

STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

40 FIELD STREET · PAWCATUCK, CT 06379

PHONE: (860) 572-0506

FAX: (860) 599-8948



BOARD OF EDUCATION: Frank Todisco, Board Chair; Heidi Simmons, Board Secretary

SUPERINTENDENT
Van W. Riley, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
Mary Anne Butler

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
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January 7, 2021

Dear SPS Families:

Democracy: In light of yesterday's unfortunate and unnecessary events at our nation's Capitol Building, it is important to remember our schools are here to provide a safe learning environment for all of our students. Teachers and other staff members are encouraged to respectfully entertain questions from students and relieve any anxiety or fear they express about yesterday's events or potential disturbances over the upcoming few weeks. This is an opportunity for us to reinforce the importance of the democratic process and how they may contribute to it in a positive, respectful manner in the future as part of their role as informed, caring, and thoughtful citizens. Do not hesitate to reach out to your child's classroom teacher or building principal if you have any concerns or questions related to this issue and our commitment to support your student.

District Instruction: As of today, we are in a position to return to the hybrid model effective Monday, January 11th. Although we have had several staff members under isolation and quarantine over the holiday and past week, it appears we have sufficient staffing to return to our hybrid model. Should circumstances change and we need to pivot to a full distance learning model in the future, you will be notified as soon as possible. As always, our intent is to provide you as much notice as possible of any shifts in the instructional delivery model to assist you in planning for childcare.

Substitutes Needed: On a related note, if you have a college student at home or know of someone who is looking for some extra income, the district needs additional substitute teacher coverage. Some of these "floater sub" positions cover in classrooms as teachers teach from home. The Connecticut State Department of Education has relaxed requirements for this role due to the pandemic and your college age student may be qualified to make approximately \$100/day as a floating substitute teacher at one of our schools. For more information contact [Sandy Tissiere](#) at the District Office by telephone at 860-572-0506 extension 2114.

COVID-19: Connecticut Departments of Education and Public Health have collaborated and allowed for modifications to the isolation and quarantine protocols associated with COVID-19 infections in school settings. However, the decision to adjust to the new protocols is to be made in conjunction with recommendation from each district's local health department. ***Stonington Public Schools will be adhering to our current protocols, and not implementing these new optional recommendations.*** Reasons for this decision include:

- The 14-day quarantine time frame remains the best practice per the Center for Disease Control
- Recommended by local school district medical advisors, Dr. Michael Blefeld and Dr. Vijay Sikand
- Area districts including: East Lyme, Lyme Old Lyme, LEARN, Groton, North Stonington, and Voluntown are continuing to adhere to the 14-day quarantine recommendation
- Current protocol has been successful in mitigating spread and keeping schools open

- Stonington Public Schools has had cases of students/staff testing positive **post** day 10 of quarantine window
- CSDE recommends districts utilize the recommendation of their **local health departments**, as local variables influence these decisions. Currently, Ledge Light Health district still strongly recommends the 14-day quarantine period for close contacts of positive individuals.
- As a reminder, click here to access our [Decision Tree](#).

One new change is acceptance of a quick COVID-19 test is the “Abbott Molecular Test”, because it is considered a PCR test. Please request this specific test from your healthcare provider if you plan to submit a rapid test result.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Van Riley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Dr. Van Riley
Superintendent of Schools