

### Meeting SUMMARY:

We heard from the Long Island superintendent Barbra Powers, Jess Woods who works as a Guidance Counselor consultant across island schools, as well as Kathy Warren from the Department of Education. The takeaway message is that this year is incredibly hard on teachers who are trying to adapt to remote and in person teaching. A lot is being asked of them, but there are lots of resources. Kids and parents seemed happy with being back to school in whatever form that looks like at each school and the department of ed has TONS of resources.

We are hearing that more people came and stayed- so there was higher sustained population and not as much tourist businesses from day trippers or weeklong guests. Some traditional summer residents have even decided to stay on through the school year because they can work remotely in a way they never could before and because islands feel safer. This has boosted the population of several schools and municipalities are trying to get a sense of population numbers for the winter to make sure they can meet needs. Also heard that real estate is going wild. Houses that have been on the market forever are selling.

### Post-Meeting Update from Ingrid on the Cranberries:

If this were a normal school year, all of our towns enrolled students would be attending the Longfellow School on Great Cranberry, meaning the students from Islesford (Little Cranberry) would ride the ferry (aka the mailboat) each day. But this year the school board decided it was best to open both schools to prevent students commuting. The school can't dictate the cleanliness or disinfecting of what is considered public transportation or the enforcement of other passengers wearing masks. This decision will be revisited once Covid is no longer considered a health threat in our area. At that point, all the kids can go back to attending one school, together.

We have two teachers and an ed tech, which make this possible. Many people are so thankful our town decided a few years ago to renovate Longfellow and to continue to maintain both school buildings, without knowing a pandemic was in our future. I won't speak for our teachers and admin, because I know they've put in a lot of work to make the best of this situation for their students, but surely it was a huge benefit to have two school buildings ready to go with so little notice.

### Meeting Minutes

Donna and Roger - Welcome and introductions & Thank you for joining

Today's Topic - Education; Community Support for Schools

Special Guest - Kathy Warren -Maine Dept. of Education; Jessica Woods - guidance counselor; Yvonne and Robin from Island Institute Education Team; Douglas Cornman Seacoast Mission-

### Updates:

Chris Rector - Senator King's office; no updates happy to listen in

Douglas - Seacoast Mission - Boat back in the water; outreach and communication with communities about the process and procedures going forward

- One of the first trips will be getting flu shots to downeast and mid-coast islands; working with the CDC about how to do that safely
- Will continue the normal outreach visits through the winter months

#### Island Institute:

- Island Fellows Update - 8 fellows this year – keep this program in mind as you are thinking about projects and capacity needs in your communities
- Island Institute Education Team Update: - recent work with high school senior parents - helping to support parents, financial aid focus parent night in October
- Island Teachers Conference - October 8th - 9th all virtual this year. Open to anyone interested. <http://www.islandinstitute.org/event/2020-island-teachers-conference>
- Sessions Run 8:30 - 3:00; sessions will be recorded if people want to view after.
- Outer Island TLC - doing virtual event - to bring together the community and helping the students and teachers stay connected.

#### Today's Topic

Barb and Jess - what is has been like on the front lines in this start up

- Barbara - Long Island School; Started 9/1; have 16 kids (1/2 from GDI), 7 of 16 started remotely. Doing live stream to help with concerns about COVID and travel. Good HVAC - looking for ways to bring in more fresh air, be outside.
  - Teacher perspective - has been hard to get used to having students in person and online; some students moving back and forth from in person; makes it tough
  - In session in the morning; then read alouds, then back to teaching
  - Very intensive; not sure everyone understands how intensive it is
  - Speculation of how long they will be able to stay live
  - COVID precautions
    - Will have to close school for 14 days if a positive case
    - Got 13K in grant monies to support PPE, new dish washer
    - Some students have stayed that normally would not have
  - The difference between large school districts and working on Long is night and day. Has been working with superintendents from across Cumberland County
  - Have had the plan in their minds since June - this helped without having to do the scramble in August that many school have had to do

Kathy - Clear that the focus has been on stability - this is so key for the students, teachers, and community

Question -

- If you know numbers of enrollment changes that would be helpful to hear as well.

Jess Woods - Belfast, worked as an island school counselor - has worked across four different Island Schools, currently working with North Haven, Vinalhaven, working with Island Institute's education team.

- Things are changing minute to minute - this has been the biggest challenges for teachers, and school administrators.

- Working with students to find "COVID silver linings"
  - Teaching our kids to be flexible and adaptable
  - So nice to be back in school with kids - was really hard to not be around them for 6 months
  - Came back into the year after a summer of planning - really a lack of down time.
  - Island Schools - buildings small on purpose; classrooms small - numbers increasing causing some last minute scrambling to provide the appropriate spacing for the students.
  - Kids have risen to the challenge - handling it so much better than could have imagined. They are so glad to be back
- Challenges:
  - People in person, with students also remote
    - If can ask for anything - grace and patience from parents and community members
  - In many ways the job has doubled - Islesboro just announces they are moving to hybrid.
  - Having to prep in double and triple ways they haven't had to be there before
  - Looking for patience, understanding -
  - So lucky that everyone is healthy - and knowing that we need to stay healthy and what that takes
  - Shortage of teachers, substitutes, and bus drivers statewide
  - Helping students to plan for life after high school -
    - Allowing them to grieve what they have lost
    - Help them to think about how it will end
- Bowdoin Island Schools Partnership
  - Expressing gratitude to the students who are willing to go into education right now.
- Overall feeling cautiously optimistic - island schools may be better positioned than others

Barbra

- Guidance counselor role is so critical right now.
- Counselor on long is reaching out directly to each family
- On teacher stress - teaching completely in public right now - adult eyes on it all the time

Kathy Warren: Maine Dept. of Education

MDOE Website - <https://www.maine.gov/doe/home>

Framework Intro Page - <https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework>

Resources for Schools - <https://www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19/>

Resources for Parents - <https://www.maine.gov/doe/continuityoflearning/parent>

- Island communities have some positives that others do not
  - Respect for staying healthy
  - Knowing the students, families, able to connect

- COVID silver lining - an opportunity to get a clue about what is actually happening in education - the hard work it takes to make it work
- Resources to share
  - [Maine.gov/doe/framework](https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework)
  - Return to school: Framework for Returning to Schools and In-person instruction
    - A working draft explaining what it took to open schools
    - Open to everyone to see and know what all the work that needs to be done to open schools
    - Main premise - decisions about how to do this needs to be made locally
      - State won't tell you what to do - But providing as much guidance as you can
  - Resources for Schools Page <https://www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19/>
    - Many many links from COVID Resources, to school nutrition, Special Education, curriculum development and support
  - COVID-19 Returning to School toolkit; videos and posters to support COVID information; tracking forms;
  - Resources for Parents: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/continuityoflearning/parent>
    - Help making lessons available
    - Virtual field trips, learning experiences
  - Continuity of Learning Resources - web resources to connect with every subject area
  - [Learnwithmoose.maine.gov](https://www.learnwithmoose.maine.gov)
    - Learning modules to use at home or with teachers; resources for every subject and grade level
- There is an overwhelming amount of information
  - A resource for teachers or parents who are feeling overwhelmed?
    - Call Kathy or DOE; for every part of school life there is someone here at DOE that represents that area
    - Contact people for the office hours - very responsive - a great place to start
    - [Katherine.warren@maine.gov](mailto:Katherine.warren@maine.gov)

Barbra: Assuming with upcoming storm days - can we go full remote and not have to count them as no-school days.

- Resources are really rich.
- Short sound bite from DOE - might be nice - "Storm Day Considerations" -

Another Resource:

- Developed directly in response to COVID - <https://www.communitylearningforme.org>
- Support for teachers, families, education organizations

- Home school population has also exploded - DOE has done a lot more outreach and support for that

Other ways the DOE has been responding

- Increases in tuition expenditures
- Unexpected increase in enrollment
- Unexpected COVID expenses can be asked about

Other Updates:

- Swans Island - 24 kids in person, 4 homeschooled, 1 remote. 2 are new from NYC - intention is to stay the year
  - School pop is down - 6 kids have left recently - which allowed the space in the school to allow full in person
  - MDI High school not in person yet. 15 high school students
- Jessica - From college admissions standpoint looking at the differences of how students are accessing education is so different; evaluating transcripts and guidance for how to report grades from last year and this year - something that everyone is having to deal with.
  - We are already concerned about our students who persist through graduation in college - want to start those conversations about ensuring students are prepared and ready for their college education
- The gamut from emotions from parents is unbelievable - Petitions to push all kids full time, vs parents keeping kids at home - especially at the high school level pressure to get going so kids don't miss a thing
- Beaver Island Michigan - School went back live Sept. 8; K-12 program, resident principal/super. All students. Able to support over 100 students. Have 55 this year. 11 more than last year - due to people staying in the community
  - Do have sports - soccer and volleyball.

The internet struggle for students, parents

- Really hope that as a state we can have a heavy lift to get this done
- Can have huge disparities
- DOE has resources to help here - hotspots etc. Feedback about how bad it is can be helpful

Our friend and PD Rep, Tom Keller, shared this map of "study from car" locations throughout our state. It has been updated as of 9/11/20. Distribute as needed!

<https://networkmaine.net/?p=480>

\*Note: Requires Google MyMaps to be enabled. Try incognito mode if the map isn't loading.

COVID Silver Lining

- University System in Maine did a great job working with high school students this fall - providing early access to college students for high school students.
  - Now that they are all online - island students can access them all now as well

- Colleges doing a lot more outreach; able to access info sessions, college visits, posting for all to see, virtual college tours (<https://www.youvisit.com>)
- Admissions officers able to virtual on campus visits getting access to admissions officers they have never happened before

**MIC Requests:**

- Donna - Swan's: Real estate sales are up - properties that have been on the market; people buying that have no history on the island - don't really know what is there, or what is not there
- Gabe VH: COVID team meets weekly and have been talking about the number of people staying on and people that have moved. Talking about it from an EMA and access perspective. Hard to have a true count. Putting out another every door direct mail asking people to respond. Asking who is here, for how long.

**Next Call**

Oct. 16th at 10:00AM

Joined by membership of the Great Lakes Islands Alliance - COVID impacts