



RSU23 MEMO

Superintendent's Monthly Update September 2026

A NOTE FROM MR. SUTTIE

A Great Start to a New School Year

The start of the 2026–2027 school year has been terrific, and it has been wonderful to see our students back in our schools. There is an energy and excitement that comes with the beginning of a new school year, and throughout RSU 23, that energy has been evident from the first day.

It is also clear that the systems we have worked so hard to build across our district, our buildings, and our classrooms are functioning at an extremely high level. From student transportation and the tremendous work of our maintenance and facilities teams, to food service, technology, classroom routines, and high-quality instruction, there has been an enormous amount happening behind the scenes to make these first weeks successful. Much of that work may not always be visible, but it is essential to creating schools where our students can learn, grow, and thrive.

Most importantly, our students have arrived ready to learn, reconnect with friends and teachers, and be part of their school communities. That does not happen by accident. It is the result of careful planning, preparation, teamwork, and an unwavering commitment to our students by everyone across RSU 23. I am incredibly grateful to our faculty, staff, administrators, and support teams for the work they have done to make such a strong start possible.

As we settle into the rhythm of the school year, we are enjoying all that September brings. Our fall athletic seasons are fully underway, giving our students opportunities to compete, build relationships, demonstrate school spirit, and represent RSU 23 with pride.

September also marks the beginning of the transition to a new season. The days are gradually becoming shorter, the leaves are beginning to change, and the familiar sights and traditions of autumn will return to our community. It is a wonderful time of year in Maine and an exciting time to be part of a school district.

At the same time, September carries a solemn significance for our nation. This year marked the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001. For many of our students, September 11 is a historical event they have learned about rather than an experience they personally remember. Yet the legacy of that day continues to shape our country and the world. As we remember the nearly 3,000 lives lost, the families and communities forever changed, and the extraordinary courage demonstrated by first responders and ordinary citizens, we are reminded of the importance of service, compassion, unity, and looking out for one another. These are lessons that remain as important today as they were 25 years ago.

As we begin this new school year, I am excited about what lies ahead for our students, our staff, and our entire RSU 23 community. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this such a terrific start. I am looking forward to all that we will accomplish together in the months ahead.



BACK TO SCHOOL

Educational Visioning Committee Begins Its Work

The RSU 23 Educational Visioning Committee composed of teachers, parents, community members, school board members, residents, administrators, and students, are meeting once a month from September through December to explore the educational possibilities and school configurations associated with our anticipated major school construction project. This facilitated process will guide our exploration of two consolidation options proposed to the Maine Department of Education, summarized below for context.

Loranger Memorial School was ranked third on the 2024-2025 Major Capital School Construction Program Final Priority List. With the first two projects on that list approved to proceed in 2025-2026, RSU 23 is next in the queue for state funded construction. While the timing of approval remains uncertain, we want to lay the groundwork now to be ready for this once in a generation opportunity.

By way of background, facility assessments conducted in 2011, 2015, and 2024, evaluated the condition of all three schools and informed long range facilities plans considering renovation, addition, replacement, and consolidation. Given the age, condition, and locations of the schools, the plan's focus has shifted toward consolidation, potentially replacing the two oldest schools or all three. Our application to the Maine Department of Education along with our long-range facilities plan identifies two primary options:

- Option 1: Consolidate and replace Jameson and Loranger into a single Pre-K–8 school. The high school would be renovated to incorporate satellite programming and district offices.
- Option 2: Consolidate and replace all three schools into a single Pre-K–12 school.

Both options incorporate new district offices, eliminating the use of portables and supporting overall efficiency and operations. The current school land parcels afford the opportunity for construction to take place on the existing site. These two options represent our primary starting point, but they are not the only possibilities, and part of the committee's work will be to explore whether other configurations should also be considered.

This process is being professionally facilitated by Dr. Franciszka (Fran) Locker, a nationally recognized expert in school visioning and 21st century learning environments. Fran has completed more than 275 educational planning projects in 17 countries, including over 30 in Maine, with nearby work in MSAD 60, Scarborough, and Cape Elizabeth. She was named Planner of the Year by the Association for Learning Environments, has led visioning processes for two MacConnell Award winners, the association's top honor for planning and facility design, and co-created and taught Harvard's Graduate School of Education course on learning environments. The committee has held its first of four full day sessions that will conclude in December.



It's been a great start to the year at LMS. Our halls are full again, and the energy that comes with a fresh school year is impossible to miss. We welcomed several new staff members this fall, including Hayley Baxter as our new School Secretary, who's settled right into the front office and been a great addition to our team.

We kicked things off with an opening assembly to welcome all of our students and staff back, introduce our staff teams, and take our third annual LMS whole school picture.

Our grade 6-8 students also started the year under a new rotating block schedule, designed to keep content blocks at an appropriate length and give students more frequent class meetings than with our previous schedule. Staff put real time into preparing for the shift this summer, and while we worked through a few early glitches, things are running smoothly now.

With Maine's Through Year fall assessment window opening earlier in the school year, we've really hit the ground running. Our staff and students have really risen to the challenge in learning new classroom expectations while preparing for the state assessment. We're also proud to be starting the year coming off LMS's #1 ranking on Maine's Major Capital School Construction Priority List, a testament to the advocacy of our staff, families, and community on behalf of our students and our building. It's shaping up to be a strong year at Loranger.



Fourth Graders Kick Off the Year with STEM Team-Building Challenges

Mrs. Lees's fourth graders kicked off the school year by jumping right into a series of hands-on STEM team-building challenges! Working in teams, students were challenged to build a tall tower using just 10 pieces of paper, one yard of tape, and one yard of string; a strong bridge using 10 index cards; and a boat made from foil, straws, and craft sticks that could carry a heavy load.

These challenges gave students an opportunity to have fun while putting important STEM skills into action. As they designed, tested, revised, and problem-solved, students demonstrated collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Most importantly, they learned that successful teamwork means listening to others, sharing ideas, persevering through challenges, and being willing to try something new.

It was an exciting and engaging way for Mrs. Lees's class to begin the year by building both structures and a strong classroom community!



Fourth Grade “I Am” Projects

Fourth graders have been exploring the many people, places, experiences, interests, and qualities that shape their identities through our annual “I Am” Project. Along with creating personal identity posters, students are writing “Where I’m From” poems, inspired by poet George Ella Lyon, using memories, traditions, places, and everyday details to tell their stories. Through this work, students are celebrating what makes them unique while learning to appreciate the experiences and perspectives their classmates bring to our community.



5th Grade

5th grade students harvested 17 pounds of potatoes from the Loranger School Garden in September. These potatoes were planted by our current 6th graders back in June. After digging them up, students weighed them, then worked with Leah Botko, our Food Service Director to scrub, chop, and season the potatoes. After they were roasted, 5th and 6th graders got to snack on our delicious harvest!



Wabanaki Studies

The Maine Environmental Education Association (MEEA) published its Mini-Grants for Outdoor Learning Report for 2025-2026. The Wabanaki Studies project that MEEA funded for Loranger appears on page 73 of the 2026 report.

COMPOSTING

Loranger students have started their third year of composting in the cafeteria. This year, we have new compostable salad bowls and boxes. Students are learning to compost them as well as leftover food, significantly reducing our cafeteria trash. Food waste is collected and composted by Diggers Cooperative of Acton. Then we get soil back in the spring for our school garden projects.

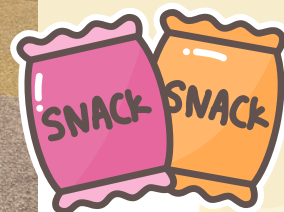
Last week, fifth graders harvested and prepared potatoes from the Loranger garden to share with other classes. The potatoes they harvested were grown in garden soil from our own compost program!

ecoMaine newsletter
featuring LMS



Graduate Nicolaus Watkins and family generously donated snacks for the Student Supply Closet:)

Thank
you

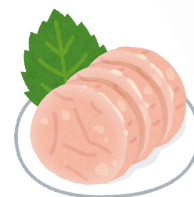
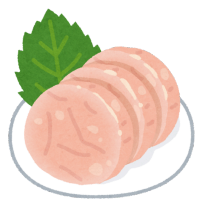


Snack
Time



SO
YUMMY!

Food & Nutrition



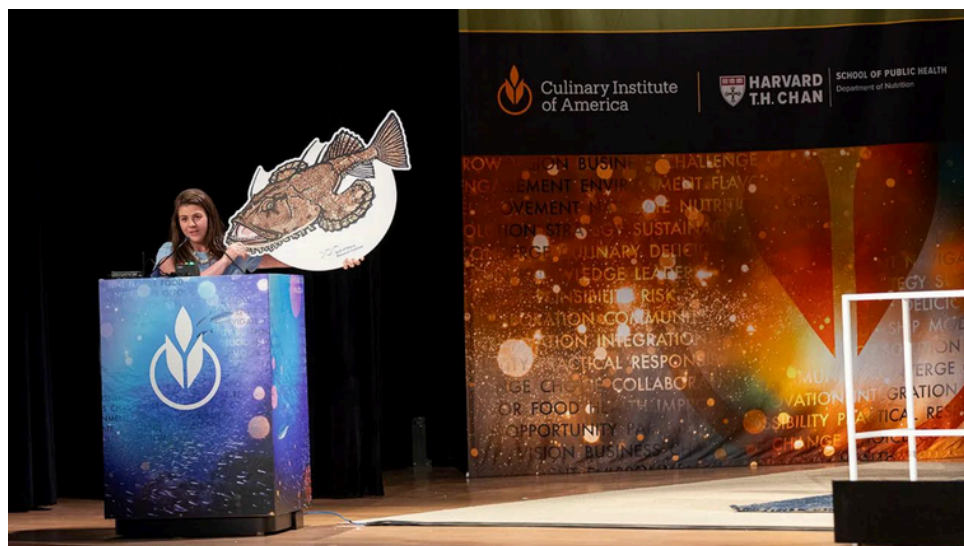
RSU 23 Nutrition Program Featured in National Publication!

RSU 23 Nutrition was featured in an article in the Food Service Director's Quarterly, a national publication. The title of the article was "How One School District is Convincing Kids To Eat Local." The article discusses the introduction of Monkfish, to student lunches at school. The RSU 23 School Nutrition Program is proud to be recognized nationally for its commitment to bringing locally sourced fish into our school cafeterias.

Our Food Service Director, Leah Botko, was recently invited to The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York to present on our collaborative efforts with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and Regional Local Coordinators through the Maine Department of Education. The presentation highlighted our work to increase student exposure to and knowledge of underutilized fish species native to Maine's coast.

This initiative provides students with opportunities to learn more about local seafood while strengthening connections between our schools, Maine's working waterfront, and our regional food system. By incorporating local fish into school meals, we are helping students discover new foods and better understand the resources and people that contribute to Maine's communities.

We are honored to have the hard work of our nutrition staff recognized on a national level and grateful for the partnerships that make these opportunities possible. We remain committed to supporting Maine fishermen and providing our students with nutritious, locally sourced foods.





Fall Flu Clinic – Staff & Students

RSU 23 will be offering Fall Flu Clinics for students and staff at each of our schools in October. These clinics provide an opportunity for eligible students and employees to receive their seasonal flu vaccination conveniently at school.

Flu Clinic Schedule

Jameson Elementary School (JES)

Monday, October 5

9:00–11:30 AM

Old Orchard Beach High School (OOBHS)

Monday, October 5

1:00–4:30 PM



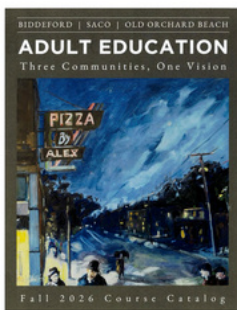
Loranger Memorial School (LMS)

Tuesday, October 6

1:00–4:30 PM

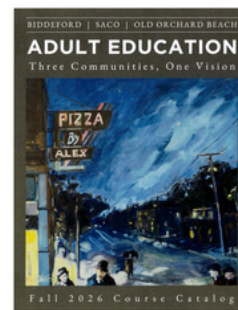
Additional information regarding registration, eligibility, required forms, and vaccination procedures will be provided to families and staff prior to the clinics.

We encourage members of our school community who are eligible and choose to receive the seasonal flu vaccine to take advantage of this opportunity.



OOB/Saco Adult Education

Learning for Better Living



We have a wide range of academic, enrichment, and professional learning opportunities for adults ages 18+. Our enrichment program includes classes in creative & culinary arts, technology, dance, languages, music, personal finance, recreation, travel, wellness, and workforce training. Our free academic program includes a high school diploma program and HiSET as well as courses in college prep, English for multilingual learners, and citizenship prep. Visit our website at oobsaco.maineadulted.org for more information. Interested in teaching for our program, fill out and submit a [course proposal form](#).

School Board Meetings

Our school board meetings normally take place on the third Thursday of every month at 6 PM at OOB Town Hall. You can watch the meetings with the link below, on local access television live, or on video replay.

Link for meeting:

https://www.townhallstreams.com/towns/oob_maine

Important Upcoming Dates:

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • School Board Meeting @ Town Hall | September 17 @ 6 PM |
| • Early Release Day | October 21 |
| • No School, Staff Workshop | October 9 |
| • Indigenous Peoples Day, No School | October 12 |

