

Westport Community Schools District Newsletter

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE - DR. REESE

As we go into the February school break, I want to take this opportunity to thank our students, staff, families, and the community for their continued support of our schools. It's hard to believe that we are more than half-way past this school year. Equally exciting is the fact that we have made it so far into the winter months without having a snow day. This allows the staff to provide more meaningful instruction to students.

There are many great things going on at each of the buildings which expose our students to not only a rigorous academic curriculum, but also enables our students to develop critical thinking and collaboration skills that are so important for their future. A good example is the Day of Play celebrated at the Macomber recently. Students and staff spent time engaged in spontaneous play - too often in today's society, we structure play opportunities for our students, whether it be through organized sports or structured play dates. This minimizes the opportunity for students to develop skills of negotiation, turn-taking, and resolving conflict. Thanks to the Mac staff for supporting this great experience for our students.

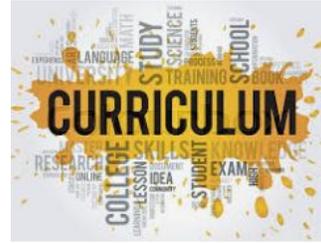
SCHOOL SAFETY

We will be doing our next safety drill after school vacation. This drill will focus on practicing the strategy of lockdown and barricade.



Additionally, students in grades 6-12 will be participating in the Sandy Hook Promise - *Say Something* campaign during the final week in February. During this week, students will learn about the warning signs of potential school violence (including social media indicators). The goal of this program is to empower our students to watch for any signs and report anything noticed to a trusted adult. More information will come home to families on the first day of *Say Something* week.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION - MR. ELWELL



The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires districts to annually distribute school report cards to the families of all students enrolled in each of the

district's schools. Just as your child's report card shows how they are performing in different subjects, the school and district report cards are designed to show families how schools are performing in several critical areas.

The individual school report cards include multiple measures of a school's performance beyond MCAS scores. In 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) redesigned the report cards, representing a new approach to examining a school's performance by providing information on student achievement, teacher qualifications, student learning opportunities, and more. The availability and transparency of this information allows all stakeholders to make informed decisions, and as a district, this performance data will be used to inform ongoing improvement efforts.

In addition, if your child attends either Alice A. Macomber School or Westport Elementary School, schools that receive federal Title I funds for supplementary services, you also have the right to request information regarding the qualifications of your child's classroom teachers.

If you have questions regarding the school and district report cards, or would like to receive a hard copy when available, please do not hesitate to contact my office for assistance.

Report Card Links

[District](#)

[Alice A. Macomber School](#)

[Westport Elementary School](#)

[Westport Junior Senior High School](#)

Human Resources

Work is underway in an effort to digitize our staff records. We are in the process of scanning paper documents which will significantly reduce the amount of valuable physical space taken up by these files.

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 to learn about the various substitute opportunities and application requirements.

Our next substitute orientation will be held on February 27, 2019 from 3-4 pm at the Jr. Sr. High School. Enter through the back of the building. No RSVP required. Hope to see you there.



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. The old middle school building has been completely demolished at this point and debris from the demo is being transported out of Westport. Over the next few months, we will be posting a Request for Bids and selecting the general contractor who will work with us to construct the new building! This is great news for the community and the building will be a wonderful community resource!



SPECIAL EDUCATION - MRS. SANTOS

Did you know that - the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975 was the first legislation to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities? The goal of special education is to enable students to successfully develop to their fullest potential by providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



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).

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

One of the largest projects in the IT Department in the last year was to replace our aging servers for the school district. We took five separate servers and



replaced them with one high capacity HP server running VMware. VMware allows you to set up “virtual servers” within the same basic server. This solution saves management time and power consumption. Instead of running five separate servers, we now run one server.

The new server leverages external storage (SAN) that has a capacity of 11 terabytes. All the staff and students have a “home directory” to save their work. Additionally departments have shared directories to allow for efficient and collaborative departmental work. These saved documents are securely accessible via any computer in the district.

All the server files are backed up on redundant Synology units. One unit at the High School performs a daily backup of the files. Later in the evening, that backup file is uploaded to a different Synology unit off site to ensure the data is preserved.

All our switches at the Jr/Sr High School are connected on a 10 gig fiber backbone. This enables the school’s data and Internet access to accommodate all the users with a 99.99 uptime.

This system will be moved to the new school building when it is completed. Having engineered the network with these items allows for incremental updates to our network without replacing whole systems.

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>

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Students in Mr. Harrington's Boat Building Class visited the New Bedford Whaling Museum. They had an opportunity to see some primary source documents regarding Westport's rich history in the boat industry.

IMPORTANT DATES - FEBRUARY/MARCH

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

FEBRUARY

- 26 Westport Fin Com Mtg (budget)
- 28 WJSHS School Council

MARCH

- 1 Gr. 1 Movie Night (Mac)
- 5 Family Fun Night (Mac)
- 6 School Committee Meeting
- 8 Progress Reports (WJSHS)
- 8 International Exch. Dance (WJSHS)
- 12 Mac School Council Meeting (Mac)
- 12 WESMAC PTO Meeting
- 14 Gr. 2 Multicultural Night (Mac)
- 15 Second Trimester Ends (Mac/WES)
- 19 WES School Council Meeting
- 20 School Committee Meeting
- 22 Early Release for Students /
Staff Professional Development
- 25 Report Cards go home (Mac/WES)
- 26 - 27 Spring School Pictures (Mac)
- 27 Kindergarten Hoe-Down (Mac)
- 28 School Council Meeting (WJSHS)
- 28 PTO Fundraiser (WJSHS)

MAINTENANCE & CUSTODIAL -



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 26, 2019	Westport Finance Committee FY20 Budget Review
March 2019	School Committee Final FY20 Budget Discussion (if needed)
April 09, 2019	Town elections & budget proposals with explanations made available to the public
May 07, 2019	Annual Town Meeting

2019 MCAS Administration Information

January 18, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter contains information regarding the 2019 MCAS assessment landscape in the Westport Community Schools. As you may already know, the transition from MCAS “Legacy” paper-based testing (PBT) to MCAS “Next Generation” computer-based testing (CBT) continues. This year, students in grade ten will experience CBT, and grade nine students will also complete a computer-based field test pilot following completion of the official administration. Please find a breakdown of the District’s assessment schedule below.

Grade Level	Assessment and Format	Dates
Three	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT)	April 2, 3 April 29, 30
Four	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT)	April 4, 5 May 1, 2
Five	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT) Science and Technology/Engineering (CBT)	April 23, 24 May 3, 6 May 20, 21
Six	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT)	April 25, 26 May 15, 16
Seven	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT)	April 8, 9 May 7,8
Eight	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT) Science and Technology/Engineering (CBT)	April 10, 11 May 9, 10 May 14, 15
Nine	Biology (PBT) Biology Field Test (CBT)	June 4, 5 June 11
Ten	ELA (CBT) Math (CBT)	March 26, 27 May 21, 22

As always, students should receive a good night’s sleep and eat a healthy breakfast prior to testing. In addition, it is imperative that students arrive on-time in order to begin the scheduled assessments promptly, and on the prescribed testing dates.

For more information regarding the Next Generation MCAS, as well as information pertaining to accessibility features and accommodations, please visit the DESE website:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/nextgen/default.html>.

Although the spring season will present a series of challenging assessments for students, we are confident that they will rise to the occasion! Please do not hesitate to contact your child’s school should you have any questions regarding these upcoming, mandatory assessments.

Sincerely,

Darren C. Elwell
Director of Curriculum