

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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25 November 2020

Dear GISU Learning Community

This letter is a follow up to the letter I sent yesterday.

Governor Scott held his Tuesday press conference and stated that schools must ask staff and families if they attended a multi-household gathering and that if so, staff and students must quarantine. The press is also reporting this.

Because adding a question to our screening process and requiring a quarantine to people who did not follow the executive order was such a drastic change to what I had been communicating to GISU families, faculty, and staff I immediately crafted a [new letter to the GISU Learning Community](#). In that letter I specifically shared “At today’s Governor’s Press Conference the Governor announced that a question about combining households for gatherings will be added to the screening questions schools ask when we return from the break and that any families who have combined households will need to quarantine as if they had traveled out of state. I apologize I do not have the specific language as it has not been posted as of noon today. I thought it was important that families have this information as soon as possible in case they need to make adjustments to their holiday plans.”

I continued to look for the specific written guidance backing up the Governor’s statement and as of today the closest documentation is this update about [Multiple Household Guidelines](#). If you review this document you will immediately notice that it does not mandate schools to change their screening protocol and does not mandate a quarantine period as a result of a Multiple Household Gathering.

Members of the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association checked with Secretary of Education Dan French, as to what was said in the press conference as it did not align with the written guidance. Secretary French replied to fall back on the written guidance - you “may” ask, and you “may” require students to quarantine and exclude them from in-person.

I am writing to you tonight letting you know I believe the Governor's statement, and the subsequent guidance from the Agency of Education, potentially puts our young children into adult conversations and decisions, which is not appropriate. As a GISU we strive everyday to build healthy relationships and trust with our students and our greater learning community. At this point a change to our screening process is not mandatory and we do not intend to change our screening process or add additional questions. We trust that our families will follow the guidelines which have been shared and will take the steps necessary to keep everyone in the schools safe. As we see cases of COVID-19 increase locally, regionally, and nationally, it remains all of our responsibility to do our due diligence to protect our families, our schools, our communities, and ourselves.

I apologize for any confusion caused by the Governor's Press Conference or my letter as a result of that press conference.

I hope you all have a fantastic and safe Thanksgiving Holiday.

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