BRUNSWICK SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

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Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, Staff and Community Members,

It is my understanding that the groundhog has predicted an early spring but those of us who live in Maine know that snow can arrive in the blink of an eye. As we head into the second half of the school year we continue to juggle a number of projects and initiatives.

On Saturday, January 23 the School Board held a public forum on four options concerning the Coffin Elementary School and BJHS facilities. We had about 100 people including the School Board and district staff. Information gathered from this forum is being tabulated by our facilitators from Good Group Decisions and will be analyzed by the School Board to determine what option is best to bring back to the Town Council. The four options include building a new elementary school on the Jordan Acres site; adding an addition to the current Coffin building and repairing both Coffin and BJHS; repairing both schools and adding a 12-unit portable unit to Coffin; and fixing both buildings through the Capital Improvement Plan process on an annual basis.

On February 1 we received news from the Maine Department of Education that we are eligible for $517,664 for Health, Safety and Compliance Repairs to Coffin and $1,000,000 for repairs to BJHS. The loans are through the state's Revolving Renovation Fund and 38.41% of the total loan is forgiven.

We have held four Sunday Suppers since the beginning of January both at Hawthorne School and the Perryman Drive Community Room. The first three suppers were sparsely attended as we were competing with Patriot football games, but this past Sunday we had 37-41 (depending on who was counting) adults and children. A very big thank-you to Mid Coast Hunger Prevention for partnering with the School Department to carry out this initiative. We will announce our February event in the coming days.

The School Department has embarked on a fundraising project to raise funds for summer school programs. We are selling hooded sweatshirts, long-sleeved tee shirts, and short-sleeved tee shirts labeled with "Support Public Education" on the front and back. Order forms may be found on the district websites as well as at Hawthorne School.

Coming in March the School Department will be partnering with the National School Climate Center to set in motion a school climate measurement to understand the specific strengths and needs to further the improvement efforts of our schools. The Comprehensive School Climate Inventory is a multi-dimensional needs assessment that provides feedback on how staff, parents, and students perceive the school environment.

Additional projects and mandates that the School Department is currently involved with include the School Board's Strategic Planning Initiative. Public forums were held throughout the fall to gather data on the School Department's programming and ideas for a comprehensive outline and direction over the next 5-10 years. Further committee meetings will be held to analyze the data for the development of the Strategic Plan document.

State mandates include the pilot year of a new teacher/principal evaluation document. The Evaluation Committee continues to meet and review feedback from the pilot process. The state recently extended our ability to pilot the new evaluation document through 2017.

Option 6 is another mandate that we are working on which encompasses work on standards of learning, a new student report card system in grades 6-12, and proficiency diplomas. We have three committees of educators that have been working on the transition over the past two years. We are required to award our first proficiency diplomas in 2021. This spring the Communications Committee will be holding public meetings to inform you of our progress to date, and work left to be done. If you are interested in learning about how standards based education was formulated and the private corporations behind it, please read "Reign of Error" by Diane Ravitch.

Thank you for your support of the Brunswick School Department during these curious and interesting times.

Sincerely,

Paul K Perzanoski

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Superintendent