

To: North Berkshire School Union staff, students, families, and community members

Date: Monday, November 16, 2020

We would like to thank the North Berkshire School Union communities of Clarksburg, Florida, Monroe, Rowe, and Savoy for working together with each of the schools to successfully reopen the buildings at the start of this school year in order to effectively educate the students in person each day. Through many months of careful, diligent planning starting in the late spring, we were able to collaborate and develop plans for a safe return to school during the 2020-21 school year. By implementing these new safety guidelines, after reviewing numerous documents from the state of Massachusetts outlining reopening guidance, we have kept our students and staff virus free during the first two and half months of the school year.

As we were reminded by Governor Baker on Friday, November 13, it is of critical importance for all communities to follow the state's updated safety protocols as the virus continues to spread across the country and state, especially with the holiday season approaching, to assist our efforts to keep our school buildings open for safe in person learning going forward for the remainder of the school year. The data shows that school buildings are not "spreaders" of the virus, primarily because the schools that are open, like in the North Berkshire School Union, are following the safety guidelines with fidelity on a daily basis. All students and staff members wear masks, they wash their hands regularly, and stay safely distanced while in school. We also want to thank the families and staff for following the guidance to stay home when not feeling well, and then getting a negative test and remaining symptom free before returning to the school building. Another key piece of the NBSU safety plan has been the rule to quarantine for fourteen days if someone has traveled to a state on the "unsafe" list. All of these actions are keeping our schools safe because the virus has not been allowed into our schools through this strict adherence to the rules.

It will be crucial for all of us to consider the Governor's statement on Friday that informal gatherings and social interactions are what is driving this recent surge in positive cases. The new guidance from the state makes it clear that indoor gatherings should not exceed ten people, and we are all encouraged to stay within our family groupings or "bubbles" to mitigate the spread of this virus. If we do travel for the holidays, and it is to a state on the Massachusetts unsafe list, then a fourteen-day quarantine will be required upon returning to the state. Also, anyone who visits Massachusetts is required to complete the online form and be tested before entering the state, depending on their circumstances in their home state.

This past Friday on November 13 represented eight months since we closed our schools down on Friday, March 13. Please be careful and work together with us through the holiday season to help keep our school buildings open to safely educate our children.

  
John Tynan-Select Board

  
Arleigh Cooper-School Committee

  
John Franzoni-Superintendent