

October 10, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lou Goscinski, Superintendent SAU 13

Phone: (603) 323-5088

Email: lgoscinski@sau13.org

Blizzard Bag Plan Given The Green Light To SAU 13

Superintendent Lou Goscinski announced today that New Hampshire Commissioner of Education, Dr. Virginia M. Barry, has approved an SAU 13 plan to provide instruction online for Freedom, Madison, and Tamworth students when weather or emergencies cause school to be closed for the day. Goscinski is authorized to declare up to five Remote Instruction School Days, commonly known as Blizzard Bag Days, to recover days of instruction lost due to school cancellation and prevent adding make-up days to the school calendar at the end of the school year. "I am pleased Commissioner Barry has endorsed an innovative way to engage our students in 21st Century learning. Moreover, her approval of the plan helps us to avoid extending the school year late into June," he said.

The commissioner's approval is a direct result of an SAU-wide decision last year to give every teacher and student KUNO tablets that they take home to work on assignments away from school without requiring Internet connection. The SAU 13 plan is unique because it allows students who do not have access to the Internet to work on academic assignments with their KUNO tablets. This is achieved when teachers "push" assignments to their students from CLOUD software to the KUNO tablets. "This groundbreaking educational technology has transformed instruction in our schools and also makes it possible for our students to effectively 'be in school' even when their schools are closed," Goscinski said.

The plan submitted by Goscinski requires on-line academic work to be equivalent in effort and rigor to typical classroom work, an assessment be completed of all student work for the day, and at least 80% of all students participate for the day to count as a school day. Goscinski said, "I am extremely proud of our teachers and administrators. They have enthusiastically supported online instruction since the idea was floated last spring. The concept has become a reality because of their dedication and efforts."

Goscinski will use the school's automated phone announcement system to notify parents when he declares a Remote Instruction School Day. His message will inform parents that school is cancelled and he has declared such a day. His declaration will also be posted on school websites. School cancellation notifications will continue to be sent to local radio and television stations. According to Goscinski, not every school cancellation day will be declared a Remote Instruction School Day. "There are many factors that need to be considered. So, it is very important for parents to pay close attention to my phone message," he said.

Goscinski notes information about Remote Instruction School Days, including Frequently Asked Questions, has been sent to parents and guardians. It has also been posted on the website for each school. He said, "If parents and guardians have questions they are encouraged to call their child's principal."