



AUGUSTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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James Anastasio, M.A.
Superintendent

August 12, 2021

Katherine Grondin, CAS
Assistant Superintendent

Dear Parents and Students:

Kathy Casparius,
M.B.A., M.C.T.E.
Business Manager

I hope all of you are enjoying the last weeks of summer! There are a couple of important changes the school department is making in response to the latest CDC recommendations and in response to the potential impact of the pandemic on student learning as we prepare to open schools in September.

Shelby Thibodeau, M.A.
Director of Special
Education

The School Board voted to **add additional early release days to the 2021-2022 school calendar**. Faculty and staff will utilize the additional professional development time to address students' learning needs. All early release Wednesdays will take place during weeks when there are five days of school. The first early release Wednesday will be September 15. Cony Middle School/High School will dismiss at noon and the elementary schools will dismiss at 1:00. The updated calendar can be located on the district's website and Facebook page. We appreciate families supporting this critical need for our staff. Staff will be engaged in the following on early release Wednesdays:

Board of Education

Amanda Olson
Board Chair
Staci Fortunato
Ward 1
Martha Witham
Ward 2
Vacant
Ward 3
Kati McCormick
Ward 4
Pia Holmes
At Large
Jennifer Dumond
At Large
Kevin Lamoreau
At Large
Kimberly Martin
At Large

- *Discuss student data*: look at trends, develop proactive teaching and support strategies.
- *Discuss teacher work*: assessments and critical feedback and recommendations for improvement.
- *Discuss student work*: analyze assignments, get feedback and recommendations on how lessons or teaching approaches maybe modified to improve learning.
- *Implement curriculum*: collaboratively work on lessons and interventions that will better target student needs.

In response to Governor Mills announcing that Maine will follow updated guidance from the U.S. CDC on face coverings, which recommends "all teachers, staff, and students in K-12 schools wear face coverings, regardless of vaccination status or community transmission level", **the Augusta School Department is requiring all staff, students, and visitors wear mask covering when inside the school buildings.**

In addition, we continue to prepare for School Based Pool Testing for COVID 19. Pool testing will provide another tool that maybe utilized, when appropriate, in addition to masking to minimize the impact of Covid in the ASD. Schools need to stay open, students need to attend, and staff members need to be at school to support students and each other. Pool testing maybe initiated if Covid begins to have an unacceptable impact on the ASD's ability to provide the education that students deserve.

It is extremely important if pool testing is initiated that your child participate to reduce the potential impact of COVID on everyone in school and to help create and maintain a safer environment for students, staff, and visitors. **For the school department to be able to implement pool testing, if desired, at least 30% of students and staff in each school must participate in the program.** More information regarding the testing process and associated benefits is posted on the school department and school web pages.

If you have not yet consented to your child participating, here is how to get started; please fill out the consent form with your permission to perform a COVID-19 pooled test for your student. This process should take no more than 5 minutes to complete using a computer or a smartphone.

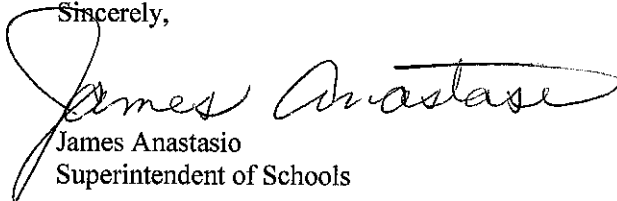
1. First, click here (<https://testcenter.concentricbyginkgo.com/minor-consent>).
2. Then, enter this access code (not case sensitive) for the school your child attends:
 - a. Cony Middle/High School: CONYRAMS
 - b. Farrington Elementary: FARRINGTON
 - c. Sylvio Gilbert Elementary: GILBERT
 - d. Lillian P Hussey Elementary: HUSSEY
 - e. Lincoln Elementary: LINCOLN
3. Finally, enter your child's information, and you are done!

Note: If you need to provide consent for more than one child, please complete the process separately for each child.

Please complete the online consent form or return the paper consent form, which can be located on our website to your child's school by September 10, 2021. If you have questions, feel free to contact your school's principal or nurse.

The school department appreciates your continued support, patience and understanding as we work hard to keep everyone safe while providing a high quality education for all students.

Sincerely,



James Anastasio
Superintendent of Schools