

School Administrative Unit No. 7

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Dr. Debra Taylor

Superintendent of Schools

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July 15, 2020

Dear School Staff and Families:

On behalf of SAU # 7 and our member school districts, I hope you are off to a magnificent start to your summer. I am pleased to introduce myself as your new SAU # 7 Superintendent! I am honored to serve the schools and communities of Clarksville, Colebrook, Columbia, Pittsburg and Stewartstown. I have served as Superintendent for 12 years in nearby Vermont and am delighted to be working with the school board and our dedicated school community.

We want to update all on the work being done to plan for school reopening this fall.

First, our staff thanks our family partners for helping our students navigate this unprecedented event in recent memory. Likewise, I wish to thank all district employees for the great effort necessary to serve our families during the last four months. Finally, great credit goes to our students who completed a successful year through a true team effort.

We understand what a challenge this was for our whole school community. And yet, the task is not complete. As we see in the news, conditions worldwide require a flexible approach to learning for the school year 2020-2021. Given our accomplishments last spring, we are confident that we can provide the model to meet the need.

In the last school year, our staff and school community came together to support our students in remote learning after school districts around the state and the nation closed down in March. As we move into the 2020-21 school year, we are engaging in planning and preparation for the upcoming school year.

Our leadership team is overseeing our fall school reopening planning. We have begun to review research and planning tools from a large variety of sources; in-state, nationally, and abroad. Five workgroups addressing detailed aspects of school planning have convened. These workgroups include teachers, support personnel, district and school administrators, and our nursing staff. Our initial goal is to inform our practices to respond well to the various circumstances that we might see this fall.

We could face three types of settings, depending on the state's progress through the summer: that all students will be in our buildings; that all students might have to learn remotely again; or some hybrid form of those two extremes.

Thus, we considered those settings applied to broad categories of school functions. To ensure our plan is thorough and reflective of our school context, a variety of stakeholders from our school community came together in early July to form five work groups. Each will represent a different function in our schools: 1) Facilities and Health, 2) Finance, Policy and Communication, 3) Logistics, 4) Social Emotional Learning, 5) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Mission Statement

To prepare all SAU #7 students for success in whatever path they choose.

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There is also an oversight committee that includes representatives from these work groups to coordinate the efforts of all teams. The goal of this work will be to consider a variety of scenarios and to develop recommendations for how to best educate our children in the fall.

Recent guidance from Governor Sununu, the Department of Education and the Department of Health advise our process. That most recent document is on the DOE's website, (<https://tinyurl.com/NH-DOE-Covid-19>).

As we prepare for school to resume in the fall, we will continue to prioritize the safety of our children, staff and families, consider what the data is telling us, listen to experts, and follow guidelines. New Hampshire communities like ours will develop their own flexible plans for the opening of schools. In order to provide our students with access to career and technical education programs, we will continue our regional collaboration with area school districts.

While there are questions right now, about what school will look like in the fall, we are working diligently to develop our dynamic plan. We encourage our families to be alert for updates accessed through our website (<http://www.sau7.org>).

Please rest assured that we are moving forward in planning. As specifics become finalized with the help of state guidance, we will communicate all to our families.

I have great faith that our school community will come together and do what is best for our children as we plan and collaborate to create a successful learning year for our students.

Thanks to all, and please enjoy a healthy summer!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debra Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debra" and last name "Taylor" clearly legible.

Debra Taylor, Ph.D.
Superintendent