

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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

3 March 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

Thank you to the community throughout the GISU for supporting the school budgets in all three school districts (Alburgh, South Hero, and the Champlain Islands Unified Union School District).

Yesterday Governor Scott announced that beginning next week Vermont Educators would become eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. There were many questions about how this process would work and the Governor promised more details at his Friday press conference. What was clear is the educator vaccinations would not use the current process Vermont is using. Instead specific educator clinics would be set up using the Johnson and Johnson vaccine and/or educators would need to use the Federal Pharmacy Program. One of the goals of this vaccination program, according to the state, is to provide a layer of protection to students, faculty, and staff in the effort to return more students more in-person learning. 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. 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.

We also currently have approximately 15% of families, across the Supervisory Union, who make the choice to have their students only participate in school remotely. If at some point GISU schools were to 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 plan to talk about vaccines, guidelines, and in-person configurations at the weekly community meetings I hold each Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. 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.

Based on the VDH COVID-19 Dashboard, cases of COVID-19 across Grand Isle County look like they may be increasing. Yesterday, there were 5 new cases; and in the last 14 days there were 22 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Grand Isle County. The best things you can do to slow the spread of Covid-19 are:

- Make sure you and your child are wearing a mask.

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- 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.

GISU Counselor Corner

Each month the Guidance Counselor throughout the GISU plan to share information through a newsletter. Please view the most recent newsletter [here](#).

Community Meeting

Wednesday, March 3, 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