



Published on *Westford Public Schools* (<https://www.westfordk12.us>)

[Home](#) > 'Tis the Season...an update! 12-1-25

'Tis the Season...an update! 12-1-25

December 1, 2025

Word Count: 888

Approx Reading Time: 3 minutes and 44 seconds

Last summer, while traveling in Scotland, I saw a wonderful inscription on a bench facing the ocean with a gorgeous view of the North Sea. Rather than being dedicated to an individual, the plaque simply said, "IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY". The picture that I took of that bench popped up on my phone recently and impressed upon me how significant that reminder can be right now. December always seems to be full of activity competing for our time and attention between the Thanksgiving holiday and the upcoming Winter break. Some folks thrive in the hustle and bustle while others might not. Some folks are eager for the longer break while others might dread it. Everyone seems to know that it is around the corner: kids and adults alike. All the extra grace we can muster for each other certainly comes in handy at this time of the year.

On this first day of December, although it is not officially winter yet, it is the beginning of the "winter weather season". I received a handful of emails from students today hoping for a snow day tomorrow; most of them did a nice job providing evidence to support their position. A running theme was the concern for student drivers. In responding to those emails, I felt compelled to remind them that inclement weather is to be expected at some point and impacts our roads here more often than not in the winter. If you have a student driver in your family who is not prepared to navigate our local roads in wintry weather, it would be prudent to start addressing those concerns with those drivers. I will always put student safety first in the decision making process around whether or not we should be having school if a storm is in the forecast, but there will definitely be times when we will all be traveling to and or from school while there is snow or slush or wintry mix accumulating on our roadways and we should all be prepared for that. Please have a conversation with any drivers in your family who are concerned about winter driving.

December also kicks off our annual budget season. I will be presenting my recommendation to the School Committee for our proposed FY27 budget during tonight's meeting. They will deliberate over the proposal for the next few meetings and are scheduled to vote on the budget in January before the Town of Westford Finance Committee budget hearings. Ultimately, the budget is presented at

the Annual Town Meeting for the voters to make the final decision as to whether it is approved or not. The specific meeting dates are as follows:

Dec 1 Superintendent's FY27 Budget Presentation

Dec 9 Town Managers Budget Presentation to Select Board

Dec 15 School Committee FY27 Budget Deliberations

Jan 5 Continued Deliberations and Public Hearing

Jan 20 School Committee FY27 Budget Anticipated Vote

Jan 29 Budget Hearing with School Co., Finance Co. and Select Board

March 28 Annual Town Meeting

Our next Community Coffee is scheduled for Friday, December 12 from 10:00-11:00 in room 13 across from Routes Roasters in the Millenium Building at 23 Depot. The conversations we have been able to have so far have been very enjoyable and I look forward to the opportunity to visit with folks in a less structured format. If coffee is not your thing, I highly recommend the hot apple cider that they added to the menu recently.

As we begin developing our next Strategy for District Improvement, keep an eye out for opportunities in January and February to provide feedback through some surveys that we will be sharing. Many of our School Advisory Councils at each school have had the opportunity to review our current Strategic District Improvement Plan (SDIP) and provide feedback during their recent meetings. As we evaluate the progress of that plan, we are looking to see what elements need to be continued and what might be removed and what might need to be added for the plan that will guide our work for FY27 to FY30.

Finally, I was able to participate in one of the recent Chapter 70 Local Contribution Study Hearings facilitated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) along with the Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS). These public hearings are designed to be listening sessions for the Healy-Driscoll administration to solicit feedback on the Chapter 70 school finance formula, the primary funding program that establishes how Massachusetts distributes education aid to cities and towns. The listening sessions focus on the local contribution part of the formula. Chapter 70 is a critical part of our overall budget each year and with school districts all over the state experiencing similar budget challenges, our state partners have engaged in exploring how the current formula is impacting various localities. If you are interested in providing input and or hearing input from other communities experiencing similar challenges, the final listening session will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 3 at Newton North High School in Newton. Find details [online about the study](#) and how to provide written or spoken public comment.

Cheers!

Christopher Chew, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

Source URL:<https://www.westfordk12.us/district/superintendent-schools/news/%E2%80%98tis-season%E2%80%A6-update-12-1-25>