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At this time last year, it looked as if changing our clocks twice a year was going to be a thing of the past. Here we are once again preparing to fall back this weekend and gain an extra hour of sleep. No complaint here, it has always been my favorite weekend of the year and I am grateful to be able to enjoy it again.

Gratitude is certainly on everyone's radar as we enter November...if it wasn't already. I am thankful every time I get the chance to visit our schools and see the tremendous work being done by our staff and students on a daily basis. Nothing can brighten your day like seeing kindergarten students' enthusiasm for a science project observing the decay of a pumpkin over time or seniors' creativity in carrying their things throughout the day when challenged to use anything but a backpack. Two ends of the spectrum with a lot of joy, laughter and critical thinking along the way. That can only happen when all of the staff are working together to create environments where students feel welcome, supported and encouraged.

As a reminder to everyone, we adjusted the [23-24 WPS Calendar](#) earlier in the year resulting in some changes to our November schedules. The Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving are full days of school since the conferences were moved to December for our elementary schools and January for our middle schools.

In October, we presented the report from the Town of Westford Budget Task Force to the Select Board, Finance Committee and School Committee. A copy of the report can be found on the Budget Task Force webpage: <https://westfordma.gov/1582/Budget-Task-Force> This was a very productive process in which I am very grateful to have participated and I hope you are able to take time to review the report. We will be creating some short informational videos in the near future that helps to break down the report and I will make sure to include them in a future update, as well.

Now that we are in November, the FY25 Budget development season is in full swing. While we work on determining the General Fund Operating budget for the schools, we are also prioritizing recommendations from last year's Feasibility Study in order to establish our 10 Year Master Plan for the district (WPS SDIP 2.2). That work informs how and when capital requests are generated. This month, we present our FY25 Capital Requests to the Town of Westford Capital Planning Committee. This process takes place every year and helps the Capital Planning Committee develop

their recommendations which get presented to the entire community at the annual Town Meeting in the spring.

Finally, November is Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) month. This acknowledgement throughout the state of Massachusetts was actually spearheaded in part by members of the WPS SEPAC a few years ago. We are grateful for the support and resources that they provide and we celebrate their partnership and advocacy. I look forward to joining them along with Gerard Coughlin, Director of Special Education and Social Emotional Learning, for their next meeting on November 15th. We will be discussing current topics regarding Special Education here in Westford and answer questions that members might have. For more information about the meeting, please access the WPS SEPAC website: <https://sepacwestford.wixsite.com/my-site/meeting-calendar>

With gratitude,

Chris

Christopher Chew, Ed. D

Superintendent

Westford Public Schools

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