

Good Afternoon Everyone,

As with every week, I hope this finds you well. This past week we celebrated both Teacher Appreciation Week and recognized the efforts of our staff, especially during the last year of the pandemic. I want to share my thanks to our parents and students who have extended their gratitude for the work that our teachers have done.

In the last year, our students have demonstrated remarkable resilience in navigating the implications of the COVID-19 virus. The loss of the usually typical events that occur in schools, whether in Kindergarten or Senior year, has been incalculable and profound. Nonetheless, our students have been incredible in their capacity to continue onward with their learning. What we have learned about resilience in recent years supports the importance and value of relationships. In the face of crises, the relationships and rapport between and among students and teachers has been essential. I am grateful for the effort and commitment our staff has demonstrated in the past year and confident that this will continue to provide a foundation for our students' success.

Many of our schools have released initial plans for end-of-year recognitions and celebrations. I am anticipating that further information will come from various state agencies related to gatherings. Schools still fall under site-specific guidelines and I am expecting to receive a FAQ document on details related to events such as the BUHS graduation. Currently, the number of tickets assigned to each family is limited to what would have been distributed for an indoor event and there is no overflow seating on the field. I realize that there is some disappointment with this as there is a natural need for celebration and recognition. The pandemic, though, has required that we still make decisions rooted in safety and, given the large number of people involved, we must be mindful of spacing between families. The good news is that we are currently able to hold an in-person event and, even if the number of attendees is not as large as we would like, it will still be an impactful and meaningful memory for our graduates, perhaps even more so in light of those usual rites of passage that have not been held in the last fifteen months.

Pfizer will be seeking emergency approval next week to allow its COVID-19 vaccine to be administered to children ages 12 to 15. It is expected that Moderna will follow a similar course of action. Please continue to monitor the news on this topic as it is widely assumed that this approval will be granted. If this approval is received, information will be shared as quickly as possible.

Children ages 16 and 17 are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Parents may find more information on the Health Department's website at <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/getting-covid-19-vaccine>.

A limited pilot program testing school aged children for COVID-19 is being conducted throughout the state. It would be reasonable to assume that this pilot program may expand to include all students as one of the mitigation measures against the virus. While the surveillance

testing of staff will be discontinued as a significant number have been vaccinated, it will be important to continue to monitor the spread of the virus in the coming months.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. The Vermont Department of Mental Health has issued a one page information sheet that can be found [here](#).

The vote for the Academy School building is slated for a vote on Tuesday, May 11th. The PowerPoint presentation given on Thursday, May 6th can be found [here](#). The Warning Articles contain information regarding poll locations and can be found [here](#).

As a reminder, our last day of school for students is June 14th. An early release schedule will be followed.

Courtesy Information

The [Brattleboro Boys and Girls Club](#) has an extensive list of camps and activities on its website. The Boys and Girls Club has provided a range of services to students and families throughout the pandemic at both its site on Flat Street and at the Retreat Farm.

Information from the Vermont Department of Health

Get Vaccinated at Special Speedway, Drive-through and Mobile Clinic Events

Vermont is offering special COVID-19 vaccination opportunities starting Friday, May 7, with a drive-through clinic at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This clinic will have the one dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. You can register through the Health Department website at healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine, or just “drive in,” no appointment necessary.

On Saturday, May 8, clinics will also be held at the Bear Ridge and Devils Bowl Speedways, with no appointment needed. These walk-in only clinics, held in partnership with the speedways and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) teams, will also have Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The Bear Ridge Speedway event, at 1058 Kidder Road in Bradford (Orange County), will run from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. with the Newport/Glover EMS. There will be 150 slots available.

The Devils Bowl Speedway event, at 2743 VT-22A in West Haven (Rutland County), will be held from 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with Rescue Inc. There will be 180 slots available.

Eight mobile clinics in Essex County and one in Caledonia County this weekend will also offer Johnson & Johnson vaccine. You can make an appointment for the events through our website at healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine. They will also have some walk-in slots available.

Read the [press release](#).

Additional walk-in clinic opportunities below:

EVERY WEEKDAY

ESSEX JUNCTION

Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Essex Fairgrounds, 105 Pearl Street, Essex Junction

Pfizer vaccine, 150 doses each day

FRIDAY, MAY 7

WATERBURY

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Waterbury Municipal Building

28 North Main St., Waterbury

Moderna vaccine, 30 doses

Abenaki Nation, Missisquoi Leadership shares vaccine clinic experience

The Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi Leadership shared a reflection on a COVID-19 vaccine clinic held April 25 at the Abenaki Tribal Office:

“It was the best possible turn out, we were able to vaccinate 130 people. We had worried people would not attend the clinic because there is so much distrust in the Abenaki community when it comes to the State. Once Missisquoi leadership explained this to the representatives from the Department of Health, they spent an unbelievable number of hours providing appropriate materials and messaging for the community which seems to have made a difference. Our only difficulty on the day was the lack of connectivity, which is a struggle for everyone in the remote areas of Vermont. We had an opportunity to express our concerns about this issue with Dr. Levine when he stopped by to see how the clinic was going.”

As Vermont Abenaki Recognition & Heritage Week draws to a close, we will continue to honor our Abenaki neighbors and reflect on the struggle to achieve state recognition, the wisdom to connect with each other through storytelling and tradition, and the importance of protecting the land and its resources.

Whether you traveled or have symptoms, COVID-19 testing is available

Remember, if you are unvaccinated (including children) and traveled outside the state, you must have a COVID-19 test within 3 days of returning to Vermont. For more details, visit [our website](#).

And if you have any [symptom](#), no matter how mild, such as a headache, cough, fatigue or a runny nose, it's best to get tested. It's also important to avoid going to work, school or other places until you receive a negative result. COVID-19 is a highly transmissible virus, and this is how we can each protect our loved ones and our communities.

If you have symptoms, talk to your health care provider. They can refer you for testing.

Even if you don't have symptoms, you can still have COVID-19 and not feel sick. If you don't have symptoms and want to get tested, there are many test sites now available around the state. It's free and easy!

Have a great weekend,

Andy

Andrew Skarzynski
Superintendent of Schools
Windham Southeast Supervisory Union