

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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

10 March 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

Based on the [VDH COVID-19 Dashboard, cases of COVID-19](#) across Grand Isle County are increasing. Yesterday, there were 3 new cases; and in the last 14 days there were 28 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Grand Isle County. This is a more than 27% increase over last week. As a reminder - the best things you can do to slow the spread of Covid-19 are:

- Make sure you and your child are wearing a mask.
- Make sure you and your child are washing your hands.
- Maintaining 6 ft of physical distancing.
- Stay home and keep your child home if you or your child are sick.
- Call your primary care provider if you or your child have symptoms of COVID-19.

COVID-19 symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. The [Vermont Department of Health's Website](#) has lots of information about best practices related to COVID-19.

The Vermont Department of Health and Agency of Education vaccine clinics for educators has begun. The effort to vaccinate school staff is massive and people are working hard to make it happen. Some of our educators have received the vaccine many more have appointments in the future, are on waiting lists, or hoping for a future appointment. Vermont has been clear that the process would start slowly and then ramp up.

I've been having conversations with different stakeholders and have shared that GISU is committed to returning as many students as possible to as much in-person learning as possible while keeping students, faculty, staff, and the community safe. We do this by following the Vermont Department of Health and Vermont Agency of Education Guidelines. **The number one limiting guideline which currently holds us back from having more students participating in-person learning is spacing guidelines.** When the Governor states that he wants more students returning to in-person learning it is important for him to remember it is his Department of Health's and Agency of Education's guidelines which are limiting this return and that those guidelines are established to keep students safe. It is currently unclear what effect vaccinating educators will have on the VDH and VT AOE guidelines on spacing. As always, we will use the VDH and VT AOE Guidelines to make decisions that will keep students, faculty, staff, and the community safe when considering returning more students to in-person learning.

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We also currently have approximately 10-15% of families, across the Supervisory Union, who make the choice to have their students only participate in school remotely. At some point, when GISU schools return to five days a week of in-person learning for students, it would be unlikely GISU would be able to continue with our remote learning option in its current configuration. Returning to a five day a week in-person schedule would also likely eliminate the hybrid option. **Please keep in mind it is not possible to make any changes unless and until the VDH and VT AOE guidelines change.** I talked about vaccines, guidelines, and in-person configurations at the weekly community meeting last Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. and will continue this focus over the next couple of weeks. All members of the community are invited to join to hear about the current situation and what we are thinking as well as to share what you are thinking about and hoping for as parents and community members. This time is an important time for you to provide inputs.

Community Meeting

Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

The link and telephone number for this week's community meeting are below. I plan to talk about vaccinations, guidelines, and implications of possibly changing our education model. There will be a time in the meeting for community members to share their perspective and hopes, as well as to ask questions.

[Join with Google Meet](#)

meet.google.com/yzd-szwo-tqi

[Join by phone](#)

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

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