

White Mountains School Administrative Unit # 35
BETHLEHEM ❖ LAFAYETTE ❖ LANDAFF ❖ LISBON ❖ PROFILE



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TEL (603) 444-3925/3001 262 Cottage Street, Suite 301 ◊ Littleton, New Hampshire ◊ 03561 FAX (603) 444-6299

July 23, 2020

Greetings SAU #35 Families and Staff,

I hope all of you are enjoying this beautiful New Hampshire summer and are taking time for yourselves to enjoy all that this wonderful state has to offer. There is a serenity and warmth here that is difficult to replicate anywhere else.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Interim Superintendent for the 2020-2021 school year. I am very excited to be given this opportunity to lead five such outstanding school districts. In my first couple of weeks here, I have heard and seen great things happening in all of our schools.

But as mid-summer is upon us, I recognize that there is a concern about how the directive to reopen schools is going to unfold. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted our world and nation. It has dominated our conversations, media, future planning, and has affected our daily living.

On July 14th, we received the long awaited guidance from the Governor ([NH Back-to-School Guidance](#)) that offers some guidance and flexibility with school reopening plans and now we are thoughtfully in the planning stages for the opening of the 2020/2021 school year. School teams, comprised of staff, parents, board members, community health leaders and more, are now planning face-to-face, hybrid (if it might make sense) and remote learning models for the school day complying with the recommended social distancing, use of face masks,

handwashing, and sanitizing of school space. Once complete, our respective School Boards will decide which model will be used for schools opening in the fall.

I recognize that there are many questions that do not yet have answers and we want things to be certain in a time where there is little certainty. These concerns are also often heightened by social media posts around plans for reopening in other states and individuals expressing understandable concern for personal safety. Every state is governed by a different set of laws. Reopening guidelines in other states are not necessarily relevant to us. And further still, how we reopen schools might look different than a district like Manchester or Nashua, whose student population is far greater and less easy to safely accommodate in all buildings. This is not the case for SAU #35. We feel we can safely accommodate students and staff given our small schools and ample spaces.

Our decisions have to be driven by public health guidance, our demographics and a need to continue to remain flexible in our responses to changing conditions. We are experiencing and living in an unprecedented time. The need for planning, flexibility, and contingencies with changing circumstances is critical. I know that we will be able to work through any model of the school day as long as we do it thoughtfully and continue to communicate.

An initial plan will be shared with boards, staff and families in early to mid-August. We will all do our best to answer your questions and wonderings as we progress through this work, aiming to provide you with the comfort and confidence you need in our plans designed to best serve and care for all families and staff.

Warmest regards,

Tari N. Thomas

Tari N. Thomas



Search Supt Thomas of SAU 35....regular posts starting soon!



@supt_thomas

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