



December 22, 2022

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,



I want to take this opportunity to share that we have hired a new Curriculum Director for Lamoille North to replace Wendy Savery who is retiring in February. I am thrilled to inform you that Valerie Sullivan, Ed.D., will assume this role! I asked Val to share some of her background and to talk about what she is looking forward to in this position and she writes as follows:

*"I'm excited to introduce myself as the new Curriculum Director for Lamoille North Supervisory Union. I'm Dr. Valerie Sullivan, a public education champion and soccer and sideline mom of three. It is an honor to join the LNSU team and serve this community's students, families, and teachers. My core values are service, equity, and potential. Being an educator allows me to live my values daily by building inclusive, learner-centered cultures where each student and teacher is supported and can thrive. Before joining LNSU, I served as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Lamoille South Unified Union for 14 years. I was a leader in the design of the mentoring and instructional coaching programs at LSUU and served as district mentor coordinator and a K-12 science coach. My classroom experience includes a decade teaching biology, anatomy and physiology, and AP biology and achieving National Board Certification in science for adolescent and young adult learners. I earned my Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy from UVM in 2012. I also have a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and a Bachelor's of Science in Biology.*

*My leadership style is collaborative and inclusive. Whenever possible, I approach the work as a servant leader, engaging with the team, inviting voice and contribution from all, and contributing to the big-picture systems thinking and the day-to-day tasks. A common strength that colleagues share about my leadership is that I read the room, include everyone, and take care of people. I am empathetic, a good listener, and an outcomes-oriented leader. I believe in the power of public education to provide opportunities, challenge and disrupt inequities, and nurture future leaders. I am committed to building the relationships and learning culture necessary to provide relevant and equitable opportunities for all.*

*I find great joy in spending time with my family and animals. I live in Johnson, on a family homestead, with my husband and children. The farm provides most of my family's food, and autumn is a time of harvesting and preserving. In addition to farm activities, I am also a baker, reader, and musician".*

What Val doesn't say is that she has been working with our Lamoille North Curriculum team since July as our Learning and Development Facilitator to review and realign our PreK-12 curriculum based on the fluid nature of curriculum design and evolving best practices. We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have Val on our team.



We also want to take the opportunity to thank Wendy Savery for her work in our Supervisory Union, first as Middle School Principal, and then as Curriculum Director for the past several years. We wish Wendy well in her retirement!

On another note, and as you are aware, we hosted our first in-person community forum post pandemic and it was, for all intents and purposes, a huge success! I want to thank our high

school students for offering childcare services and our Community Advisory Council members for helping to facilitate discussions. Our Marketing and Communications Director solicited feedback from attendees and some general themes emerged as follows: Participants praised communication efforts from the schools and staff support of students; they also commended the work ethic of all staff, the welcoming nature of the school community, and our extracurricular opportunities. Additionally, participants expressed the need for resources for more mental health supports for students, more competitive pay for staff so that we can have a better chance of retaining them, more school safety audits and more consistency across elementary schools regarding student expectations, opportunities, and grading and reporting proficiencies. Our Community Advisory Group and leadership teams will be working to address all of the issues that emerged in the next several months.

I would also like to share some timely information from our community partner, Healthy Lamoille Valley:



### **Safe Holiday Celebrations**

Did you know that December has been named [National Impaired Driving Prevention Month](#)? We encourage you to use this reminder for three purposes:

1. **Talk to the young drivers and soon to be drivers in your life about the importance of not driving under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs.** Studies have shown that cannabis impairment can last up to 6 hours after use depending on THC content and other factors. Teach your teens how to speak up and to get help. Don't let someone get behind the wheel while intoxicated. There are two great resources to support these conversations: [ParentUpVT](#) and ["Talk. They Hear You."](#)
2. **Think about holiday gatherings that you are hosting or attending.** Are alcohol or other adult use substances present? Do they need to be? As adults sometimes we overlook the unintended messaging that we give youth when alcohol is present at every party or function. If you choose to have adult-use alcohol or cannabis present, take steps to ensure that youth cannot access these substances, even through secondhand smoke exposure. Check out this helpful podcast, ["Parenting Through the Holidays."](#)
3. **Concerned about overuse of substances?** Know that we have an amazing local recovery center in the Lamoille Valley with awesome supportive staff and volunteers who are ready to talk with you or your loved one. Visit the [North Central Vermont's Recovery Center's website](#) to learn more!

Finally, as we head into our Winter break, I want to wish you all a peaceful, joy-filled and rejuvenating time with family and friends. I continue to be so grateful for our Lamoille North community members and the strong relationships we have built together. Thank you again for your collaboration, compassion and dedication to the wellbeing of our students, staff and families.

My best to you,

Catherine Gallagher, M.Ed.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Lamoille North Supervisory Union