



North Stonington Public Schools

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

DEBORAH MARTIN
BUSINESS MANAGER

March 5, 2021

Dear North Stonington Public Schools families,

I will start off with--HOORAY, North Stonington Public Schools staff is getting vaccinated! It was announced last week that school district employees would be getting vaccinated in March and we received the directions on Tuesday for staff to schedule appointments for the first clinic. Many of our staff will get their first dose of the COVID vaccine this weekend. It will be one-year next Friday that the Governor, by Executive Order, closed schools. A lot has happened since that day and we are now seeing light at the end of a long tunnel.

We are continuing in the first phase of our full-return with students attending school every day except Wednesdays. We are still working out the bugs with drop-off and pick-up of students at the elementary school but other than that, it is great to see everyone moving towards "normal." Every Tuesday, the Department of Health (DPH) and the State Department of Education (SDE) has a webinar to update superintendents with the latest guidance. This week focused on the vaccination rollout. The DPH and SDE also emphasized that all districts should have students attending school in-person. When asked about the social distancing of 3' and 6', it was stated by Dr. Matthew Cartter, MD, MPH, the Epidemiologist for the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, "it's not the end all and be all." As always, they reiterated it's important to employ multiple layers of protection. Of course, wearing masks is the most import PPE along with washing hands frequently and having hand sanitizer available. The district also purchased clear dividers and we are using them when extra protection is needed.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my administrators, department heads and central office staff for all the hard work that they put into making sure that every concern and detail was addressed. I want to also thank the Board of Education for spending countless hours hosting meetings for parents, teachers and community members to be sure that everyone was heard and every concern was addressed to the best of their ability.

As a reminder, beginning Monday, March 29th, all North Stonington Public Schools students will return to a full-in schedule five-days per week. We will continue to make available for any family that chooses and would like to remain fully virtual can continue in that model. In addition, any student who wants to remain in the hybrid can as well. For the remainder of the school year, based on a student or families comfort level, you can choose to be full-in, hybrid or virtual.

So families can plan accordingly, if I have to cancel school due to inclement weather, we will move to a virtual day. As of today, the last day of school for students will be on Friday, June 11th.

IMPORTANT: Now that we are in full-return, it is especially important that we do our best to keep not only your child protected from COVID, but all other students and staff. If you suspect that your child is exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms or, for that matter, not well in general, please keep your child home. In addition, if someone in your home has COVID-19, please do not send your child to school. Contact your physician for a conversation to see if testing is necessary. There are plenty of testing sites in the area and Ledge Light Health District (LLHD) would be happy to identify one for you. The wait time for the test and results is very short. We also ask if your child has been tested due to exhibiting COVID-19 signs, please do not send your child to school until a negative result is confirmed. We all want to be sure that we do not place any student or staff in jeopardy of their health as we want to keep all students and staff in school where they belong.

As we have since last June, we will continue to review the town's data and adjust our plan accordingly. On behalf of the administrators and Board of Education, we'd like to thank everyone for your patience as we look forward to returning to a full-return and most importantly, resuming our normal lives.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Nero, Superintendent of Schools