

GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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

23 September 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians & Community members,

Last week marked our first full week back. I'm proud to share that everyone is doing a great job adjusting to the new guidelines, systems, and routines we have adopted as our part of our [GISU Reopening Plan](#). We are happy to be connecting with students whether in our hybrid or remote only learning model. By opening the school year using the hybrid and remote only learning models with reduced class sizes, we allowed all staff and students time to practice our safety and health routines, and to adjust to teaching and learning required in hybrid or remote only environments. We appreciate your understanding, support and flexibility as we adjust our procedures.

On Tuesday, September 22nd, Secretary French announced that all Vermont Schools would shift from Level 2 to Level 3 effective September 26, 2020. The shift was made in a collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health and Agency of Education and allows for slightly eased guidelines in the [Strong and Healthy Start Plan](#) developed by the state. Based on this announcement the GISU will need to assess our readiness for increasing in person learning. Much like our [Continuity of Learn Plan](#) in the spring and our [Reopening Plan](#) this fall I expect we will work collaboratively with the GISU faculty, staff, and community to develop a plan to increase in-person learning for students in grades K-5 when possible. I anticipate we will take a methodical approach that brings back smaller groups (maybe individual grade levels) and then allows for us to evaluate the impact. Taking this approach and following guidance from the Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont Department of Health, will minimize risk to students, faculty and staff while we develop new routines as we increase the number of students in the building.

The Champlain Valley Superintendents have identified 'essential benchmarks' for increasing in person learning for students in K-5. In other words, we will consider additional days for in person learning, only if:

- We have sufficient staffing levels to follow health/safety procedures and meet the needs of students
- We have the ability to maintain compliance with the guidance from VDH/AOE
- Vermont Department of Health guidance and data continues to support an increase to more in-person instruction

Although these benchmarks were developed collaboratively, the decisions, timelines, and plans will be determined locally, not as a region. Each district has a unique set of circumstances as it relates to the benchmarks and must plan accordingly.

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In addition to the benchmarks above it is likely that the GISU plan will consider the following:

- Increasing in person learning days will be by grade level and begin with our youngest students
- In person learning will likely be 4 days a week with Wednesday still being a remote day. This is necessary in order to simultaneously meet safety and health guidelines, labor contract obligations and our remote only learners.
- In grades where we are providing in person learning 4 days a week + Wednesday remote, families will have to have their children in school the 4 days + the remote day or be 100% virtual. Due to staffing limitations, we are not likely able to accommodate other variations.
- After bringing a group of students back to more in person learning there will be a pause to evaluate the effect on our processes, systems, routines, and procedures.

Tonight's Community meeting will focus on these new guidelines and I will talk more about our process to develop our plan to bring more students back to in-person learning. I anticipate that we may be able to share an early draft of our revised plan at the September 30 community meeting.

We appreciate all of your support as we navigate through these unprecedented times.

Community Meeting

Tonight's Community meeting will focus on how we are doing with the reopening, a reminder about inservice, a conversation about what it means to move from Level 2 to Level 3, and an outline of the process of how we will plan to revise our current plan. The access to the Superintendent's weekly Community Meeting is available below.

Wednesday, September 23, 2020, 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#

**Please note tonight's Community meeting will be recorded and posted to the COVID 19 communications section of the GISU website

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If you are interested in viewing any of the three meetings which reviewed the GISU Strong and Healthy Start Reopening Plan the links to the Google Meet recordings are available [here](#).

If you would like to review the [GISU Reopening Plan](#) as well as any of the school-specific plans for the [Alburgh Community Education Center](#), the [Grand Isle School Campus](#), the [North Hero School Campus](#), or the [Folsom School](#), please click on the links. Please reach out to your classroom teacher or principal for school-specific questions or me for supervisory union questions at any time. We are always happy to help!

2020-2021 Calendar

You'll recall that there is legislation being considered in Montpelier to reduce the mandatory number of student days from 175 to 170. If this passes our [2020-2021 GISU calendar](#) will not need to be adjusted to meet the mandatory number of student days. It appears that the legislation has the support to pass and I'll keep you informed as more information becomes available.

September 28, 2020 Inservice

Connected to the 2020-2021 school calendar there are 5 inservice days scheduled in the calendar. The calendar was adopted by the school boards in the spring. The first of those inservice days is coming up on September 28, 2020. This inservice day will allow our faculty and staff to review what is working and what adjustments we need to make to improve the learning experience for students. It will also allow us to do work related to the transition to more in person learning described at the start of this letter.

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 in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Clark

Michael J. Clark
Grand Isle Supervisory Union
Superintendent