

Superintendent Report
Region One Schools
September 2021

Happy Start of the School Year!

Starting the School Year - The school year is off to a good start, full of positive energy and enthusiasm! Teachers and students are happy to be back in classroom settings that are looking more like pre-pandemic arrangements. Administrators, teachers and support staff have worked hard to create welcoming environments and remain aware of the need to support students' social and emotional well-being especially for those students who were distance learners for the entire year in 2020-2021.

An “unofficial” enrollment count is noted on the table below. I will provide the official “black line” count in my October report, which will include a comparison to previous years.

School	Total Students 2021-2022 (as of 8/30/21)	New Students (Includes incoming PK/K students)
Cornwall	107	20
HVRHS	346	28
Kellogg	74	14
Kent	213	54
North Canaan	234	37
Salisbury	303	49
Sharon	97	17

COVID-19 Update

- **Positive Cases and Communication** - Based on discussions with the Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) staff, there have been several cases of COVID-19 in its catchment area schools since the start of the school year. In Region 1, we were made aware of a few positive cases, just before the start of the school year; however, we did not begin to formally track cases until the first day of school for students. I will continue to send letters to inform families of the cases in each Region 1 member district as well as a summary of the cases for all families in the Region. I will also continue to publish the table that summarizes cases each month in my BOE reports.

On Friday, September 2, [this linked letter](#) was sent to all Region 1 families to help them understand the changes to contact tracking and quarantining based on vaccination status. The letter also alerts families about the addition of two mental health days available to all students during the school year. These days have been added as a possible excused absence according to

Public Act 21-46: *An Act Concerning Social Equity and the Health, Safety, and Education of Children*. The days may be taken any time during the school year, but cannot be taken consecutively.

- **Vaccination Mandate**- All “covered workers” have received a questionnaire requesting their vaccination status in preparation for the September 27th deadline. By this date, according to Executive Order No.13, all “covered workers” must be fully vaccinated, prove that they are in the process of becoming fully vaccinated, or apply for an exemption. CSDE and CT DPH have indicated that they will provide guidance with regard to the creation of application documents that support exemptions (medical and religious) as well as vaccination refusal. These documents will note the need for weekly mandated testing that accompanies vaccination exemption.

Superintendents have been advised by attorneys to not provide percentages with respect to numbers of staff who are vaccinated in our schools; however, I can report that Region 1 is highly compliant with State expectations.

Finally, after September 27, 2021, Boards of Education in Connecticut may not hire any individual (as a new employee) who refuses to become fully vaccinated.

- **Vaccination Clinics** - To date, we have hosted two first-dose COVID-19 vaccination clinics (August 12 & 19) and one second-dose clinic (September 2). The second second-dose clinic will be held on September 9. 120 individuals participated will have been fully vaccinated as a result of standing these clinics in our area. Tina and I are working with Griffin Healthcare (the clinic provider) to organize additional clinics for the fall. These clinics will be available to unvaccinated individuals as well as to those vaccinated individuals who need booster shots (when they are approved).
- **COVID -19 Screening Tests** - Per my earlier communications with BOEs, Region 1 Pre-k-8 schools will have access to COVID-19 screening, using PCR testing, for the 2021-2022 school year. According to CSDE and CT DPH, we will be partnering with Quest laboratories for this activity. I am waiting to be contacted by the Quest lab to arrange a screening schedule that will work on a weekly basis for all of our schools. We are hoping to start the testing later this month. I will be communicating with the administrative team and families as soon as we have additional information.

As you know from my earlier communication, parent consent is required in order for a student to be tested. We surveyed parents to understand how many students would be participating in this activity. Based on the responses we received, there are sufficient numbers of families who are willing to be tested to warrant that we follow this screening protocol in our schools.

Faculty Association Memorandum of Understanding - After a meeting with the Region 1 Faculty Associations, a draft of an MOU, has been created to reflect the concerns raised during that discussion as follows:

- Absence management due to quarantine
- Vaccination mandate requirements
- Distance learning guidelines (should this become necessary at any point in the year)

I will work with all Region 1 Boards of Education, Administrators and Faculty Associations to come to consensus on a final working agreement for the 2021-2022 school year.

Legislation - The linked document is a [preliminary draft of legislation](#) impact on CT Schools I will highlight the legislation that has the greatest impact on Region 1 at BOE meetings. You will notice that several of the bills address the impact that COVID-19 has had on students and they provide guidelines with respect to addressing social and emotional issues.

Policy Updates - CAFE has furnished CT BOEs with a number of new policies as a result of the new legislation drafted last spring and the vaccination mandate. I will be working with the Region 1 Policy Committee as well as member district policy committees to review these policies and help them adopt what is appropriate for each school in Region 1.