

# Superintendent's Community Newsletter

To inspire and support every learner by challenging minds, building character, sparking creativity, and nurturing passions.

## Happenings in RSU5

Jean Skorapa, Superintendent

### Strategic Planning Process Being Launched!

RSU5 is set to launch a comprehensive and inclusive process to update and further develop a five-year strategic plan that will chart the course for our district's work for the next five years. This highly collaborative initiative will shape the vision for our district by taking inventory of our strengths, our challenges, and our hopes and dreams for our students for the future. There will be multiple opportunities for wide stakeholder engagement from staff, students, families, and community members.

A Strategic Planning Process Advisory Committee composed of representatives from different stakeholder groups from our community has been assembled to work collaboratively with our process facilitators, Great Schools Partnership, to develop a plan based on the needs and aspirations identified by the RSU5 community. Committee members include:

David Jensen, Parent/Community Member Durham  
Caitlin Loveitt, Parent/Community Member, Freeport  
Liz Dolci, Parent/Community Member, Pownal  
Isabella George, Student, Freeport High School  
Halie Goodspeed, Teacher, Freeport High School  
Jennifer Winkler, Teacher, Pownal Elementary School  
Kara Kaikini, RSU5 Board of Directors  
Kelly Sink, RSU5 Board of Directors  
Emily Grimm, Principal, Mast Landing School  
Amy St.Pierre, Principal, Freeport Middle School  
Elisha Morris, Director of Instructional Support  
Cynthia Alexander, Assistant Superintendent  
Jean Skorapa, Superintendent



Your engagement and feedback is vital to this inclusive process. We are very excited to begin this collaborative work!

## Budget Development is Underway

We are in the process of developing a budget for 2025-2026 that will allow us to continue to provide a high quality education and move our district forward, while at the same time being fiscally responsible to the taxpayer. There will be several opportunities in the upcoming months for the public to provide feedback regarding the FY26 budget. Visit the RSU5 website at [www.rsu5.org/budget/budget-2025-2026](http://www.rsu5.org/budget/budget-2025-2026) in January for budget documents.

### FY26 RSU5 Budget Timeline

September 11, 2024	Budget Timeline to Board
December 4, 2024	Leadership Meeting w/ Towns
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January 22, 2025	Superintendent's Proposed Budget
February 5, 2025	Budget Review: MSS, PES, MLS, Inst. Support
February 12, 2025	Budget Review: DCS, FMS, FHS, Athletics
February 26, 2025	Budget Review: Region Ten, Technology, CIA, Nutrition, Community Programs, Facilities, Transportation
March 12, 2025	Review of FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget Board Deliberations on Budget
March 19, 2025	Review of FY26 Superintendent's Budget Public Input on Budget Board Deliberations on Budget
March 26, 2025	Public Input on Budget Adopt FY26 School Budget
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April 9, 2025 @ DCS	6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&A on FY26 Board Adopted Budget Signing of Warrants for ABM & Referendum
April 30, 2025 @ PES	6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&A on FY26 Board Adopted Budget
May 7, 2025	6:00-6:30 p.m. Q&A on FY26 Board Adopted Budget
May 14, 2025 @ DCS	Annual Budget Meeting (ABM) on the FY26 Budget Board Meeting
June 4, 2025	Budget Validation Referendum (BVR)
June 11, 2025	Computation & Declaration of Votes Assessment Warrants

## Why Attendance Matters

In a student's K-12 career, there are 2275 school days in which to receive the instruction and support required to prepare them to pursue their passion after high school graduation. In just 2275 school days, children progress from learning to identify letters and shapes to analyzing complex texts and testing hypotheses. There is so much to learn and so little time.

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overstated. Research from the U.S. Department of Education demonstrates that regular school attendance is a critical factor in academic achievement at all grade levels. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of the school year or 18 days, regardless if the absence is excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism, even as early as Kindergarten, correlates with reduced achievement in literacy and math that lasts for multiple years. In addition, there is a demonstrated negative impact on the social/emotional development of children who are regularly absent from school as they do not have an opportunity to learn how to play with peers. Sadly, at the middle and high school levels, chronic absenteeism is one of the strongest predictors that a student will fail to graduate on time or will drop out of school.

Research indicates that a positive school climate results in improved attendance. In a climate such as this, students feel comfortable at school and excited about learning. In RSU5, we are committed to ensuring that all students experience a joyful learning environment that is safe, nurturing, and fosters curiosity. We encourage all families who are experiencing difficulty with regular attendance to contact the school to develop a plan of support. We are standing by to help.

## Curriculum Updates

Cynthia Alexander, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

### Science Curriculum and Instruction

We are excited to share that we are making updates to our science curriculum, which is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These enhancements are designed to foster a more engaging and effective learning environment for our students, ensuring they develop critical scientific skills and knowledge.

Our work emphasizes three-dimensional learning, integrating core ideas, scientific practices, and crosscutting concepts. Our focus is on Phenomena answering the question, "What is happening in the world that we need our science to explain?" This approach not only prepares students for advanced studies but also equips them with the tools to tackle real-world challenges.



**Professional Development Opportunities/Timeline for Implementation**

To support our educators in implementing updates, we began offering a series of onsite professional development opportunities beginning in the 2023-2024 school year in grades 3-6 and at high school level. These sessions will continue in the 2024-2025 school year providing teachers with the necessary training and resources.

**Feedback and Collaboration**

These updates will enhance our students' learning experiences and inspire a lifelong love of science. It will also better align the curriculum and instruction with the State science assessment given in grade 5, 8, and 11.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the students of RSU5.

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**Instructional Support Updates**

Elisha Morris, Director of Instructional Support

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**Understanding the Special Education Referral Process  
Child Find & Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports**

The process of identifying and supporting students with disabilities begins with Child Find, a legal requirement for schools to identify, locate, and evaluate children who may have disabilities and need special education services. The goal of Child Find is to ensure that every child receives the support they need to succeed academically and socially, starting as early as possible. If you have concerns about your child's development or academic progress, it's important to know that the school is required to make efforts to identify and assess any child who may have a disability.

Prior to referring students for special education services, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is typically implemented at the building level. MTSS is a framework that provides interventions and support for all students, including those who may have disabilities. MTSS uses a tiered approach to help students at varying levels of need, starting with general classroom interventions and progressively providing more targeted support. If a student continues to struggle despite interventions at the universal and targeted levels, a referral for a special education evaluation may be made.

If you have concerns about your child's educational needs, remember that you have the right to initiate a referral for special education services. Our schools are here to work together with families to provide the best possible support for every student.