

Westport Community Schools
March 20, 2020
School Closure Updates

We have finished our first week of mandatory school closure per the instructions of Governor Baker. I hope families are all feeling well. As challenging as these times may be, I am also encouraged by some comments I have heard throughout the community of families that are spending more quality time together, playing games, talking, eating meals together, etc. We live in a society that is so scheduled and packed with activities and responsibilities. During this forced closure of schools, as well as closure of events, businesses, and restaurants along with the strong recommendation of social distancing and remaining in homes, we have been provided with an opportunity to reconnect as a family unit. Hearing some of these stories has helped me to stay positive during this time of unrest. Later in this update, I will share information about a weekly "State of the Schools" address I have started doing.

For next week's 'episode', I would enjoy sharing pictures from our families of how they are using this time to reconnect and slow down in this otherwise face paced world. I am asking any family that is interested, to please send me pictures of whatever activity your family is doing to keep active and stay positive - it could be something as simple as sitting together to do school work... playing a board game together, etc. When sending these pictures to greese@westportschools.org, please be sure to include your family's name and any brief blurb that tells about the picture. I will compile these to share with next week's state of the schools address. My hope is that everyone will get as much enjoyment in seeing the positive things that are happening in our families as I do in hearing the stories about family activities. The news can be so negative and overwhelming - let's change the narrative and share some of the good!

Picking Up Items from school

We have received a couple requests from families to pick up items that children have left in school, including items such as band instruments. After consulting with the team during a safety meeting on Thursday afternoon, we have decided that families will not be allowed into the schools through April 6th to pick up any personal items students may have left. The buildings are operating with a skeletal crew and the custodians continue to complete deep cleaning. We do not want to interfere with the sanitizing process that is occurring in the schools during this closure. **However**, if there are any specific needs from students or families to get something that has been left in the school, families can reach out to their school principal via email (see below) and coordinate for a pick up. While individuals will not be allowed into the building, the administration can retrieve whatever item(s) you need and have them available for pick up through the vestibule windows in each of the buildings. Should there be any additional changes to the school closure time period, we will re-evaluate this request. Parents should contact:

Macomber Elementary	Dr. Cheryl Greeson	cgreeson@westportschools.org
Westport Elementary	Ms. Stacey Duquette	sduquette@westportschools.org
Westport Jr/Sr High	Mr. Mitchel AHo	maho@westportschools.org

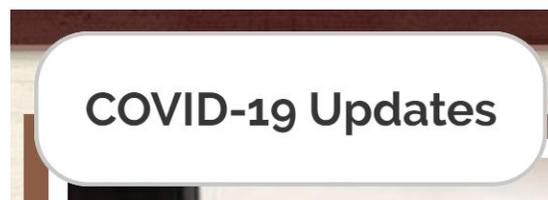
State of the Schools Address

At the suggestion of one of our school committee members, I am beginning to do a weekly TV recording to update families of the events of the week. This state of the schools address will be available for viewing on the main page of our website, in the right-hand column. Additionally, all videos from the community are also available on the Westport Community Television Vimeo page. You can access that page at: <https://vimeo.com/westportcommunitytv>

Be sure to check out this week's episode for a review of what is happening in our schools. Additionally, don't miss the science experiment towards the end of the video! Our leadership team has been meeting virtually daily to discuss any changes or updates. During a recent meeting, we discussed the importance of laughter and humor during times of struggle. As a result, we have been beginning our meetings each morning with someone sharing a joke. It has had a positive impact on the tone of our meetings. Therefore, I have decided to include a joke of the week during each state of the schools address. This week's joke was told to me by second grader Brandon Chaves. I am inviting students to send jokes in for consideration for future 'state of the schools' addresses. PLEASE make sure the joke is appropriate. Students can email me a joke or can record themselves telling the joke and email me the recording. These jokes can be emailed to greese@westportschools.org When emailing, be sure to tell me your name and grade so we can acknowledge your contribution to keeping us all smiling!

Website reminder

We are updating information very frequently and have created a dedicated webpage to sharing information with families. Please check the webpage daily for any new information. You can get to the dedicated page from the COVID-19 button found prominently displayed on the main page.



Check Your Emails, Google Classroom Pages, Classroom Dojo accounts, etc.

Please be sure that you are checking (and having your children check) their Google email accounts (for those students having email accounts through the Westport Schools) or any other platform that your teacher has used in the past (ie. Google Classroom, Classroom Dojo, etc) for updates from your teachers. Teachers are sharing materials and resources for students during this time and it is important that you check those sites frequently to make sure that you are

staying up to date within each class. If you have any questions about assignments or activities, please be sure to communicate with your teacher.

Meals reminder

WE are providing grab and go breakfast and lunch bags to all Westport children on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10-11 am at the Westport Junior Senior High School. Families can drive through the bus entrance and a staff member will deliver the bags directly to your vehicle. There is no need for you to get out of your car! Due to federal regulations regarding reimbursement for these meals, we can only distribute meal bags for the number of children that are **IN** the vehicle. We have to maintain accurate records of the number of children in order to get any type of reimbursement from providing these meals to you FREE OF CHARGE! If you or someone you know may have difficulty getting to the pick up location **or** if you have any questions about the food being served due to food restrictions, please reach out to Michelle Rapoza at mrapoza@westportschools.org

Principal Book Read

Dr. Greeson has completed a book read of Giraffes Can't Dance. Be sure to check it out! This is a great way to incorporate technology with your child and provide them with time to sit and enjoy having a book read to them. This video is available on the Westport Community Television site at <https://vimeo.com/westportcommunitytv>

Thanks to Dr. Greeson for sharing this story with us! Be sure to check out for other staff that may present stories and other activities to students over the next couple of weeks.

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency: COVID-19 Response Command Center

Our nurse leaders shared a document with me regarding updates from the state for this pandemic. The link below connects you to an update from the state agency for March 19, 2020. I thought families might want to hear about topics at the state level.

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#inbox/FMfcgxwHMPmVDmdzJxNhWjTgpGxDMQKm?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>

As this first week comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank our students, staff and families for your flexibility and patience during this time. Many of our teaching staff are trying to adjust to having families at home to care for while at the same time continuing to connect with their 'classroom community' in meaningful ways. This is new and novel for many of us and it is going to look different for families depending on the teacher and platforms that may have already been in place for communicating with students and families. If you have any

questions about work that teachers are sharing, please be sure to reach out to your child's teacher(s) directly.

Have a wonderful weekend with your families! I hope you are continuing to find things to do at home to keep active, both physically and mentally. We look forward to having our hallways filled with the noise of our students, staff and community on April 7, 2020.

Best,

Dr. Reese
Superintendent of Schools