

Friday, February 24, 2023

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,

Please note important upcoming events set forth below:



- LUHS Varsity Girls Basketball Quarterfinals Game, February 24, 2023, 7:00 pm @ Fairhaven High School. Watch online: <https://www.youtube.com/@FHUHSathletics>
- LNMUUSD Budget Information Meeting, February 27, 2023, 6:00 pm, GMTCC
- LNSU Winter Break, February 27 – March 7, 2023
- Town Meeting Day, PLEASE VOTE, March 7, 2023

I write to you on the eve of our February break with the wish that all of you have a wonderful week off doing the things you love with the people most important to you. It is hard to believe that upon our return, we will have only three and a half months until the end of the year!

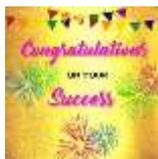


We extend a warm thank you to all of you who were able to attend our Annual Meeting last Monday. In some ways, it resembled a dinner show during the hour before the actual Annual Meeting. We had students from both the Jazz Band and the Jamtones perform for our guests, followed by a beautiful montage of our Lancer Dancers; our student entrepreneurs were present displaying their wonderful creations and business ideas for people to survey.



We simultaneously enjoyed a Farm-to-Table feast featuring locally-sourced foods prepared by Karyl Kent and her team. We thank Karyl Kent and her team, our high school childcare volunteers, music teachers, Molly Maroney and Dan Johnstone, and business teacher, Bob Fredette, for their participation in this special event. As I looked around the room and saw the clear enjoyment of the guests and the talent of all our students and staff who were in attendance, I could not be prouder of the system we have and the opportunities available to our students under the guidance of enormously talented and committed educators.

The business of the evening began with a reading of the warned Articles and our Meeting Moderator, Mark Nielsen, invited several of us to speak to both the budget and the stories of our student successes and opportunities for growth. The roadmap to student and staff success includes the three tenets of our Agency of Education mandated three-year Recovery Plan post pandemic – Academic Rigor, Social-Emotional and Physical Wellbeing, and Student Engagement. We know that our nation experienced significant learning loss as a result of the pandemic and we had, and have, work to do to help lessen the gaps in learning. The role of our literacy and math interventionists to assist with learning recovery cannot be underscored.



We discussed our successes, having almost completed the second year of the plan. We are seeing the importance of our students being provided nutrition through universal access to school meals so that they are ready to learn; we are seeing the results of professional development for staff in literacy and math in our students' performance; and, we are seeing the results of well-defined support systems for students given adaptations, modifications and enhancements to curriculum in order to thrive. We attribute our evolving successes with students' and staffs' sense of safety and belonging, to our robust work with Lamoille Restorative

Center and our schools in restorative practices. Everything that we hope to accomplish has to begin with the understanding that without relationships and that sense of belonging, the most well-oiled academic system would not be enough. We need both.

What are some of those evolving successes? Here are just a few stories from our elementary schools:

- A third-grade student who was two years below grade level reading expectations in the fall, with appropriate literacy interventions, reached grade level expectations in four months.
- Many, many first-grade students began the school year testing at a beginning kindergarten reading level and after seven months of interventions progressed through seven reading levels and no longer need targeted interventions because they are now meeting grade-level expectations.
- Two other students in third grade were reading at a grade 1 level and after four months of reading interventions are now reading at third grade benchmark expectations, which is two and 1/3 years of reading progress in four months!
- 85% of all students receiving interventions in reading and math experienced significant growth to meet or exceed benchmark expectations.



At the middle level, students are encouraged to pursue their passions and interests. In math class, students applied their knowledge of systems of equations by creating a business and determining when their business would make a profit. One student chose to determine how much could be made with a snow cone business and researched the costs needed for the business and determined a fair price at which to sell them. He did not stop there. He brought his proposal to the principal to see if the school would buy a snow cone machine to make money for the for the upcoming Medic tournament fundraiser. He brought his proposal to Ms. Maurice, and she approved the purchase. This shows how math students can use math they are learning now and apply it to real-world situations.



At the high school, we are expanding our Advanced Placement offerings for next year, but I want to highlight that one of our current offerings, AP Human Geography taught by Sara Reed, had a 100% pass rate last year for the final AP exam. The global average for this exam is 2.70 and our students scored the highest at 4.5. "Success" on an AP exam is defined as a score of 3 or higher, which is the score point that research finds predictive of college success and graduation.

We have student leadership opportunities and currently have five student representatives to the school board.



Our education in the trades continues to be second to none and most recently one GMTCC student, Haley Michaud, was honored at the Statehouse with the Vermont Presidential Scholars Award for her work in Career and Technical Education. The Vermont Presidential Scholars Program is a statewide recognition of student citizenship, academic, artistic, and leadership excellence. Now a senior at Green Mountain Tech, Haley is in her second and final year in the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) program.

In 2022, she took the gold medal at the SkillsUSA Vermont Conference, a contest in career readiness and professional excellence in Career and Technical Education. She ranked 7th in the country at the SkillsUSA National Conference in Atlanta.

Haley attended the Pre-Tech program at Green Mountain Tech during her sophomore year. After exploring all 12 offerings, she landed with HVAC, believing it was the best fit. Even though she'd been warned away from attending Green Mountain Tech, a product of continued lack of knowledge about career and tech ed, she remains proud and confident of her choice. "I've achieved more in my last three years here than most high school students ever will." She says that Green Mountain Tech "gives you a head start in whatever field you want to work in, academically as well." Indeed, it does.

We have more students engaging with their peers in collaboration on projects and membership in clubs, performing arts and athletics. We have many, many talents to celebrate. Investments to support continued and even more success include funding for universal access to meals for all students, ongoing training and professional development in restorative practices, literacy, math and other content areas for all educators, funding for facility needs and safety enhancements, funding for interventionists, coaches, mentors and counseling professionals for our students, and competitive salaries for our teachers and staff so they want to, and can afford to, live in Lamoille County where we can train, develop and retain them as expert educators, staff and system support professionals. Continuity in education for our students is critical for a healthy culture of belonging and building and maintaining relationships.

For access to all of the slides presented at the Annual Meeting, please see [HERE](#).

I also want to thank our entire School Board, Community Partners, Central Office team, Administrators and Business Manager, Deb Clark, for their work ethic and support for schools and communities in building a budget that is fiscally sound and supportive of our students and staff. We are extremely fortunate to have the expert teachers, school staff and tremendously supportive administrators and School Board who continue to keep the bar high and support all of our work on behalf of our students and families every day.



Lastly, I continue to be so grateful for our Lamoille North community members and the strong relationships we have built together. We appreciate your support for our work with your children and youth. Thank you again for your collaboration, compassion and dedication to the wellbeing of our students, staff and families. I hope all of you have a wonderful break and we will look forward to seeing all of our students on Wednesday, March 8!

My best to you,

Catherine Gallagher, M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools
Lamoille North Supervisory Union