

## East Millinocket School Committee to Delay In-Person Instruction:

### Rationale:

On Tuesday, August 25, 2020, the East Millinocket School Committee voted unanimously to delay the start of in-person instruction for students at Opal Myrick and Schenck High School. They also approved a change in the school calendar so that students will not begin remote instruction until September 14<sup>th</sup>. Elementary students will begin school with online and remote instruction for the first two weeks and return to in-person instruction on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Schenck High School students will also begin remote instruction on September 14<sup>th</sup> and return for in-person instruction on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Students enrolled in Region III programs will also engage in online learning until October 5<sup>th</sup>. More information concerning remote learning and the start of in-person will be mailed to each parent by the week of September 8<sup>th</sup>. The School Committee made this decision for the following reasons:

1. The recent pandemic in the Katahdin Region has adversely impacted students and staff at both Opal Myrick and Schenck High Schools. Several teachers, staff members, and two administrators have tested positive to this point. In addition, at least two high school students have tested positive.
2. Numerous staff members have been ordered to test and quarantine for ten days to two weeks because of expected exposure to people infected with Covid 19.
3. Currently, a group of Schenck High School students have been ordered to quarantine and test due to possible exposure.
4. CDC has yet to provide information that Covid 19 has flatlined in the Katahdin Region. The investigation is still ongoing at this time and more testing could be ordered.
5. CDC ordered the physical plants of Schenck High School and Opal Myrick closed due to infection on Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. They also ordered a thorough “deep cleaning” of both schools, which was recently completed.
6. Because of the ongoing virus and the need to protect the safety of all staff and students, East Millinocket decided to err on the side of safety and delay in-person instruction until we gather more information from CDC that the immediate threat has passed in the Katahdin Region and cases have flatlined and are going down. In addition, a delay will ensure that we receive all the PPE necessary to begin in person instruction safely.
7. A delay of only two weeks will allow our staff to complete mandatory quarantines, obtain all test results, and prepare for enhanced online instructional capabilities. Should we have to shut our school down in the future, our students and staff will be in a much better position to take advantage of online platforms.
8. Our Board takes its obligation to protect all its charges very seriously and believes that by delaying in-person instruction for a modest two weeks, we can offer a greater degree of safety for both staff and students, especially in light of the recent outbreak in our area.

**Please continue to refer to our website for more information and updated plans.**