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October 1, 2024

Word Count: 567

Approx Reading Time: 2.5 minutes

A month into school and already we see the fruits of our extraordinary staff members' labors in the joy and enthusiasm that the vast majority of our students exhibit each year when we return to school. This year has been no different and for that we are very fortunate. I am happy to say that most students do not seem to feel the impact of our recent challenging budget cycle. My concern at present is that the staff certainly does. It reminds me of a sign that I have seen a number of times in shops and restaurants, "The whole world is short staffed. Please be kind to the people who showed up!"

In that vein, while it is difficult to share only a few, I wanted to highlight some examples of how our wonderful WPS educators are taking great care of their students with fewer hands to help.

We had five Reading Interventionists resign just before the school year started and our FY25 budget included the reduction of three of our Literacy Specialists for this year. While we have been able to fill the five RI openings, this made universal screening with DIBELS very challenging to accomplish. The literacy teams in the schools teamed up and helped each other complete the testing. All data was collected on time to start data team meetings and intervention services.

With increased class sizes in many content areas at Westford Academy, while students might not notice having an extra group or a few more students in a section, the teachers have needed to be creative in organizing both the space and activities in some rooms. Science teachers have done a great job running engaging labs while navigating a more crowded room all while maintaining lab safety practices. Teachers across departments are working hard to meet the demand of providing all students with timely effective feedback to best support student progress and ensure opportunities for student participation.

Those are just some examples and there are plenty more districtwide.

It is also at this time of year that we recognize the efforts and commitment our building administrators have exhibited in helping to make sure school gets off to a great start. October is National Principal Appreciation month, so please join me in thanking all of our Principals, Assistant Principals and Deans for their tremendous dedication and the support they provide to all of our students and staff.

We continue to move forward in the Eligibility Phase with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in terms of exploring a potential future project at the Col. J Robinson Elementary School. Just recently, the Town of Westford Select Board approved the establishment of the Robinson School Building Committee (RSBC) and selected the members to participate. As more and more information becomes available throughout this process, we have created a dedicated webpage to simplify access to the resources and information for all of our residents:
<https://www.westfordk12.us/district/news/msba-robinson-school-study>

Finally, Westford is collecting data to ensure there is adequate space for our residents to attend the upcoming Special Town Meeting on October 21, 2024. We are asking residents to take a survey regarding their potential attendance. Please consider completing the survey linked below:

<https://westford-ma.civilspace.io/en/projects/all-other-surveys/engagements/attendance-at-special-town-meeting-monday-october-21-2024>

Cheers!

Chris

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Superintendent of Schools

Source URL: <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/superintendent-schools/news/fruitful-harvestupdate-wps-10-1-24>