



# WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Happy Holidays to our School Community!

I fervently hope that each of our Westport Community School families has had a terrific holiday to date. Collectively, we are humbled and honored that each day, we get an opportunity to provide your child or children with the educational experience that will make a difference in their lives going forward. We take this responsibility very seriously, and I promise you that we will not falter in our mission to do so, regardless of the current and future challenges we face.

We are also passionate about keeping our school community safe as we carry out our mission to educate students during this interminable pandemic. This is evidenced by the hundreds of thousands of dollars we spent on Covid mitigation strategies to keep our students and staff healthy. This includes purchasing and maintaining hundreds of HEPA air purifiers in our classrooms and installing UV technologies at all three of our school buildings. Additionally, our custodial and maintenance staff maintain the filtration and HVAC systems district-wide to ensure maximum classroom and building air exchanges. Furthermore, we periodically test the CO rates in our classrooms to monitor air quality and modify our mechanical systems where needed. Fortunately, the success of these strategies is borne out by our relative lack of in-school Covid transmissions at our Westport Community Schools since the start of the school year. This is a credit to our whole school community, especially our nursing staff charged with implementing the state's Test and Stay program. This program, while daunting, has been instrumental in us avoiding the wholesale class quarantines that were so disruptive to families last year.

That said, as most of you are aware, we have seen a significant uptake in Covid cases since the start of December. And as we begin a new year in January, I fear that the number of Covid cases in our community will grow exponentially due to the Omicron variant coupled with the inevitable mixing of people during the holiday. Consequently, with the return of students and staff to school on Monday, January 3, 2022, we will be asking for your support more than at any time during this pandemic to give our students every opportunity to participate in in-school learning. To this end, we ask that you please follow the mitigation strategies outlined by the Center for Disease Control, Massachusetts Department of Health, as well as our local Board of Health. These strategies include vaccinations, frequent handwashing, social distancing where possible, and proper mask-wearing. Furthermore, I cannot emphasize strenuously enough that it is vitally important to keep your son or daughter home if they exhibit Covid symptoms.

Additionally, I want to thank you for your support of our schools and staff. We have an intimate understanding of the struggles you face throughout the year to keep life going as normal as expected under these very challenging circumstances. Your continuous support and understanding have gone a long way in allowing us to meet the educational expectations of our families. We will need this support even more as we face a very challenging situation relative to the pandemic as we end our calendar year. To help families matriculate during these difficult times, I suggest you visit our website, <https://www.westportschools.org/>, for the most up-to-date information regarding our schools.

Finally, please reach out to us if you are struggling due to the pandemic or just generally having a difficult time. We are called the Westport **Community** Schools, and we are committed to the health and well-being of our community. We know that we can and will get through these difficulties by working together.

Wishing you the best for 2022!

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It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status.