

Westport Community Schools District Newsletter

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE - DR. REESE

This is a great time of year to celebrate with our families, but it is also an appropriate time to reflect on the past year and to set goals for the upcoming year. My past six months in the district have allowed me to learn a lot about this district.

I believe one of the biggest strengths of Westport is the community, from the students and parents to the school staff to other members of the community that provide supports to our students. We have a dedicated staff, committed to each child. We have hard-working students, who are invested in their learning and giving back to the community. We are also very fortunate to work in a community where so many people value and support the work that we do each day with the children of Westport. This support was reflected in the vote earlier this spring in support of the new school building. This was no simple task and we truly appreciate the commitment of a number of Westport's residents in support of this effort. While the opening of the building is almost three years away, we continue to work closely with members of the school building committee, various town boards, and a number of community members to complete this project and provide a beautiful building that not only meets the changing needs of students today, but also is an incredible resource for the community. I recognize that any proposed building project can have some challenges, however, I firmly believe that the new building will be an incredible asset for our community for years to come and appreciate the willingness of a variety of community groups in working with us to ensure that the opening of the Westport Middle-High School is something can celebrate!

My goals for for the upcoming year are to:

- continue to improve communication/outreach efforts
- work closely with each school to ensure that our proposed budget for the 2019-2020 school year reflects current student population/needs & provides for rigorous instruction and courses for all students
- increase school safety and training for students and staff

SCHOOL SAFETY

Beginning in January, students and staff will have an opportunity to practice various safety strategies that might be employed should there be an intruder in the building. In January, all students and staff will participate in a table-top exercise. On a non-specified day, there will be an announcement made over the intercom notifying students and staff of the drill and asking them to complete the tabletop exercise with their class. This drill should take no longer than 15-20 minutes. All of the feedback provided by students and staff will be reviewed by the central office administration, school administrators and our SRO officer. Issues will be identified and will be reviewed with staff at a meeting in the afternoon. On the following day, staff will do a debrief with students to discuss anything else to consider for future drills. Please note that for this drill in January, students and staff will not be implementing any of the strategies... they will only be discussing the various strategies and problem-solving about the different options.

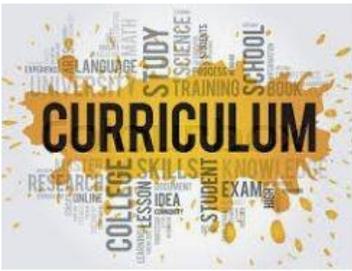


We will communicate with families on the day that the drill is occurring to let you know that it is happening, as well as any outcomes from the drill.

While we recognize that holding these types of 'drills' may seem a bit scary, particularly for younger students, it is imperative that we practice and help both our staff and students develop the strategies to protect themselves in the unlikely event that there is an intruder in a building. For more information about the approach that our safety drills are based upon, you can check out the following website: <https://www.alicetraining.com/our-program/alice-training/k12-education/>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Karen Augusto, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent at kaugusto@westportschools.org

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION - MR. ELWELL



Earlier in December, homework surveys were posted to each school's website. The brief, school-specific surveys are designed to solicit feedback from parents regarding

perceptions of the District's homework policies and practices. As the District continues to re-examine the use of homework as a mechanism to support and reinforce learning, parental input is an important part of the process, and the survey represents one opportunity for parents to engage in this dialogue with Westport educators. Thank you to those who have already responded, and if you would still like to complete the survey, please visit your child's school website by the end of December!

This fall, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released *Family Guides to the Standards*, covering some of the learning standards that every student will master in each grade level and how families can help them to achieve these learning goals. Guides include standards for English Language Arts, Math, and Science and Technology/Engineering. To access the *Family Guides* to learn more about the standards at the core of the District's curriculum revision efforts, please visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks>.

SPECIAL EDUCATION - MRS. SANTOS

December is an extremely busy month for all. Two of our substantially separate classrooms at the Junior



Senior High School have embraced the holidays by hosting holiday sales. December 17th through the 20th, students and staff will have the opportunity to purchase "homemade" pet treats and holiday ornaments all created by the students. These will be available during lunch in the cafeteria. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to West Place Animal Sanctuary in Tiverton. Wishing you a wonderful and safe holiday season!

The district is continuing to look for substitutes to work in our schools. For more information, contact Kristin McDaniel, human resource coordinator, at (508) 636-1140 or check out our website at https://www.westportschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=290776&type=d&pREC_ID=669651 to learn about the different substituting opportunities and application requirements.



WESTPORT MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATES

We are very excited by the continued progress of this building project that will house all of our fifth-twelfth grade students beginning in September 2021.. At the November school committee meeting, the school committee decided that the building will be named the Westport Middle-High School.

Each month, we will provide the community with an update of the ongoing work. Over the next two weeks, the abatement/demolition contractor will be completing the abatement activities on the second floor level and begin preparation for demolition. Abatement will continue on the first floor level with containment breakdown occurring by end of December 21st and followed by preparations for demolition. Roof work will continue with the removal of the roofing system and insulation.

Drilling of the water supply well has commenced and will continue to the depth of 500' or until water is reached.



TECHNOLOGY - MR. NEKRASZ

The IT Department is in the process of implementing the rest of the technology bought during the summer months. We purchased 150 Chromebooks and 70 HP desktop computers. The Chromebooks were distributed this past autumn and the PC will start to be installed over the Holiday break.



These PC's are robust computers running Microsoft Windows 10 Professional. They have 16 gigabyte of RAM, 256 Gig SSD drives and digital video connectors to easily connect to a monitor and projector. These PC's in the Westport Elementary School and the Macomber School will enhance the classrooms for teachers and students.

The Chromebooks are the latest model for student use with touchscreens. They are capable to run the latest version of TestNav, which is the program that students will use to complete the new online MCAS testing.

TRANSPORTATION - MS. RAPOZA

As the winter weather comes upon us, please be sure to dress your children appropriately. Ice and snow can be challenging for bus drivers, remind your children to stay clear until the bus makes a complete stop when loading and unloading.



There has been a great concern with vehicles passing school buses while their stop lights are on. If you see a vehicle pass a school bus, take down the license plate and vehicle description and report to your local police department. Failing to stop or illegally passing a stopped school bus with flashing lights can result in a \$250 fine in Massachusetts, at minimum. A second offense by a fine of not less than \$500. That fine can go up to \$2,000 and a suspended license of up to a year for subsequent offenses (MGL 90-14).

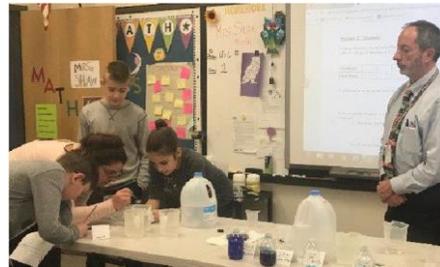
Students are not allowed to be dropped off in the front of the schools, please drop off children in the designated drop off areas.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM



In order to reduce some of the waste in the cafeteria, The Macomber School implemented a "share table" at the Macomber School. We are beginning the Share Table with grade 2, students may put unopened milk and other sealed items on the designated table. Other students may take the items. Mrs. Mahjoory has been discussing this with the grade 2 students to educate them on food waste. Thank you to everyone for their efforts as we kick this challenge off throughout the other grade levels. The School Lunch Program began taste testing new school lunch entrees. We completed the first taste testing at the Macomber School on December 11 with students trying Chicken Alfredo with Pasta. The 1st and 2nd grade students enjoyed it the most. We will be taste testing at the Westport Elementary School in January and then the Jr. Sr. High School in February.

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Students from Mrs. Shaw and Mr. Tetrault's sixth grade classes completed a hands-on, engaging activity to help better understand ratio and proportion.



IMPORTANT 2018-2019 CALENDAR UPDATES

The Westport Community Schools have added two additional early release days to the 2018-2019 school calendar. these days will allow staff to participate in professional development activities to better support your children. Please add the following days to your calendar and make any necessary childcare arrangements:

January 22, 2019

June 12, 2019



FY 20 BUDGET TIMELINE

Our budget is a planning document, a work in progress which reflects the student needs of our district. As always, all school committee meetings are public meetings and members of the community are welcome to attend and participate during the public comment period of the meetings.

October 2018	Complete FY18 Reports Develop FY20 Budget Templates
November 1st	Distribute template to School Depts
November 14th	School Comm. Mtg - Timeline review
November 19th	Principals/Dept Heads submit budgets
November 26th – 30th	Central Admin Review of budgets
December 12th	School Comm – Budget Presentation
December 21st	Submit Prelim. Budget to the Town
January 9th, 2019	School Comm. - FY20 Budget Review
January 23rd, 2019	School Committee – Public Hearing Proposed School Dept. FY20 Budget
	*Must be advertised 7 days prior (MGL 71-38N)/Proposed FY20 Budget Review
February 6, 2019	School Comm. - FY20 Budget Review
February 2019	Westport Finance Committee FY20 Budget Review
March 2019	School Committee Final FY20 Budget Discussion (if needed)
April 2019	Town elections & budget proposals with explanations made available to the public
May 2019	Annual Town Meeting

IMPORTANT DATES IN DECEMBER/JANUARY

* (CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS ON EACH OF THESE EVENTS)

DECEMBER

19	WES-MAC PTO Movie Night With Santa (at WJSHS)
20	Westport's Got Talent 4th Annual Talent Show (WJSHS)
24-Jan 1	Winter Break

JANUARY

1	No School - New Year's Day
2	Students and Staff return from break
8	School Council Meeting (Mac)
8	WES-MAC PTO Meeting (Mac/WES)
9	School Committee Meeting
21	No School: Martin Luther King, Jr Day
22	Early Release Day (all students)
23	School Committee Meeting
25	Term 1 Ends (WJSHS)

Did you know... Our sports teams have games throughout December and January (Boys and Girls Basketball - freshman, junior varsity and varsity). You can check out each team's schedule at:
www.miaa.net/schools/public/WestWe3

Come cheer on our student athletes!



