

Mill River Schools Community,

It is my pleasure to offer this report on behalf of the Mill River UUSD Superintendent's Office.

Calendar year 2020 was something else. We all expected 2021 to start with difficulty and finish smoothly. In reality, we have navigated more challenges as a school district in 2021 than we experienced in 2020. Because of this, we certainly know that our community is tired. Tired of the pandemic, the restrictions, the unknown, the conflicts, and the effects of illness on people we care about. Everyone is tired.

But, it is important to note that people in this community are still showing up. Despite the challenges and changes that have emerged over the past two years, your community is showing up. Our students come to school every day under challenging circumstances. Learning and engaging is not always easy. But, they do their absolute best to make it happen. School faculty, staff and administrators - like their peers across the world - are navigating what is without doubt one of the more challenging periods in history to work in schools. But, they are making it happen and students are learning and thriving even under difficult circumstances. Our Board members, even in challenging moments, are showing up and making decisions for the good of the school district and its students. No aspect of the school experience for any of these groups has been unaffected by the pandemic. We see challenges, hurt, heartache and frustration. But, there are also moments of joy, growth, excitement and energy. Through it all, our community keeps showing up.

For anyone not connected to our schools, the following are some of the key aspects of the first half of the 2021-2022 school year:

- We began the school year on schedule on September 1st, with all PK-12 students fully in-person from day one.
- Following the Board's decision, a flag stating "Black Lives Matter" with a Pride-striped edge flew at Mill River Union High School on the main flagpole from early September through early December.
- During the month of November we hosted vaccination clinics in elementary schools for our students aged 5-11. Elementary vaccination rates are climbing. Our Mill River Union vaccination rates are roughly 60%.
- As of the writing of this letter, we have been in the midst of the most significant levels of COVID cases of the pandemic in our schools. The dynamics have also changed in terms of where authority resides for decision-making in schools in Vermont related to managing the COVID pandemic. The chart below outlines those shifts for your reference.

2020-2021 Authority

2021-2022 Authority

Combination: State & District	Regulatory # of school days Definition of "Attendance" Remote / Hybrid / In-Person	State
State	Operational Masking Screenings Distancing Visitors	District

	Events / Sports Spectators	
State	Public Health Management and communication re: school-based cases Determination of close contacts Assigning quarantine	State

If you ever feel like you need more information about what our school district and its schools are up to, we want to help you to find the information you are looking for. Please do not hesitate to call or email any of our principals with any questions you may have. Please don't hesitate to call or email our district office with other questions. We'll work hard to point you in the right direction and find answers if we don't know them. We are committed to our students, committed to our schools, and committed to this community - through the best of times and the worst of times. Thank you for supporting all that we do on behalf of our community's students.

Sincerely,

David Younce
MRUUSD Superintendent of Schools
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