

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOUS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

802-372-6921 • P.O. BOX 54, GRAND ISLE, VT 05458 • WWW.GISU.ORG

11 November 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

Thank you for your service and sacrifices to all veterans on Veterans' Day. We appreciate all you have done and are doing for us.

Last week GISU experienced its first confirmed case of COVID-19 in a member school. In fact the [North Hero School](#) had one case and the [Grand Isle School](#) had one case. We worked very well with the Vermont Department of Health and followed all the recommended protocols. The school communities were notified using the routine we described in the [October 21, 2020 Community Letter](#). Although it is a process we wish we did not have to use, it did go smoothly, and as of today we do not believe there was any community spread in the school buildings. This leads me to believe that the routines, procedures, and practices we have in place to prevent transmission is working; and I'd like to recognize and thank the Faculty, Staff, Students, and Administrator's for the hard work they do every day to keep everyone safe. The one hiccup we had involved having multiple faculty and staff members required to quarantine as a result being a direct contact of a confirmed positive case. We had significant difficulty covering all in-person classes and did have to move one classroom that was safe to be in-person to remote. This was only because we did not have the staffing to cover the in-person classroom. We anticipate staffing will continue to be a problem unless we can recruit more substitute teachers.

According to the [Vermont Department of Health's School Based COVID-19 website](#) there were 15 new cases of COVID-19 in Vermont schools last week. Overall there have been a total of 54 confirmed cases in Vermont schools.

[The State of Vermont has suspended its leisure travel map and implemented a mandatory quarantine for anyone returning or traveling to Vermont.](#)

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOUS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

802-372-6921 • P.O. BOX 54, GRAND ISLE, VT 05458 • WWW.GISU.ORG

Based on the staffing challenges identified above, our flexibility to move students from remote back to in-person may be somewhat compromised. We are exploring what we can do about families wanting to shift between in-person and remote learning; and while we anticipate we will continue to have flexibility we are considering having a requirement that when a family shifts from one mode of instruction to another mode, they have to stay in the new mode for a specific period of time. I'm hoping to talk more about this tonight to gain some parent/guardian feedback.

At Tuesday's press conference with the governor it was announced that school employees would have access to surveillance COVID-19 testing on a voluntary basis. We have worked to provide this testing and will participate in the first round next week. We are pleased to provide this additional layer of protection in the schools.

Some more good news includes: in late September the GISU central office was contacted by a representative from the Bernie Sanders campaign. We were told that Bernie and Jane Sanders wished to donate chromebooks to the students in our island schools that were used during his presidential campaign. We met Ryan Garvey who gave the GISU 50 chromebooks to distribute. The laptops have been set up with the appropriate software and have been disinfected and will be sent out to our four schools. We wish to thank the Sanders Institute for their generosity.

Reminder:

The GISU Member School Districts have received very few applications for Free and Reduced meals. Based on a waiver from the USDA that allows all families to receive free meals for all of the 2020-2021 school year, it is imperative that if families think they may qualify for free or reduced meals they complete an application. In addition to receiving meals, our free and reduced membership has an impact on grants we are eligible to apply for and receive. If you have any questions about if you qualify for Free or Reduced lunches please reach out directly to your local school who can provide you with information and an application. We know families are very busy and we thank you in advance for your help with this.

Community Meeting

Tonight's Community Meeting will review our positive cases, seek feedback about switching between in-person and remote and will talk about travel. As usual, there will be a time for

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOUS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

802-372-6921 • P.O. BOX 54, GRAND ISLE, VT 05458 • WWW.GISU.ORG

community members to ask questions and share their experiences. The access to the Superintendent's weekly Community Meeting is available below.
Wednesday, November 11, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

[Join with Google Meet](#)

meet.google.com/yzd-szwo-tqi

[Join by phone](#)

(US) +1 573-349-3062 PIN: 810 989 343#

**Please note tonight's Community meeting will be recorded and posted to the COVID 19 communications section of the GISU website

Thank you for working with us to support the GISU mission to ensure all members of the Grand Isle Supervisory Union Learning Community are curious, creative, courageous, and capable of pursuing their aspirations in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Clark

Michael J. Clark
Grand Isle Supervisory Union
Superintendent