

# Thank you to district staff and Covid preparation updates

August 30, 2020

Hello Everyone!

I am writing to update you on a few items. I also want to thank everyone for working so hard these first few weeks to be ready for the students return. Your efforts are truly amazing and make me so proud!

The district staff continue to work to make sure all of the supplies we need are ordered and stocked up for cleaning, disinfecting, personal protection, etc. Please, if you notice something is not available let your building custodian or administrator know so we can check our supplies and order more if necessary. Some items are still in short supply, ie. hand sanitizer and dispensers. The work around is actually preferred, hand washing. We do have an ample supply of soap.

I am excited to be able to announce our Co-COVID Coordinators for the district. Andrea Davis, RN (OQS Nurse) and Felicia Hayes, RN (HHS/HACTC Nurse) have agreed to share this important role. This outline of responsibilities comes directly from the Safe and Healthy Start Guide created by the Vermont Department of Health and the Agency of Education:

Each school or SU/SD or independent school should identify a COVID-19 Coordinator to establish, review and implement health and safety protocols. The COVID-19 Coordinator should be a school nurse or other health professional qualified to interpret guidelines and ensure they are implemented to the best standard of practice. Make sure staff and parents/caregivers know how to contact the COVID-19 Coordinator. A workgroup should be established to review and implement health and safety protocols (including policies and procedures, facilities and supplies, education and training, communication and messaging, etc.). The workgroup should consist of administrators, teachers, paraeducators, custodians and other critical school staff who work with and around students and have knowledge to contribute to the safe and healthy reopening of schools. Consider including families, especially those whose children have special health and education needs in the workgroup or identify additional strategies to solicit input.

Thank you Andrea and Felicia for stepping up to help us all in this time of need.

The district continues the assessment of our heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in all buildings. The engineering firm hired to do the assessment has reviewed the specifications, operating condition and the controls used to manage our equipment. Their recommendations include changing the schedule of start and stop times of all of our air handling equipment to maximize air flow in classrooms, offices and school facilities. Our wonderful maintenance staff have already completed this first step. Second, they recommend filter changes in all of our air handling equipment to filter out much smaller particles that may be in the air. Once the filter changes are made an assessment of the air flow will take place to ensure the equipment is still working at peak effectiveness. The district has already ordered the new filters and scheduled the air flow testing. We may need everyone's cooperation when this work is scheduled as we want to complete it as soon as possible.

Lastly, I understand how stressful this summer and the start of school has been. Not only are we dealing with a pandemic but we are changing the way we do our work drastically and suddenly. Again, I really appreciate the efforts you have put in this regard. It is a privilege to work with all of you.

Tom DeBalsi  
Superintendent of Schools  
Hartford School District