



August 21, 2023

Dear Lamoille North Families:



As the first day of school approaches, I want to take this opportunity to welcome all of our students and staff back for the 2023-2024 school year! We are so excited to see our students and to welcome all those who are new to our schools! Our school staff have been working hard to ensure that our buildings are ready and classrooms are set up to ensure an atmosphere of celebration, belonging and community. On that note, the first day of school is **Monday, August 28, 2023**. Please be on the lookout for first week activities from your building principals.

Flooding Update

Our picturesque Vermont community has always held a special place in our hearts, and I am filled with anticipation as we embark on another year of growth, learning, and togetherness. The past year has presented its share of challenges, but I am immensely proud of how our community has come together with unwavering resilience. Nowhere is that more evident than in the response to the devastating flooding in Lamoille North communities. Lamoille North continues to be an active member part of the Lamoille County Flood Recovery Team with Director of Marketing & Communication, Rene Thibault, acting as our school district liaison. This team of county organizations includes groups such as the United Way of Lamoille County, Lamoille Health Partners, Capstone Community Action, local legislators, and more.

This team aims to coordinate efforts to support the flood-impacted communities of Lamoille County - focusing on clean-up efforts, physical and mental health support, housing and shelter, loan guidance, and more. Our participation on this team has enhanced our ability to support our students, staff, and school community members as we approach the start of a new school year, and has allowed us to strengthen partner connections to do just that. For example...

Senator Kesha Ram-Hinsdale (D-Chittenden-Southeast) and the Alchemist Foundation have partnered with Lamoille North to donate school supplies for our upcoming [3rd Annual Backpack Giveaway](#) happening Tuesday, August 22nd, at Johnson's Tuesday Night Live event at Legion Field (55 School Street). We truly appreciate her support and look forward to seeing members of our school community Tuesday night!



On a very important note, please reach out to your building principals for any help you might need if you were impacted by the flooding or for any other reason. We want to ensure you start the year off with a sense of comfort and assurance that you will have the care and support you need.

Priorities for the Year

This school year we will continue our work in social-emotional learning and wellness, restorative practices, equity, student and family engagement, and academic rigor through effective multi-tiered/layered systems of support for all students. You will see expanded opportunities for student voice and choice, school safety, a renewed commitment to family/caregiver conversations, community forums, and all things necessary to ensure that our students come to school each day feeling safe and connected, understanding expectations, and ready to learn.

Our K-12 curriculum has been realigned and will be posted on our website next week. You will be able to see what is taught at each grade level and in each content area as specified by the Vermont Agency of Education's (VTAOE) Education Quality Standards. This work has been an almost two-year process and we commend the work of our Curriculum Director, Val Sullivan, and all of the teachers in each building who worked to redesign and realign this document.

Safety Update



Our school teams are unwaveringly committed to a safe and supportive learning environment for our students and staff. We continue to build safe and inclusive communities that extend beyond our hallways. Last year, we hosted multiple community forums, worked closer than ever with community partners, and shared community resources with our families in our newsletters. The most important way we can foster safety is by knowing our school community members well and ensuring that school is a place that fosters belonging and connection. However, we are also held to other safety mandates. In the spirit of communication, we ask that you view our safety information [HERE](#). Each of our buildings and Central Office has a Crisis Planning Team, consisting of representatives from the school administration, teachers, guidance/behavioral specialists, support staff (e.g. facilities, nutrition, and transportation), and the School Resource Officer (SRO). Furthermore, the school district has a broader Crisis Planning Team that includes senior representatives of the district as well as a number of community partners further outlined on our website.

Lamoille North is focused on adhering to the [Vermont Agency of Education Recommended School Safety Best Practices](#).

Please note: We do not share detailed information about our safety plans and procedures for the protection of everyone in our facilities. This is done intentionally as a safety precaution so our responses cannot be anticipated.

VT S.138 (Act 29)

Governor Scott recently signed VT S.138, which requires all public and independent schools to develop “access control and visitor management” and “all-hazards emergency operations plan” policies according to guidelines set by the Agency of Education. The access policy must at minimum require that all school sites and supervisory union and district offices lock exterior doors during the school day and require visitor sign-in. Also, the bill sets a schedule for the widespread phase-in of schools’ use of behavioral threat assessment teams, with a model set of policies and procedures developed this year, and implementation by July 1, 2025.

Last year, we received much feedback from our communities about the need to have more support in our schools from law enforcement. To that end, in April we hired Waterville community member, Warren Lyon, as the SRO for our middle, high school and GMTCC. You can find his biography [HERE](#). We have also hired an SRO for our elementary schools. Chris Turner is a parent in our district and will begin working in this role later in the year. You can see his biography [HERE](#). Until the time that Chris begins, Warren will be available as support to all of our schools as needed. Both SRO’s share our schools’ philosophy about restorative practices and are committed to supporting our families and acting as home-to-school liaisons. The primary focus of the SRO’s will be to create positive relationships with our students and all members of the school community, to offer mentorship, and to foster a supportive learning environment. Their presence will aim to bolster a sense of security, allowing students to thrive academically and personally.

Final Thoughts

In the spirit of our close-knit community, I look forward to connecting with all of you throughout the year. We have much to celebrate given the unique and many strengths of our communities. I invite you to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead, and help us continue to create a learning environment that nurtures the hearts and minds of our students and all members of our school community.



In closing, I continue to be so grateful for our Lamoille North community members and the strong relationships we have built together. We appreciate your support for our work with your children and youth. 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