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[Home](#) > Getting Involved...update! WPS 9-1-2023

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Welcome back!

Hopefully, this extra- long weekend will provide everyone with some well deserved rest and relaxation and or celebration now that school has officially started for the year.

I have already been able to see some of our students in action, eagerly engaged in getting to know each other and their new teachers during these first few days. Over the next week, I look forward to seeing more and more as we make rounds visiting all of the schools to enjoy the environments and observe how everyone is transitioning into this new year of learning.

As mentioned in my previous update, we are in year one of our new Strategic District Improvement Plan. You will be seeing our updated mission and vision throughout the district:

We value the development of curious lifelong learners who are responsible, empathetic members of the community, demonstrating innovation through a wide variety of opportunities within inclusive, joyful learning environments that embrace their variability and honor their diversity.

We believe in preparing our students for active, positive participation as both local and global citizens by developing and fostering creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Preparing our students for active, positive participation as local citizens, requires them to be aware of how our local government works. One of the ways that you can help support this at home is through modeling your positive participation in local civic activities. We have a large number of local boards and committees that meet regularly to discuss and determine important issues that impact the whole community. The more informed you are of what is being discussed the more ability you have to help contribute your perspective to the community conversation. All of the meetings are posted on our [Town of Westford website](http://westfordma.gov) (westfordma.gov) and you can sign up by selecting the

“notify me” button to have the agendas of certain boards or committees of your choice sent directly to your email.

We chose all of the words reflected in our mission and vision carefully and know that it speaks to the core of the work that we are doing as a school district. While lifelong learning is important, we know that developing curiosity and empathy as well as responsibility is a more specific vision of what we want for our students. They should be enjoying inclusive spaces where everyone is welcomed and encouraged to be involved. Joyful learning environments that are fun and engaging places where they can appreciate spending a significant amount of their day. Finally, our schools and classrooms should allow our students and staff to be themselves with all our individual variability of skills, strengths, interests and experiences all of which are honored on a daily basis knowing that they are supported and respected.

Our goal is for these statements to be living and observable in the regular interactions and activities that our students and staff experience.

At the beginning of the year, a lot is being asked of everyone, it is easy to find yourself taking on too much. Pace yourselves as best you can to try and maintain balance, getting involved is important, just don't spread yourself too thin. I reminded all of our faculty on our opening day the old adage that you can't pour from an empty cup.

Cheers!

Chris

Christopher Chew, Ed. D

Superintendent

Westford Public Schools

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