

WINDHAM SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

1 School Street, Wilmington, VT 05363

www.windhamsw.k12.vt.us

Stamford

Searsburg

Southern Valley Unified Union SD

Twin Valley Unified Union SD

August 27, 2020

Dear Windham Southwest Supervisory Union Staff, Families, and Community,

I hope that this letter finds you and your family as well as can be given the challenging circumstances. I also hope that you found moments to enjoy our beautiful VT summer weather.

It is hard to believe that it is already time for me to write my welcome back to school letter. This will definitely be a year like no other. It will be a year of so many new things as well as so many unknowns. I understand how uneasy this unprecedented time may be for you. If I may be a resource for you, please reach out.

I look forward to welcoming our students back on Tuesday, September 8th, our first day of school for ALL students, those joining us in person for the Hybrid 4/1 Option, and those enrolled in the Fully Remote Option.

Please note that September 8th - September 18th are half days of school for those students who chose the Hybrid 4/1 Option and attending school in person. **Please also note that Wednesday the 9th and Wednesday the 16th are half days in the building and are not remote learning days. The Wednesday remote learning days will begin Wednesday the 23rd.**

You can view all of this in our finalized calendars for the 2020-21 school year. The only changes from the WSWSU draft calendar that has already gone out are:

1. Corrected typo: teacher inservice starts August 28th
2. Feb. break for the Stamford community is changed based on the Board's decision.

Twin Valley and Southern Valley Final Calendar: [TVUUSD & SVUUSD 2020-21 Calendar](#)

Stamford Final Calendar: [Stamford 2020-21 Calendar](#).

I also want to share with you the latest updates to the Agency of Education's [Safety and Health Guidance for Reopening Schools, Fall 2020](#) (8/11). The implications for these updates are summarized in [Our COVID Addendum to the Family Handbook](#) and our [FAQ](#). Please note the following:

1. If your child is ill, has symptoms, has been exposed to COVID, or has [traveled to high risk areas as determined by the state of VT](#), your child may not attend school. See the AOE guidelines [Safety and Health FAQ 2: Quarantine and Staying Home When Sick](#). This [FlowChart](#) will be used to guide our decision making regarding when students need to be at home and when they can return to school.
2. Since it is easier for families to keep their child at home rather than for us to send a child home, families are expected to do the following **before they send their child on a bus or drop them off at school**:
 - a. Take their child's temperature
 - b. Do a health screening that asks if your child has any symptoms, has had close contact with someone with COVID, and has traveled to high risk areas. The exact health screening questions and process are forthcoming from your school.
3. Temperature checks will **ALSO be done by staff at the school** when students are dropped off at the school by car or the buses. (Health screenings will be done by staff for those who were not able to do it at home).
4. We understand that no temperature checks by staff before students get on the bus, along with the mingling of cohorts, may impact your decision to use school transportation. This is why bus transportation continues to be discouraged by the AOE. We kindly ask that you let your school know if you have chosen other arrangements to get your child to school.

Since we are entering a new normal for schooling, I know that you will have more questions. We will continue to work to identify answers. As we know more, I will share more. I aim to continue to keep you as informed as possible.

Even amidst the many challenges we are facing, we will continue to care for, support and challenge each student to be prepared for their future, as our WSWSU mission implies. We will also use our Continuous Improvement Plan to help guide our continued work on:

- **Academic Proficiency of Students** (learning and growth)
- **Personalized Learning** (engagement; recognizing that one size does not fit all)
- **Safe and Healthy Schools** (social and emotional wellbeing)

In closing I want to remind you that having our students in school will only work if we are all invested in our success and committed to doing our part to protect the health and safety of every person. Each of us will need to continue to sacrifice our personal preferences and interests to prioritize the health of our friends, colleagues, and community members. I believe in us and have great confidence in our ability to meet this moment.

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD reminded us Vermonters in last week's press conference — the two weeks leading up to school reopening — is the time to do all the right things so that schools will be safe. "That means mask-wearing, physical distancing, frequent handwashing, and staying home and away from others when you're not feeling well. We can't afford to let down our guard now." That means thinking twice about fitting in a family trip or gathering before school starts, and carefully considering the risks of all your activities.

Please reference [Vermont's Cross State Travel Rules](#) before any travel to other states.

I look forward to partnering with you to carry out our plan. And, most importantly, I look forward to welcoming you back to school. Together, we can make this year as successful as possible.

I wish for you and your family health, relaxation, and some end of summer fun.

Sincerely,

Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll
Superintendent of Schools