

# ERVING SCHOOL UNION #28

ERVING, LEVERETT, NEW SALEM, WENDELL, SHUTESBURY

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July 9, 2020

Dear Union #28 Families,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying your summer with your children and family and sharing all of those special moments of summer--sunshine, walks, backyard playtime, rest and relaxation. As family members who supported remote learning on a daily basis, it is well-deserved. We are so thankful for the wonderful family support our district received. I know you join me once again in thanking our school staff for their tireless efforts this spring. Union #28 has an amazing team of educators!

At the end of June, I shared with you the Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance from Commissioner Riley. This guidance is the document the Leadership Team and I are working with to craft our reopening plans for Fall 2020. The overarching goal of this guidance is “the safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings, to maximize learning and address our students’ holistic needs.” Additionally, this guidance provides a clear set of health and safety requirements for in-person learning in our schools this fall. To that end, the Leadership Team, principals and custodians have been conducting feasibility studies to determine what our classrooms and physical spaces will look like with the current FY21 budgets we have in place. This information will also be shared with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Commissioner and his Return-to-School Working Group, in order to further inform the final and more comprehensive guidance we will receive towards the end of July. Due to the unpredictable nature of the coronavirus, we are also planning for a hybrid model and for full remote learning, if that becomes necessary.

Our initial feasibility studies are based on physical distancing of six feet whenever possible. Classroom set-up, based on physical safety requirements, will certainly look different than it has in the past: more desks, students facing forward, limited additional furniture, minimized movement of students throughout the school, re-purposing of non-classroom space. What won’t change is the dedication of our wonderful staff and the commitment to the best education for our students, a hallmark of our Union #28 schools.

In this return-to-school model, we look to return our K-6 students to school five days per week. Additional information regarding preschool programs will be distributed soon. Masks will be required for all students in grades 2 through 6. Mask breaks will be scheduled throughout the day. Movement of the students will be minimized, and there will be many opportunities to access the outdoors throughout the day. Principals are working with teachers and custodians to craft the layouts of classrooms and other additional spaces and schedules are being created. A Union #28 Return-to-School survey has been sent or you will be receiving one soon from your principal.

As a Leadership Team, we continue to meet twice weekly to discuss and plan for reopening and we continue to adapt our plans as we receive new information and guidance.

I realize there are many questions. Please know that we are available to hear them--even if we don't have all the answers right now! We will be providing opportunities for your voices to be heard through communications with your principal and other members of the Leadership Team. Please feel free to contact your school principal or me via email with your thoughts and wonderings. Look for more to come over the next few weeks as we continue to refine plans, connect with you and share the newest information as we receive and synthesize it.

***“Unity is strength...where there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.”*** Mattie Stepanik, American poet (or, as he wanted to be remembered, "a poet, a peacemaker, and a philosopher who played")

Thank you for your continued support of our schools as we work to provide the best educational opportunities for your children.

Best,



Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent of Schools