

Dear Clarendon, Shrewsbury, Tinmouth, and Wallingford Communities

As we are all aware, our schools have been under tremendous pressure from so many directions this past year, most due to the pressures of the ongoing, everchanging Covid pandemic. I'm proud to say that we as a school district have worked hard to keep our students and families informed on the why's and how's of the pandemic responses required by each of our schools. Parents have been so diligent in keeping their children home when they are symptomatic or have a need for quarantining and have been generally supportive of our masking mandate within our buildings and school grounds. These actions have been vital to keeping our children attending in-person classes. As I write this report, we are again entering a new unknown with variants complicating what had started to feel like a return to a more normal school experience for everyone. We continue to encourage everyone to keep up their efforts and to make use of the wonderful vaccines that are available to everyone five years of age and up.

Last year's report made you aware of the District's Equity Plan adoption. We continue working to update our District Policies to conform with that plan. Currently, the board is completing an update of our District Goals, both for the changing dynamics of education in Vermont and the possible funding changes that are planned to be discussed in the Vermont Legislature this upcoming session.

This year we have also been working to increase our connections with our communities. Every town has its own personality and that means each town requires a bit of a different strategy on how best to open conversations. One communication method that has seen growing success is the Community Conversations that were started by the Community Engagement Committee. These have been happening on the 3rd Mondays of most months at 6:30pm. It is a great opportunity to have direct conversations with 2-3 board members on pretty much any subject connected to our schools. During these sessions, your questions can be answered and thoughts shared and we hope that regular attendance will continue and increase over the coming year. The opportunity to speak directly with board members is so valuable, both for those in attendance and for the board members. It is not something that happens easily during regular full board meetings as that is when the business of the board happens with the middle ground being at regularly scheduled monthly committee meetings. These committee meetings are where the nuts and bolts work of the board occurs and they are more casual than our bi-monthly full board meetings allowing for increased public participation.

I close with both a request for patience and a request for communication. Please share your thoughts and needs with us; then have patience as we work through all of these competing demands to find a balance that works the best for the most people.

Sincerely yours

Adrienne Raymond, Chair