

## Westport Community Schools District Newsletter

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE - DR. REESE**

This year is passing very quickly! We have been very fortunate this winter with weather and were not impacted by many snow storms - therefore, we only had one full snow day. The school committee will be voting on the final day of school during an April school committee meeting.

Students in all schools have been busy over the past month, many preparing for the upcoming state mandated testing - an opportunity for them to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have attained during this past school year. This will be the first year for our high school students to take the online version of the test. Our high school administration, not unlike schools across the state, are anxious to see how this different format of testing impacts student performance.

On the personnel front, I want to take this opportunity to welcome Ms. Leah Chesney as the new interim vice principal for the Westport Elementary School. Ms. Chesney is no stranger to many students, staff and families - she has worked in our district for a number of years, most recently as an instructional interventionist and lead teacher at the Macomber Elementary School. She will be serving in this role through the end of the school year and I am confident that students and staff will both be appreciative of the talents she brings to this role! We also are in the process of filling the WES principal position for next year. Initial interviews have occurred during this month and finalists will be identified in early April. At that time, we will also identify various opportunities for students, staff and the community to meet each of the finalists and provide input into the selection of the WES building leader.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY**

This month, we practiced our lockdown and barricade safety protocols. I want to thank local public safety officials for their continued support and guidance in these drills. Their input helps us to make any necessary adjustments to the protocols and to determine any additional safety measures we should be taking.



Our next safety drill will focus on evacuation strategies. Evacuation, when deemed safe, is probably the most important and effective strategy for minimizing harm during an incident. We have been meeting with police and fire staff to establish our procedures for evacuation and will be working with staff and students to help them learn and practice these strategies.

As has been mentioned in the past, we recognize that discussion about these drills can be scary and might seem to be overwhelming for some students (and staff members), but it is important that we equip everyone with the appropriate tools and techniques in the very unlikely event that an incident occurs. The skills that our students are learning can help them in the school setting, but also in the community. We appreciate the continued support of families to encourage school safety.

Over the next few months, we will be doing some small renovations to the main entryways to increase the safety for when someone is trying to enter the building. In addition, we have applied for a state grant that will assist us in moving some additional safety initiatives along. We will know by the end of April if we received that grant.

## CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION - MR. ELWELL



On March 22, Westport educators participated in several professional development offerings, with an emphasis on curriculum, planning and social and emotional learning.

At the Macomber School, teachers explored how to leverage more from the ST Math Program through the use of student data and available online resources. ST Math allows students to deepen their conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts, most notably through the experiences of Jiji the penguin!

At Westport Elementary School, teachers examined the Understanding by Design (UbD) Curriculum Development approach, and spent time “unpacking” content standards with McTighe Associate Ms. Elizabeth Cooney. The Westport Community Schools have adopted the UbD approach for curriculum development efforts district-wide.

Westport Junior Senior High School faculty and staff participated in “Courageous Conversations” with Dr. Kalise Wornum. Dr. Wornum facilitated a dialogue that explored how race, culture and other factors impact teaching and learning, as well as strategies to navigate difficult exchanges in school.

Additionally, Teaching Assistants and Related Service Providers explored the impact of trauma on the student experience with Ms. Julie Love, Director of the McLean School Nurse Project. Creating a trauma-informed learning environment continues to be a priority for the District!

### Professional Development Topics

[ST Math](#)

[Understanding by Design](#)

[Cultural Proficiency](#)

[McLean School Nurse Project](#)

### Human Resources

The district is continuing to look for substitutes to work in our schools. For more information, contact Kristin McDaniel, Human Resources Coordinator, at 774-309-3385 or check out our website at [https://www.westportschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=290776&type=d&pREC\\_ID=669651](https://www.westportschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=290776&type=d&pREC_ID=669651) to learn about the various substitute opportunities and application requirements.



### WESTPORT MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATES

As we move into April, we are excited about determining the name of the General Contractor that will see our building project through completion! Once this company has been named, work will start happening on the site... we are expecting an official ground-breaking ceremony to happen during the month of May.



## SPECIAL EDUCATION - MRS. SANTOS

At least annually, the Individual Education Program Team (IEP) must meet to discuss each student's progress, in respect to their goals/objectives. The IEP Team consists of parents, regular and special education teachers as well as other relevant school staff. During the annual review meeting, the special and regular education teachers and ancillary service providers, explain progress made given data collected over time. The IEP Team will then consider the most appropriate goals and objectives for the upcoming year. The new IEP will be written to ensure that our students achieve to their fullest potential.



## TRANSPORTATION - MS. RAPOZA

Spring is in the air! As the spring approaches we will be planning our second bus evacuation drill. Evacuation drills help to prepare students in the event there is a bus emergency. Students are informed to listen and follow the directions of the bus drivers. Students should take evacuation drills seriously. We encourage students to discuss the drills with family members. This not only helps the child work through the event but helps families understand what the process would be in case of an emergency. Families are welcome to contact the Transportation Director if they should have further questions.



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).

It is illegal to do u-turns on Main Road in the front of the Jr. Sr. High School. Students are not allowed to be dropped off in the front of the schools, please drop off children in the designated drop off areas.

## TECHNOLOGY - MR. NEKRASZ



The IT Department is in full swing supporting the upcoming MCAS online testing this Spring. We will have representatives at the Westport Elementary School and the Jr/Sr

High School during the testing days to support the computing devices during the test. TestNav is the program that allows them to take the test on the Chromebooks. The student will not log into their normal Google account, instead they will click on the Apps button on the bottom of the log on screen and click on TestNav. The testing facilitator will instruct students with proper sign on instructions at the time of the test.

All our testing is hosted on a proxy server that we have set up at the two schools. Staff have been trained to upload all the students and tests appropriate to their individual school. This proxy server allows for testing on a network that does not rely on the Internet during the test. After the test is completed by all students, the test answers are securely uploaded to the MCAS Testing Center.

Good luck to all the students taking the test this spring!

## Picture of the Month



March provides us with an opportunity to celebrate reading and children's author Dr. Seuss.

Walking through the schools, one could witness many ways in which students celebrated reading - even in physical education class where

Mac PE Teacher Ms. Majhoory created a number of stations based on images from various Dr. Seuss books.

## SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

In order to reduce some of the waste in the cafeteria, the Macomber School continues to have students use the “share table”. The School Lunch Program has completed taste testings at all three schools and it was successful. The students enjoyed trying new items and made recommendations of new menu items they would like to try. The Elementary School tried a new lunch menu item beef chili on February 13, which was delicious. Not a huge favorite of the students, but new lunch items usually take about three tries being served before students acquire a liking. We continue to collect school lunch debts. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing when 3 charges have accumulated. It is expected that all incurred charges will be paid within 5 days of written notice; by sending cash, check or money order payable to the Town of Westport. Payment must be sent with the child to the cafeteria, by mailing a check or money order to the appropriate school, and through the online payment systems MySchoolBucks.com. Students will be served a differentiated meal if the accumulated balance is not paid in full by the expected date. The differentiated meal shall consist of a sandwich (not peanut butter and jelly), fruit, vegetable and eight-ounce low fat milk. **The district has been very lenient with this policy, but with the increases of lunch balances, we will begin implementing the policy effective, February 1, 2019. Free and reduced lunch applications are available at each school and on the website.**



<https://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/Z2Browser2.html?showset=westportset>

## IMPORTANT DATES - APRIL / MAY

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

### APRIL

1-5	Preschool Registration (Mac)
2	WES School Council Meeting
3	School Committee Meeting
5	Third Term Ends
5	Grade One Movie Night
5	NHS Induction Ceremony
9	Mac School Council Meeting
10	School Committee Meeting
11	College Night for Juniors
11	Parent Conferences (WJSHS)
15-19	No School - April vacation
24	School Building Committee Mtg
25	WJSHS School Council meeting
25	NJHS Induction Ceremony
27	Mr. Westport

### MAY

1	School Committee Meeting
3	7th/8th grade Dance
7	WES School Council Meeting
13-17	Kindergarten Screening (Mac)
14	Mac School Council Meeting
14	WES/MAC PTO Meeting
15	School Committee Meeting
17	Early Release for Students / Staff Professional Development
17	Westport Education Foundation Derby Fundraiser
17	WJSHS Prom
20-24	Kindergarten Screening (Mac)
20	7th & 8th Grade Spring Concert
21	WES Spring Concert
22	WJSHS Spring Band Concert
23	Mac Art Show
27	Memorial Day - No School
29-June 1	8th Grade Trip to DC