

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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

16 December 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

The Governor's press conference yesterday struck a more optimistic tone to me. While it is true that the number of new cases each day remains at a high level compared to what Vermont has experienced in the past, early indications are the trend may be leveling off again. According to information shared at the press conference, the post-Thanksgiving COVID-19 case spike in Vermont was one of the smallest in the country. The Governor thanked Vermonters for their hard work and sacrifices.

Grand Isle County had another week of significant growth in confirmed positive COVID-19 Cases. Based on the [information provided on December 16, 2020 by the Vermont Department of Health](#), Grand Isle County had fifteen (15) confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the entire county in the last 14 days, you'll notice that the number of cases in the last seven (7) days increased by 50% and is up from ten (10) cases last week. You'll also remember that last week our positive cases doubled so this is an improvement.

According to the [Vermont Department of Health's School Based COVID-19 website](#) there were 34 new cases of COVID-19 in Vermont schools last week (Up from 20 the previous week). While this significant increase statewide there have not been new cases in a GISU school. Overall there have been a total of 195 confirmed cases in Vermont schools.

In the last couple of community letters I've shared our relatively low rate of infection has allowed us to safely create more opportunities for students to participate in in-person learning. I've also highlighted that I am very concerned that as cases increase and we have staff members who are required to quarantine as direct contacts of active cases; we do not have enough substitutes to sustain our in-person learning at the levels we have been and have shared ways you can help.

I know there is a tendency for us to have some COVID fatigue. People are tired of:

- Wearing a mask
- Practicing social distancing
- Washing your hands with soap and water REGULARLY
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- Isolate if you have symptoms

However it continues to be important for us all to stick with it to keep each other safe.

On Tuesday, Governor Scott extended the [Governor's Executive Order](#), which in addition to everything else we have shared still includes a general ban on multi-household gatherings. I will continue to monitor what the Governor shares and if there is a change I will send an update letter. In the meantime, GISU will continue to operate as we have.

As the year draws to a close I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the community for your ongoing flexibility and support. This school year has not been like any other that I have been a part of. I'm proud of how we have worked together and supported each other to ensure the best opportunities for our students. I hope you have a safe and restful break. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the Island's Community.

Snow Days

With the cold weather setting in it's just a matter of time for the snow to follow and with snow comes snow days, kids' favorite and superintendents' nightmare. We have talked as an administrative team and recognize there will be a wide range of opinions about snow days. Some people will think we should not have them as we can just go remote and some people

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will remember the joy and memories they made when they were surprised by a snow day. Our plan will be to take a middle of the road approach. Our last day of school is currently scheduled June 15, 2021 which is a Tuesday. We think that keeping in-person days is something we should strive for. Therefore our plan is if it is unsafe for students to be bused to school we will call a snow day exactly like we have historically. We are at the point where we have to make up for any missed days so canceling school for a snow (or anything else). If we end up having to close for snow for three days we re-evaluate as missing more than three days will put make up days into the next week which is June 21, 2021, the official first day of summer and we don't think extending the school year into that week is a good idea. There are two pieces of good news: first, we will not need to call a snow day on Wednesday because students are not being transported by bus; and second, for each of the last two years as the GISU superintendent I have not needed to call more than three snow days. Let's hope that at least in this respect- this year is average.

Community Meeting

Tonight's Community Meeting will talk briefly about the current conditions in the state. As usual, there will be a time for community members to ask questions and share their experiences. The access to the Superintendent's weekly Community Meeting is available below.

Wednesday, December 16, 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#

***With the December Break the next scheduled community meeting will be January 6, 2021

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