

School Union #69
Hope, Appleton and
Lincolntown



Superintendent's Update December 15, 2021

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*The Winter Break is almost here!
Best wishes to all, hope you find
time for some relaxation with
family and friends!*



December reflection: Great Blue Herons

In thinking about my annual December reflection for this newsletter, I found this photo in my phone. This is my Great Blue Heron weathervane, attached to my new garage. It struck me that many of you may not know my GBH story, or why I find them so fascinating. So, if you'll indulge me, I'd love to share one of the most pivotal moments of my life. When my child was about 2 years old, I was offered my first administrative position. This meant that I would need to leave the small, family oriented elementary school at which I

had been teaching, the school that was 3 miles from my home and my child would attend in a few years, in order to take on a longer commute, greater responsibility and greater opportunities as an administrator. It was a difficult decision, and late in the summer, which further complicated the situation. Like many of you, I do my best thinking outside, so one morning, very early, I decided it was time for a walk on the boardwalk along the Squamscott River, behind the town of Exeter, NH. It was a beautiful, quiet morning (like the photo below).



As I walked the boardwalk, there was a sudden flurry of wings and long legs, and **12** (twelve!) Great Blue Herons were standing on rocks exposed by the low tide! I had never seen such an incredible display of these large, prehistoric-looking birds and they all seemed to be looking at me as if to say, "We have some advice for you!". I'm not sure if I was a big believer in signs and omens up to that point, but this did not seem like something I should ignore, so I ran home to look up all I could find about Great Blue Herons and see what I could glean from their presence at the river. What I found significantly shaped my decision making and fostered a twenty-year love affair with these amazing creatures.

Today, I share with you the wisdom of the Great Blue Heron not because I see these traits in myself, but because when I find I need a check-in or I'm struggling to keep my path clear of distractions, I review the lessons I took away from my encounter:

- Family first
- Be adaptable
- Strike only when ready
- Be patient
- Quiet is just as important as noisy.

We are all experiencing hardships and facing difficult decisions that are unknown and unknowable to those around us. We only see what people choose to share.

This winter break, I wish for you some quiet, contemplative time to think on your own story and listen to the stories of those around you. The holidays can be hard for some, the pandemic has wrought havoc with lives and livelihoods, we may never know. In quiet moments we can get in touch with our commonalities, which are far greater than our differences, and share a kind and loving thought for everyone in this resilient, remarkable community!

Kate