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Superintendent of Schools

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July 16, 2020

Dear Two Rivers Supervisory Union Community:

I am deeply honored to begin serving this community as your superintendent. There are a number of things for us to talk about in the coming weeks as we plan for the reopening of our schools. My immediate goal is to communicate openly and often with you about our progress toward beginning school in the fall. In addition, I will be sharing my more general entry plan for working toward long term teaching and learning goals for the SU.

First, here are some details of our work toward preparing for the opening of school -- which is six short weeks away. Please understand that these proposals are fluid. Our plans will necessarily change as information about the spread of Covid-19 in our area changes.

The Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont Department of Health have issued guidance for the opening of schools. That document can be found here: [A Strong and Healthy Start](#).

The document contains requirements, which we must (and will) follow to the letter. It also contains recommendations, designed to give schools flexibility so that they can achieve the goal of returning to school as safely as possible. We will do as the document states and follow those recommendations the best we can.

Our administrators, nurses, facilities directors, and teachers are in the process of creating detailed, specific plans for every aspect of the return to school. We are inviting parents, local government, area business owners, and other community members to work with us as well. We will have our next open forum (by Zoom) on Tuesday, July 21 at 6:00. Here is the Zoom link (which will also be available on the TRSU website): <https://trsu.zoom.us/j/96192949166>.

Based on the requirements and recommendations of the "Strong and Healthy Start" document, here are the broad strokes of our current plans:

Return to Buildings:

- We plan to reopen all five of our schools every day for in-person instruction of all students.
- Based on our examination of available space in each building and expectation of student numbers in each building, we believe we can have all students attend school each day while maintaining appropriate social distancing.
- We will aim to have students outdoors as often as possible and for as long as the weather permits.
- All students and staff will be required to wear facial coverings whenever they are indoors. When outdoors, face coverings can be removed as long as at least 6' of social distancing is maintained.
- All students and staff will be required to have a health screening (temperature check and answering of health related questions) prior to entering the building each day. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or above will not be allowed to remain at school.
- Students will remain in cohorts to the extent possible.
- We are considering the possibility of a Remote Learning option. If it is available, it would be a choice for at least the first semester. Students selecting that option could not alternate between school and home during that time.
- (Further details will be available soon.)

Transportation:

- Regular bus routes will run.
- All students will have a temperature check and answer health questions prior to boarding the bus. Any student with a temperature of 100.4 or above will not be allowed to board.
- All students and staff must wear facial coverings on the bus at all times.
- Seats will be assigned.
- Students will be spread out as much as possible. However, under the guidelines, there is no maximum number of students allowed on buses (other than normal bus capacity).
- We recommend that parents transport their children to school whenever possible.
- (Further details will be available soon.)

*All our TRSU families will receive a survey next week to allow us to gather information and hear your thoughts.

The document from the state referenced above is 25 pages long. There are additional explanations for those guidelines, FAQ documents, and updates. The work our staff is currently doing is taking that large body of information and applying it to our particular buildings and populations. We are creating detailed guidelines of our own that explain what the state level guidance will look like for our students, families, and staff. As those details are available, we will share them with you.

In the two years since I moved to this supervisory union, I have been repeatedly impressed by the many skilled educators and staff working in our schools and by the supportive parents and families who care for our talented students. The nurturing and generous spirit of all of our residents is truly outstanding. It is my great privilege to serve this community, and I look forward to working with all of you as we face these challenges together.

Lauren Fierman, Superintendent of Schools

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