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## Superintendent's Update 10-19-21

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Reply-To: Thomas Scarice <do\_not\_reply@westportps.org>

Tue, Oct 19, 2021 at 3:02 PM

Good afternoon,

At the beginning of the year I informed the school community that we will revisit our Covid mitigating measures every 4-6 weeks. I could not predict the longevity of any of the mitigating measures beyond a 4-6 week timeframe. Now that we are six weeks into the year, and we are currently experiencing a continued drop in Covid positive cases, I want to update the school community on some changes to our Covid mitigation measures.

1. **Unmasked Teachers Delivering Instruction:** The CT Department of Public Health permitted school districts to afford an option for teachers to teach unmasked if they are vaccinated, provided that they are in the front of the room and the students are masked and seated. We did not implement this provision to start the year, but starting tomorrow, October 20, we will allow this option for teachers teaching students in grades 7-12 only. K-6 will be considered after November 1 when we have a better handle on ages 5-11 vaccinations. This is an option for teachers and not a requirement.
2. **Lunch Tents:** Lunch tents, particularly for the elementary level, will remain in place for the remainder of the month. We will revisit lunch practices when we better understand the K-6 vaccinations at the end of the month. The lunch supervision at the elementary levels is very challenging and we will move as quickly as we can to return to "normal" lunch provided our transmission rates continue to drop.
3. **Visitor Vaccination Requirement:** At the start of the year we instituted a requirement for visitors to show proof of vaccination. We will continue to require vaccination from visitors through at least December 31 at this point, perhaps longer. A reassessment of this requirement will take place at that point in time. Larger groups of visitors will be permitted to meet in person in our schools with building administration permission, provided there is the opportunity to distance (i.e. larger rooms), and that visitors are masked with proof of vaccination.
4. **Elementary Parent Conferences:** Elementary parent conferences will be held in person for vaccinated parents and virtual for unvaccinated parents. Virtual accommodations for any parent can be made provided. Elementary building principals will communicate additional information about parent/teacher conferences in the coming weeks.
5. **Performances:** There are a number of performances scheduled in the next couple of months. Following a meeting with the Westport/Weston Health District, we decided that we will monitor the Covid transmission rates to guide the mitigating measures we employ. For example, some of the measures we will consider include the degree to which we allow certain capacities to attend (i.e. 50%, 75%, 100%, etc.), and the type of spacing we require for seating. More information on specific performances will be forthcoming as individual events approach.
6. **Building Rentals/Park and Rec Programs:** We are open for building/space rental from community groups after hours. We will continue to recommend universal masking, however, these are outside events and we do not have the capacity to enforce our measures outside of school hours.
7. **Field Trips:** Some field trips have been approved so far this year, particularly those outside. However, we will begin to review field trip requests pending the continued low transmission rates.

I recently did a podcast with Dan Woog on the national discussions involving Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the impact on our school community. I am no expert on this topic, but I shared my thoughts on a variety of topics with Dan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DGg4CDqAKvLI>

Thank you,  
Thomas Scarice

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