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## Marching into the new year...update!

WPS 9-1-22

This year kicked off with a lot of energy. The WA Marching Band and Color Guard woke all of the teachers up first thing Monday morning with a phenomenal surprise performance during our Opening Day Staff Meeting. They were able to cheer and celebrate all of the different schools that they attended reminding everyone throughout the district that we have contributed in different ways to their journeys. The extended ovation following their performance was clearly an expression of the overwhelming pride and appreciation the entire staff felt seeing all of their students both past and present fill the PAC with joyful music. Being able to bring all of the staff members from each school together in one place again was inspiring and hopeful.

Tuesday gave the 6th and 9th graders an opportunity to have orientation activities in the morning and let them have the schools all to themselves to better acquaint themselves with schedules and directions in the new buildings.

This first September morning was a fantastic way to greet the second day of classes for most of our students and the third day for our 6th and 9th graders. With pre-K and Kindergarten orientation opportunities taking place in small groups yesterday and today, all of the classrooms throughout the district have been bustling with activity. As we visited all of the schools over these past two days, it has been rejuvenating to interact with so many students again. Teachers shared the joy of recognizing more familiar first day energies from the students than in the past two years. While normal is still yet to be defined, familiar is certainly optimistic.

We observed increasing enthusiasm and some unbridled joy in every school in the district. It warmed our hearts considerably knowing that joy should be commonplace and an expectation in any environment filled with students. Every building had students excited to be back enjoying the next rung up the ladder of seniority as well as others taking in the new surroundings as the youngest grades in each building explored with curiosity and eagerness.

Creative problem solving and critical thinking skills were being exercised right away around every corner. Sometimes by the students...sometimes by the teachers.

Now that school traffic is back in season it's time to start thinking again about the impact of all of these vehicles in congested areas. Fortunately, many vehicles now have automatic stop features to reduce unnecessary engine idling. Please remember to use those features and or turn your vehicle off when waiting in line so that we can reduce idling around the schools.

Finally, for many years, we have had a no school day on the Friday before Labor Day. This year, we shifted that no school day to next Tuesday so that we can better accommodate the State Primary

Election Day taking place. So, yes, in case you missed that on this year's school calendar, we do indeed have school tomorrow and then everyone can enjoy an extra long weekend.

Sincerely,  
Chris

Dr. Christopher Chew  
Superintendent  
Westford Public Schools

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