

# GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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25 August 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

Happy First Day of School!

### **Congratulations 2021 GISU UVM Outstanding Teachers!**

At our opening inservice the GISU recognized Dorothy Sacca (CIUUSD) and Michael Bjella (Alburgh School District) as our 2021 UVM Outstanding Teachers. Here is how the educator(s) who nominated Dorothy and Michael described them.

Dorothy Sacca

Dorothy has been and continues to be a true professional, both as a coworker and educator. Dorothy has really adapted to her new role teaching 5/6 math and science. She has gone above and beyond to ensure that students have a multi-sensory experience. Dorothy incorporates the idea of multiple intelligences into her teaching. She also has an excellent and respectful way with kids. She is able to ensure students follow classroom expectations in a caring way that never embarrasses students in front of their peers. She always individualizes assignments for those struggling learners. She modifies the work in a way that does not single out those students among their peers. Dorothy is truly an outstanding teacher.

Michael Bjella

Michael has rejuvenated our band program through COVID. He has gone above and beyond in virtual lessons. For younger students he promotes the love of music, his classroom has a ZEN feel, he makes all comfortable. Michael has expanded our music program during a pandemic. He is student orientated and supports our school community in so many ways. He's as close to Mister Rogers as I've ever met!

Congratulations Michael and Dorothy!

### **Current School Guidance and Expectations (Updated 8-25-2021)**

We are looking forward to a more traditional year. Students will attend in-person five days a week with traditional school hours. We expect to 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 August 4, 2021; and has 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

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the year with. The following are the recommendations I am making as the Superintendent to GISU and member Districts to follow to keep our students, faculty, staff, students and communities safe.

## 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. <sup>\*1</sup>

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.

## Busses

We are requiring: Masks for ALL individuals on ALL school transportation, Assigned seats and daily seating

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<sup>1</sup> Not Adopted by the Alburgh Board.

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charts with last names, dates, and school will be recorded using the same format at the end of the year. Buses will be disinfected after each route, and hand sanitizer will be on the bus.

We are encouraging: Windows down and physical distancing on the bus as much as practicable

## Building Use

Outside groups will not be permitted to use schools during the school day.

After school hours building use is on hold for now. After school care programs will be permitted to occur in school buildings after school.

## Exterior Spaces

The public may use exterior school grounds. Outdoor recess space/playgrounds are open.

## Visitors/Volunteers

No Visitors/Volunteers at this time during the school day. Co-curricular activities may have volunteers. We will support the mentoring program.

## Sharing Materials

Sharing of materials is allowable, however we recommend limiting the sharing of materials when possible moving forward.

## All School In-person Meetings/Assemblies

On hold until further notice. We recommend virtual student assemblies. Outdoor group meetings can be considered on a case by case basis.

## Field Trips

Will be considered on a case by case basis and will require approval by the Principal AND Superintendent. No overnight, out of state or international trips until further notice.

## Library

Resumes pre-covid procedures and protocol.

## Music

GISU will follow the [International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study Updated Guidelines](#).<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>2</sup> \*Not currently adopted by the Alburgh Board.

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## **Contact Tracing**

[Please see this 8-20-2021 memo for current VTAOE and VDH Guidance](#)

## **Community Meeting**

Tonight's Community Meeting will focus on reviewing the current VT AOE and VDH Covid-19 guidance and the superintendent's recommended mitigation strategies with a focus on Contact Tracing. 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 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m

### **[Join with Google Meet](#)**

[meet.google.com/yzd-szwo-tqi](https://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