGE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fantasy Stage</strong> (0–10 years)</td>
<td><em>Imagination and play themes revolve around work</em></td>
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| **Interest Stage** (11–12 years) | *Children form a healthy self-concept and become aware of their personal qualities*  
*Children become aware of and consider a variety of careers and learn about what workers do and about the value of work*  
*Children identify with a gender role and think of jobs in terms of gender*  
*Children develop positive attitudes that lead to competence, cooperation, and achievement* |
| **Capacity Stage** (13–14 years) | *Adolescents become aware of their own values and abilities*  
*Adolescents develop planning, decision-making, and problem-solving skills*  
*Adolescents recognize that not all jobs are the same, that there is a difference in requirements, duties, pay, and rewards among careers*  
*Adolescents realize that academic choices may affect their post-high school life*  
*Adolescents take on increased responsibility for making their own career-related decisions* |
| **Tentative Stage** (15–17 years) | *Adolescents become aware of their own aspirations*  
*Adolescents identify career options and set tentative goals*  
*Adolescents explore their tentative career options and goals* |
| **Transition Stage** (18–21 years) | *Young adults make a career choice*  
*Young adults learn skills needed for entry-level employment in their career of choice* |
| **Trial Stage** (22–24 years) | *Young adults follow through with obtaining a job in their career of choice* |

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**The Freeport, Pownal and Durham Education Foundation (FPaD5) is excited to invite you to our biggest fundraiser of the year- Fright Night at the Grange.** This is an adult-only Halloween Party boasting food, music and fun! So don your scariest/ funniest/ most original costume and get ready to have a great time- all while supporting educational excellence for students in RSU5!

**Where?** Freeport Harraseeket Grange  
**When?** Saturday, October 19, 6:30-11:00pm  
**What?** DJ, light fare (included in price of ticket), silent auction  
For tickets click on the following link:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 25, 2019</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date TBD @ Central Office</td>
<td>Leadership Meeting w/ Towns</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22, 2020</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Superintendent’s Recommended Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5, 2020</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>Budget Review: DCS, FMS, FHS, Athletics</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12, 2020</td>
<td>Budget Workshop</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Budget Review: MSS, PES, MLS, Inst. Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 26, 2020</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
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<td>Budget Review: Technology, CIA, Nutrition, Community Programs, Facilities &amp; Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 11, 2020</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>Review of FY 21 Superintendent’s Budget Board Deliberations on Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18, 2020</td>
<td>Budget Workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&amp;A with Individual Board Members regarding FY 21 Budget Review of FY 21 Superintendent’s Budget Public Input on Budget Board Deliberations on Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25, 2020</td>
<td>Business Meeting</td>
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<td>Adopt FY 21 School Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8, 2020 @ DCS Workshop</td>
<td>6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&amp;A on FY21 Board Adopted Budget Signing of Warrants for ABM &amp; Referendum</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29, 2020 @ PES Business Meeting</td>
<td>6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&amp;A on FY21 Board Adopted Budget</td>
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<td>May 13, 2020</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td>6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&amp;A on FY21 Board Adopted Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 27, 2020 @ DCS</td>
<td>Annual Budget Meeting</td>
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<td>June 9, 2020</td>
<td>Budget Validation Referendum</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10, 2020</td>
<td>Computation &amp; Declaration of Votes Assessment Warrants</td>
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