

March 31, 2022

Dear Washington Central Community,

I want to start this week's letter by expressing my thanks to you for so swiftly transitioning back into masks. I recognize that Washington Central is one of a very few school districts in Vermont that is requiring masks at this time. The decision to follow the CDC community level metric to inform our masking practices is one that we made with the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront. We have immunocompromised students and staff members in our schools, and all of our elementary schools have children under the age of five who are not yet eligible for vaccines.

We are ending March with 63 reported cases of COVID across our schools. That is our second highest count this school year. Our district case counts this school year to date are: September (25), October (7), November (37), December (42), January (215), February (46), and March (63). As I wrote earlier this month, testing and reporting protocols have changed recently, so the March counts are those that were reported to us directly from families or staff members.

It seems that the CDC community levels get updated some time on Thursday late afternoon or evening. Twice now I've reported something in the community letter, having double checked earlier in the day, only to be told that what I wrote was no longer accurate. Please know that Maria Melekos and I are vigilant about checking the site. Should the community letter and the changing levels cross paths, we will be sure to alert you of the updated level.

Next Wednesday, April 6 the school board is hosting a community forum focused on the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds. There are four major pillars of ARP ESSER: Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and Well-being; Student Engagement and Truancy; Academic Achievement and Success; and Safe and Healthy Operations. Come join us to learn more about our current and planned uses of the funds, ask questions, and offer ideas for future use. The forum begins at 6:00 p.m. It is a hybrid meeting that will take place both in the U-32 cafeteria and via Zoom. You can find more information soon on our district website, www.wcsu32.org.

As always, please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at jmillerarsenault@u32.org or 802-229-0553.

Warmly,

Jen Miller-Arsenault

Interim Superintendent