

April 7, 2022

Dear Washington Central Community,

This week I have waited to send the community letter until the CDC community level metric was updated. The metric is updated on Thursdays by 8:00 p.m. each week. Washington County is still medium. That means that masking is optional in our schools this week.

Each week, if the updated level means that the masking practices are the same as the previous week (masks optional when the CDC community level is low or medium, masks required when the CDC community level is high), we will not send out a separate email to families and staff. If the metric indicates that our masking practice does need to change in response to the community level, Maria Melekos and I will send out an additional email specifically about that topic. I'm hoping that this practice will balance the need for timely information with the desire to keep school and district correspondence manageable for families and staff. I welcome your feedback about whether or not this modification in practice strikes the right balance for you.

This past Tuesday evening I attended a forum about drug and alcohol use in our five towns. Sponsored by the [Central Vermont Prevention Coalition](#), the forum focused on resources that are available for both prevention and support. One of the resources they shared is the website [Parent Up Vermont](#) and one of the key takeaways for me was the importance of talking early and often to children and youth about substance use.

April is Autism Acceptance Month. One of our speech language pathologists shared the following information with our staff and I would like to share a slightly adapted excerpt with you:

This is a month where we recognize the need for supporting, understanding, accepting, including, and empowering the people on the autism spectrum (ASD).

Previously, April was known as Autism Awareness Month. However, with new research and the approach to a more neurodivergent world, it transitioned to Autism Acceptance Month in 2021. This shift in language reflects input from the ASD community to promote inclusivity and advocacy for the human and civil rights of all people with ASD.

For those with people in their lives on the spectrum and those who work with students with ASD, I hope you will consider messaging that goes beyond awareness and

promotes full acceptance and appreciation of the many contributions of autistic people.

As always, I welcome your feedback. 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