



February 23, 2024

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,

Please note important upcoming events set forth below*:



February 26, 2024, Budget Information Meeting, 6:00 pm, at GMTCC
February 26 – March 5, 2024, LNSU Winter Break

**Please make sure you check for updated changes or additions to dates of events listed on your school(s) website. Your school website is updated daily.*

Today is the last school day before winter break and our hope is that you enjoy your time doing the things that you love with the people you love! School will resume on **Wednesday, March 6th, 2024**, the day after Town Meeting!



In important news yesterday, Governor Scott signed a law aimed at driving down education spending. H.850 addresses the consequences of Act 127, the Act that has had people concerned, not about its premise, but about its implementation. H.850 will repeal the 5% homestead tax rate increase cap created by Act 127 — Vermont’s most recent education funding law — and replace it with a tax discount system limited to districts that lost taxing capacity under the new pupil weighting system. **Lamoille North’s district rate will drop from the maximum 5% increase (the cap under Act 127 before it was repealed) to an estimated 2.65% increase pre-Common Level of Appraisal (CLA), which is different for each town.** You can read the text of H.850 [HERE](#).

The law will also allow school districts to push back budget votes until April 15, 2024, as lawmakers hope removing the property tax cap will spur school boards to remove spending. Many districts are still planning to put budgets in front of voters on Vermont’s Town Meeting Day, which this year is March 5, 2024. Lamoille North will move forward as planned on Town Meeting Day because we believe our budgets are responsible, sound, fiscally conservative and driven by student need.



As you are aware from our Annual Report and the information we shared at the Annual Meeting, our spending focuses on maintaining the status quo for our students; however, due to inflation, rising staff health care costs and teacher salaries, and the increased needs of Vermont’s children, an increasing number of whom are struggling with mental health challenges, we are seeing increased budgets.

We indefinitely postponed building and renovation projects and most repairs and have focused on the resources our students need to access support for their education, engagement and wellbeing. We are not seeking millions in capital improvements that we see other districts in the

state proposing. We are proposing a budget that supports the basic entitlements to education that all of our students deserve. You may have read the article in the News and Citizen that states Lamoille North is not trying to cut millions in capital expenditures, and that is because we simply don't have millions in capital expenditures in our budgets in the first place. We would never have considered those expenses in today's climate while building responsible budgets.

Our Boards did an excellent job of balancing the opportunities presented under Act 127 to broaden and enrich services to our students without overburdening the statewide education budget and our local communities. They were thoughtful, methodical, and they met with all stakeholders via meetings, where public comment was heard, and for numerous budget presentations. Our Boards have proposed sound, reasonable budgets. And, as we have seen, we cannot predict how our property taxes will behave, but we can influence how our school budgets are developed. Please view our Annual Report [HERE](#).

We are proud to serve in a state that believes every single child deserves an excellent education regardless of their background or zip code. We have faced flooding, poverty, homelessness, and other factors impacting our communities; however, we have much to celebrate. We have more and more opportunities for our students and we see, year over year, more and more student engagement and success. Our budgets align with our constitutional, moral and ethical commitment to provide a high-quality education to our children by focusing on the best interests and needs of our children and families.

Very truly yours,

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