

Grand Isle Supervisory Union

224 US Route 2 Grand Isle, Vermont 05458

P.O. Box 54 Grand Isle, Vermont 05458

Phone: 802-372-6921 Fax: 802-372-4898 Web Site: www.gisu.org

24 March 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members:

All GISU schools have transitioned to a remote delivery model of education for the maintenance of learning. Our teachers, special educators, support staff, and administrators have done a tremendous amount of work to ensure students are being supported to the best of our ability while our schools are on a dismissal ordered by Governor Scott to last until April 6, 2020 (however we do expect this to be extended). The GISU has established a Continuity of Learning Team which is preparing to transition to new learning and teaching as a part of the Governor's order should the dismissal extend beyond April 6, 2020.

This showed up in my newsfeed recently, from an anonymous author, and I think it is a powerful reminder that I think is important for parents/guardians/caregivers to consider:

"You might be inclined to create a minute by minute schedule for your kids. You have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, science experiments, and book reports. You'll limit technology until everything is done! But here's the thing...

Our kids are just as scared as we are right now. Our kids not only can hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off of school for 4 weeks sounds awesome, they are probably picturing a fun time like summer break, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you will see an increase in behavior issues with your kids. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally - it will happen. You'll see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behavior in the coming weeks. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

***What kids need right now is to feel comforted and loved.** To feel like it's all going to be ok. And that might mean that you tear up your perfect schedule and love on your kids a bit more. Play outside and go on walks. Bake cookies and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.*

Don't worry about them regressing in school. Every single kid is in this boat and they all will be ok. When we are back in the classroom, we will all course correct and meet them where they are. Teachers are experts at this! Don't pick fights with your kids because they don't want to do math. Don't scream at your kids for not following the schedule. Don't mandate 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it.

*If I can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of all of this, **YOUR KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH WILL BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEIR ACADEMIC SKILLS.** And how they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during those 4 weeks is long gone. So keep that in mind, every single day."*

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We have been and will continue to prepare bagged meals (breakfast and lunch) out of our production kitchens at the Alburgh, Grand Isle, and Folsom Schools, where our professional staff have and will continue to prepare meals in a safe and sanitary environment. If you would like to be added to delivery please call:

Alburgh - Wendy Savage 796-3573 ext 101

Grand Isle, Isle La Motte, or North Hero - Jo-Ann Tier 372-8866

South Hero - Arianna Middlemiss 372-6600 ext. 1115

Please remember I've scheduled an opportunity to talk with community members who have questions, concerns, or just want to talk via a Superintendent/Community Google Hangout on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The direct link is [here](#)

(meet.google.com/yai-bbqu-ryz) for the video conference or by phone, (US)+1 319-332-7286, PIN: 533 925 225#. I hope you will consider joining me (I think there is capacity for up to 150 participants)

One of the directives from the governor's order was Schools will collaborate with the state to provide childcare options for healthcare workers and others essential to the response. The current list of essential persons as defined by the state can be found [here](#). Let's Grow Kids is coordinating collecting the information from essential persons to access childcare. More information can be found on their website <https://www.letsgrowkids.org/coronavirus>. [This is the form to request childcare.](#)

Once again I have to share how proud I am of our faculty, staff, students, and community. It is amazing how much has happened in just over one week! We appreciate your flexibility. We will get through this together. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out anytime.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Clark
Grand Isle Supervisory Union
Superintendent