

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOUS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

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

11 August 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to students returning to school in a couple of short weeks. I'm sure your children will remember the fun they have had with you this summer following the challenges of the 18 months that came before it; and there is still time to make even more memories! You'll recall that back in the end of June, Dr. Rob Althoff, child and adolescent psychiatrist and parent of two children at Folsom, [presented about the effects of the pandemic on the emotional health of youth and the adults who care for them at the weekly GISU Community Meeting.](#) One of the messages Dr. Althoff shared in this presentation was the power and importance of routines in each child's life. As we get ready to return to school those routines and schedules will change. I encourage you to watch Dr. Althoff's presentation, talk with your children about how they are feeling, answer questions they have honestly (its okay to say you don't know something and that you will reach out to someone who might know the answer), and start shifting schedules towards one that aligns with your regular school schedule. If you have any questions please reach out to your local school or me any time; and if you have a general question or comment you would like to share please join me any Wednesday evening at the Weekly Superintendent's Community Meeting via Google Meet (more details later in this letter) where there is always a time set aside for any community member to ask questions and or share celebrations or concerns.

This year's mantra is "Together Again" and by working together I'm confident the 2021-2022 school year will be a great one. Thank you for your trust and support. I hope you find the rest of this letter helpful. I look forward to continuing the tradition we started in March of 2020 of a Weekly Community Letter with updates on Wednesdays followed by the Google Meet Community Meeting on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.

Current School Guidance and Expectations

We are looking forward to a more traditional year. Students will attend in-person five days a week with traditional school hours. We will operate in a more traditional manner with less restrictions. However, we will continue to use many of the important mitigation strategies which kept our students, faculty, staff, and communities safe. The Vermont Agency of Education in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health began releasing specific guidelines last week (on Thursday) and have indicated they will continue to release guidance in the near future. We know that not everyone will agree with all of the guidelines and mitigation strategies we will use this year. Some people will think they are too much while others will think they are not enough. Please know we take our responsibility to keep everyone safe seriously, that includes balancing physical safety with social and emotional safety. I am always happy to talk with the community about why we are doing something a certain way and to consider other possibilities. Often the strategies we use are interconnected and a change to one will have an impact on others. We believe by following the mitigation plan we are putting in place, it will be more likely we will be able to maintain the five day a week in-person learning schedule we start the year with.

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOUS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

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

Stay Home When Sick

School health personnel should use the COVID-19 in Pediatric Patients Flow Chart (Pre-K – Grade 12) Triage, Evaluation, Testing, and Return to School in partnership with pediatric providers and families to guide medical decision-making. Students and staff who are sick should stay home. This is the most important prevention message.

All students and staff should stay home if they:

- Show symptoms of COVID-19;
- Have a fever (temperature greater than 100.4°F); or
- Are currently in quarantine due to close contact with an individual with COVID-19 or in isolation due to testing positive for COVID-19.

If symptoms begin while at school, the student or staff member should be sent home as soon as possible, and the individual should be isolated from other staff and students until they can go home.

Masks

Due to the makeup of our schools and who is eligible for vaccines we will not achieve 80% vaccination rate for any building therefore universal masking for students and adults when indoors will be required.

Masks, when required, may be removed when needed for instructional or operational purposes.

Masks are currently required for all passengers on buses per federal regulation, regardless of age or vaccination status.

Masks are not required outdoors when students and adults are able to practice social distancing.

Guidance will be updated when vaccine eligibility expands.

Surveillance Testing

The GISU will participate in regular VT AOE Surveillance testing for our students and staff. We will publicize more information once we have information from the VT AOE.

Handwashing

Frequent hand washing/sanitizing is encouraged at all transitions.

As the VT AOE and VDH release more guidance our procedures will be updated.

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

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

Welcome Director of Student Support Services Nick DeVita and District Nurse Kristie Barber

I am excited to introduce our new Director of Student Support Services, Nick DeVita. Nick comes to the GISU from FNESU where he served as the Social and Emotional Learning Coordinator and School Psychologist. Nick is passionate about working with students with disabilities, students with social/emotional and behavioral concerns, students with trauma, and with LGBTQ+ students. He has worked with various districts on implementing social-emotional screeners, developing risk of harm and crisis protocols, conducting psych/educational evaluations, and building EST systems. Nick's email is ndevita@gisu.org if you would like to send a welcome.

I am also excited to introduce our new District Nurse, Kristie Barber. Kristie comes to the GISU from a Nursing Supervisor role at a residential facility Kristie is a Grand Isle resident and is passionate about student health and wellness. She will be overseeing all four campuses and the health assistants in each building. You will see communication from Kristie and the health team in relation to regular wellness and COVID protocols and surveillance testing. Kristie's email is kbarber@gisu.org if you would like to send a welcome.

Residency and Tuitions Vouchers

If you have not already done so, this is a reminder that there are two forms that need to be filled out and sent to our central office in order for us to pay tuition for your child. One form proves that you are a resident of Grand Isle County and the other confirms where your student is attending school (tuition voucher). Unless you move, the residency paperwork is a one time requirement. On the other hand, the Tuition Voucher is an annual process until your child graduates from high school.

- [Residency Form Links](#)
 - [Alburgh](#)
 - [Grand Isle](#)
 - [Isle La Motte](#)
 - [North Hero](#)
 - [South Hero](#)
- [Tuition voucher](#) for all residents

Please send this information directly to David Mills, the GISU Parent Liaison. Please contact David if you have any questions or to send in the paperwork.

David Mills
PO Box 54
Grand Isle, VT 05458

dmills@gisu.org
(802) 372-6921 x2008

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

CURIOUS | CREATIVE | COURAGEOUS | CAPABLE

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

Community Meeting

Tonight's Community Meeting will focus on welcoming people back and reviewing the current VT AOE and VDH Covid-19 guidance. 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, August 11, 2021, 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#

Thank you for helping to ensure that all members of the GISU 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