



North Stonington Public Schools

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Dear North Stonington Public Schools families,

As a result of next week being short, you will not receive a weekly update next Friday. The last year has been described in a lot of different ways. COVID-19 has caused a great disruption to our daily lives. With the excellent vaccination rollout taking place, we are now looking forward to better days ahead!

The district has tried to do its best managing and educating our students from a complete closure of school last March, to developing a Reopening Plan that began in the hybrid model in August. The Reopening Plan has been adjusted and amended 23 times as we will now move to a full in-person, 5-days per week model, beginning next week. There have been several public BOE meetings held with hours of public comment including contributions from parents and teachers. In short, anyone who wanted to be heard was heard.

With a little over one year from the time that the Governor closed schools, I want to give some bullet points of where we are at present and what to expect in the next few weeks regarding vaccinations:

- The overwhelming majority of North Stonington Public Schools staff will be fully vaccinated by the end of the day this Sunday and will be protected from COVID-19 in two-weeks. Once protected, members of the education community will not have to be quarantined if they are in close contact with a confirmed case.
- In *The Day* article published and updated last Sunday it stated, "In Connecticut, nearly 560,000 people were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of Friday, representing about 15.7% of the state's total population. Eligibility for those ages 45 to 54 began Friday, and come April 5, anyone over 16 will be eligible." After this weekend's clinics, the percentage of those vaccinated will rise substantially, especially among educators and ancillary school staff.
- The pharmaceutical companies are now concentrating in developing an effective vaccine for children younger than 16 and some are conducting trials. At present, the Pfizer vaccine for young children is in trials.

There is obvious excitement as we move to a more normal way of life especially with spring in the air. The latest numbers for positive cases for COVID-19 released by the Ledge Light Health District for our community continue to be very good. However, we still must remain vigilant following our Reopening Plan as well as following guidelines within North Stonington.

As a reminder, we have a vacation coming up shortly and I am sure that many of our families will be traveling out-of-state. To review the travel guidelines, I have taken the following quote for travel directly from the state portal: "Connecticut residents and travelers to Connecticut should follow travel-related guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH). Mandates and requirements are not currently in place in Connecticut." At the last Board of Education meeting, they approved a resolution that will not require that students and staff test negatively for COVID-19 as there is no longer a state mandate, when traveling back into the state. However, the BOE is recommending that it would be wise to test anyway for peace of mind.

IMPORTANT: As a reminder, in anticipation of the effect the second dosage of the vaccine may have on our staff and not being able to safely cover classes, Monday, March 29th, will be a virtual day for all students.

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 begin and continue in the full-return and most importantly, resuming our normal lives.

Sincerely,

Peter L. Nero, Superintendent of Schools