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Superintendent of Schools

**Jonathan D. Moody**  
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Support Services Manager

Date: 6-3-2020

Dear MSAD 54 Parents, Guardians, Students and Community,

It is with sincere gratitude that I write this letter to you as we close in on the end of the current school year which ends for students on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

It has been my sincere privilege to have served as your Superintendent of Schools over the past seventeen (17) years. Clearly, the past three months have been challenging and unprecedented regarding the issues that everyone has experienced and coped with as a community. We are focused on bringing the closure of school to an end as smoothly as possible, while recognizing how stressful this is for everyone. I want to personally thank everyone for their part in making this as smooth and as child centered a process as possible.

The 2019-20 school year, without question, will forever be marked by the coronavirus pandemic and the impacts it had not only to our schools, but our society. Almost overnight our schools were transformed. I could not be more proud of our staff, administrators, students and their families for their grace and resilience in the face of the changes thrust at them over these past few months. This pandemic has certainly provided us with challenges, but it has also shone a light on the strength and compassion of our communities.

Although we've come to the close of the school year, there is much work still to be done. As our communities and our State face potential future budget challenges, the MSAD 54 Board has again taken a fiscally conservative approach to our budget, putting forth a responsible final draft which both decreases spending from the previous fiscal year (-\$101,678) as well as reducing the local property tax burden by 1.28% (-\$182,073). With our budget comes planning for next year and the financial implications that state and national regulations will have on schools. As we are given more information we will leverage our state and federal funds to meet the challenges ahead in a way that ensures both a safe, and a high-quality education for our students.

It is our goal to be back in the Fall with our students and staff safely in our buildings moving forward in their learning. It is with this in mind that we will be taking the guidance from the Maine Department of Education and Maine CDC to develop a plan to safely start school on September 1<sup>st</sup>. This work is complex and ongoing and we expect new information to inform our planning throughout the months of June and July. Part of this process will include a parent survey to get feedback and insight on the past three months and thoughts regarding the year ahead. We will engage community stakeholders in

conversations and will utilize our website (<http://www.msad54.org/public>) and email system to distribute information on our progress over the summer.

In the next few days our building Principals will be sending home information on the close of school. With the budget process being pushed out into July, our students will likely not receive information on their class placement or teacher for the next school year until late in the summer. Although summer programming will be dramatically limited as a result of the guidelines provided by the DOE, we will be offering some summer instruction. Our Title I program will be offering remote learning for seven weeks during the summer, a credit-recovery summer program will be offered for students in grades 9-12, and we are again holding a few advanced courses over the summer including a dual-enrollment college psychology course and financial literacy. For some students formal summer school just doesn't make sense. We recognize that students are in need of a break and a return to the normalcy of summer. However, a benefit of the past few months is that the district has built out a considerable amount of resources on our online learning site: <http://bit.ly/msad54>. The site includes materials for students in grades K-12, and is a page I would encourage parents to access should they want to find resources for their child over the summer.

Our Meal Delivery program has been a tremendous success as the district has delivered over 340,000 meals to young people across our communities. This effort was made possible through waivers from the federal government which provided the funding, and because of the tremendous efforts of our food-service, transportation and support staffs. We will continue to deliver meals daily through next week and will move to a 3-day meal delivery schedule (M/W/F), for the last two weeks of June, ending on the 26<sup>th</sup>. After two well-deserved weeks off, the meals program will begin on-site meals for youth at locations in every town starting the second week of July (more info to follow on our website). Again, I can't say enough how proud I am of the collective effort of our staff to be sure the young people in our communities have food.

Finally, I wish to once again express my gratitude and sincerest thanks for all your support over the past 17 years as Superintendent of Schools. This is my last year as Superintendent in the District but I know that in spite of all the uncertainty and the many unknowns that you will get through these times together and with success.

I wish all of you the best in the upcoming months.

Respectfully,



Brent Colby  
Superintendent of Schools