

# WINDHAM SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

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May 20, 2020

Dear Families and Friends,

I hope this finds you and your families as well as possible given the many challenging situations you may be facing during this pandemic. I hope the arrival of Spring is a source of relaxation and rejuvenation for you during these trying times. I know how difficult it may be for you to not have answers to so many important questions, including how we are going to approach the Fall. I also comprehend how it may feel to have information change so rapidly and to not be provided with any level of certainty. Furthermore, I understand that hearing that the Fall will be vastly different, and that it will not be business as usual may be disconcerting. I share these feelings with you and offer my support and compassion. I want to offer you more, and I will as soon as I can, but I can't quite yet. We are patiently awaiting guidance and direction from the AOE, the Secretary of Education and the Department of Health. While I do not yet have the guidance we need, let me share with you what I do know.

**We are so proud of the tremendous work that our teachers and staff are doing.**

**Kudos goes out to:**

- Food, childcare, transportation service people for their generosity, bravery and diligence in providing essential services according to ever-changing procedural guidelines for health/safety
- Students and families for their flexibility and partnership in supporting learning in the home
- Teachers and paraeducators for their flexibility and innovation in distance/e-learning
- All teachers and leaders for communicating well enough for 80% of families to respond that Communication is "about right" on our E-Learning Check-in home survey (202 responses so far; distributed first May 12, still collecting responses)
  - (refers to two survey items, one on "Communication from leadership is..." and one on "Communication from my child(ren)'s teacher is..." with multiple choice options *too little, a little less than I want, just right, a little more than I want, and too much*); only <5% *too little/too much*, 80% *about right*
  - Also, kudos to principals for whom 80% was not good enough and want to do better. So they are responding to individuals who self identified (optional) on surveys, and they are adjusting communication approaches to improve based on needs expressed on surveys. Kudos for practicing responsive communication, just as we lead our educators to engage in responsive teaching!

- Special Education and related service staff (OT, SLPs, School Psychologist) and paraeducators have been providing high quality specialized support and interventions throughout the WSWSU.

### **End of School Year Graduations and Celebrations:**

In compliance with Secretary French's guidance, [Guidance: End of School Year](#), each Principal is planning their end of year celebrations and/or graduation. Each Principal will share with you their plans via upcoming communications.

### **End of School Year Date:**

According to Secretary French's guidance, [Guidance: End of School Year](#) we are following our regular school calendar. We have received waivers for any days that we had to close due to COVID-19 for dates prior to March 18th, and for some "snow" days. **The final date for all students across WSWSU will be June 11th.**

### **Planning for Opening in the Fall:**

According to Secretary French's latest communication with Superintendents, he suggested that we use the guidance in [VT Guidance-for-Childcare-Afterschool-Summer-Programs](#) as information that can inform our preliminary planning for the fall. He expects more specific guidance for Vermont schools to come out to us soon. Secretary French also frequently references the document CCSSO [COVID-19 Response](#) as a model for planning for the reopening of schools, The model outlines four areas for organizing our planning:

1. Continuity of Learning
2. Conditions for Learning
3. Leadership and Planning
4. Policy and Funding

The model also describes considerations for us to take into account under each of the four areas. We have begun to work within this model as a place to start.

I know that this information does not answer everything. As I know more, I will share more. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this unprecedented difficult and confusing time.

May you and yours be well, may you find moments of peace, and may you extend compassion to all.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Anne