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As many of you are aware, a number of changes have been taking place at the Federal level this month with the new administration taking office. The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office recently released guidance in response to the changes in federal immigration enforcement policy. If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to take a moment to review this flyer that was shared with us this week: [Flyer for K-12 Schools on Protecting Students and Their Information.pdf](#)

We remain committed to keeping all of our students safe and protecting their privacy. We only collect the information we need which does not include information regarding their or their families immigration status. As mentioned in the guidance, if U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agents were to request access to a student and or their information, the agents will be referred to our district central office. Our protocol includes notifying the student's parent or guardian and contacting our local legal counsel to determine appropriate responses based on the request.

Along with FY26 Budget, our last few School Committee meetings have included discussions about potential changes to the School Start times for next year. The following information was also shared from our principals this week, as well:

The Westford School Committee is considering a change in start times based on research showing that adolescents will benefit from a later school start time. Currently, middle and high schools start at 7:25 AM. The proposal would change Grades 6-12 to 8:00 AM start time, Grades 3-5 to 8:50 AM, and Grades PK-2 to 9:10 AM. Thank you to everyone who took our community survey — we had 1305 responses with 73% in favor of the change. This topic was discussed at our Jan 21 meeting (recording available here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/kXoYFpFbPR8>). The committee plans to vote on this proposal at their Feb 3 meeting. More information is available at <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/school-committee/webforms/school-start-times> Please send any feedback to SCHOOL-COMMITTEE@WESTFORDMA.GOV.

Finally, we continue to make progress through the Eligibility period with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) regarding a potential project in the future at the Robinson Elementary School. As mentioned in previous updates, a full committee has been formed appropriately named the Robinson School Building Committee (RSBC). They have been meeting to look at the cost estimates of a feasibility study which is a required component of the MSBA process. The feasibility study is designed to determine what options, if any, would be most appropriate to best support the facility infrastructure and provide the best learning environment for our students served at the Robinson School. It will include determining costs associated with bringing the school up to current building codes, potential renovations and or additions that could be made, or whether a new building

would be most appropriate. Another piece of the study will consider if a project takes place at the Robinson School could it include consolidating another of our existing elementary schools to maximize efficiency. If the town approves moving forward with a study following this spring's Annual Town Meeting on March 22nd, then a portion of those funds could be eligible for reimbursement from the MSBA. There are multiple points embedded within the process of a building project with the MSBA in which the Town must vote to approve decisions and consider options. So, engaging in a feasibility study does not mean that the Town is making a commitment to a larger project. As we approach this upcoming Town Meeting, the RSBC will be hosting public tours of the Robinson School as well as providing informational materials to help the community make an informed decision as to whether or not we proceed with the feasibility study at this time.

Cheers!

Chris

Christopher Chew, Ed.D Superintendent of Schools

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