

October 14, 2021

Dear Washington Central Community,

You may have noticed that last week's community letter came from "WashingtonCentralIC" and arrived a day late to many of you. We experienced a technological glitch. The new email address should resolve this issue going forward. Also, we post the community letter on the district announcement page at www.wcsu32.org each week for your convenience.

This week we had one positive COVID case that impacted East Montpelier Elementary School. We are continuing to offer weekly surveillance testing for students and staff and we are preparing to implement the "Test to Stay" (TTS) rapid antigen program. Each week I attend a video meeting with Secretary of Education Dan French and Vermont superintendents. There are still more questions than answers regarding TTS, winter sports, contact tracing practices, etc. and the guidance is ever-evolving based on current conditions, new learning, the supply chain, and other factors. What I know to be true is that the health and safety of our students and staff members remain our primary concerns, and all of us work very hard to understand and respond to new information as we receive it. We will share information about all of these issues as we learn more.

Believe it or not, it is time to start thinking about snow days! Earlier this week I met with a representative from First Student and our district operations manager to learn about past practices and prepare for this winter. I have also examined our inclement weather data since 2015-16. The earliest inclement weather day we've had in recent years was on October 30 and the latest was on March 22. We've had anywhere from 1-5 snow days in recent school years. We've also had the occasional 2-hour delay, and we work hard to avoid having unplanned early release days due to weather conditions. I'll share more about snow days in the weeks to come once I get a bit smarter about our procedures.

On a related note, as you may know, there is a national shortage of bus drivers. We in Washington Central, and other districts across Vermont, are impacted by this shortage. There have been a few occasions already this school year when we have needed to get creative about bus routes at the last minute due to a shortage resulting from illness. We make every effort to accommodate the shortage and communicate in as timely a manner as possible if routes or athletic events are impacted.

Finally, just a reminder that [applications for the Humanity and Justice Coalition](#) are due tomorrow, October 15.

As always, I welcome your feedback and can be reached at jmillerarsenault@u32.org or 229-0553.

Warmly,

Jen Miller-Arsenault
Interim Superintendent