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Mid-August greetings to everyone,

The cooler weather each morning certainly might help mental preparation for our return to school in just a few short weeks. The final shine of summer cleaning is beginning to sparkle as anticipation starts to rise. Friends and family from other parts of the country have been posting their first day photos for over a week already which reminds me how happy I am to live in New England.

This time of year always brings me back to the days of waiting for class lists and bus routes to be published in the local newspaper. It is amazing how much has changed since then and that we are now apparently living in the age of George Jetson. For those of you who may have successfully avoided social media all summer, he was supposedly born on July 31, 2022. While the buses might not be flying yet, even Elroy and Judy had virtual field trips and smartwatches.

Our transition to PowerSchool as our new student information system has required a number of adjustments including the ability to make sure everyone can appropriately access the information. Today (8/16) at noon, the system was made available for families to access directly to review class placements for our elementary students.

If you have not already been able to do so, here is the information you will need to access your PowerSchool Parent/Guardian Account:

- The PowerSchool Parent/Guardian Portal is on an app which Caregivers/Guardians can download to your phone from the Apple Store or from Google Play.
- The District Code : RJTW
- Username: The email the school has on record for you (each Caregiver/Guardian).
- Password: Please use the forgot password button to set up your password.
- The parent portal can also be accessed here: <https://westford.powerschool.com/public>
- If you have any questions please contact your school's Main Office.

As we continue to prepare for the start of the year, our full district leadership team is meeting this week for our Summer Leadership Institute. Our focus this year is our collaboration in developing our next Strategic District Improvement Plan. Throughout the year, we will share information with the district at large as we progress through the process in preparation of presenting the plan to the School Committee for final approval.

Finally, I wanted to take a moment to share with all of you the recent information from DESE and MA DPH that was released yesterday regarding COVID-19. Our WPS Health Services website will be updated soon with the following information:

Isolation and Exposure Precautions

Effective August 15, 2022, all students and staff in childcare, school in grades K-12, or participating in out-of-school time (OST) and recreational camp settings should follow the updated isolation and exposure guidance issued by DPH, in alignment with recently issued guidance from CDC. No asymptomatic person should be excluded from school as a result of exposure, regardless of vaccination status or exposure setting.

As a reminder, contact tracing is no longer recommended statewide in K-12 schools.

Masking

There is no statewide requirement for masking in schools, apart from in school health offices, and the Commonwealth is not recommending universal mask requirements. As always, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice.

COVID-19 Testing

With the conclusion of the statewide K-12 COVID-19 testing program, staffing, supplies, software, and all other services previously provided via CIC Health are no longer available through the state.

In line with recent CDC guidance, screening testing and test to stay are not recommended.

Additional information regarding orientation for grades 6 & 9 will be coming out from WA and the two middle schools later this week. If you haven't already signed up for the principal's weekly email from the schools your family is associated with this year, I highly recommend you do that soon so that you do not miss any information sent out from the specific schools. You can do that by visiting our district website and subscribing: <https://www.westfordk12.us/subscribe>

Cheers!
Chris

Dr. Christopher Chew
Superintendent
Westford Public Schools

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