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Halloween on a Sunday night before a Monday morning, it's the kids version of the day after the Superbowl.

As we enter the third month of this school year, we tend to lean into activities that ask us to be mindful of gratitude. I am incredibly grateful to be a part of such an amazing school system and have the privilege and opportunity to visit all of our wonderful schools regularly. Watching our staff interact with students is both humbling and inspiring. Those relationships ground powerful learning and Westford continues to focus on developing those relationships on a daily basis. Every Wednesday, I dedicate my schedule to working out of two of the different schools. One in the morning and one in the afternoon. This has provided plenty of opportunities for informal classroom visits and impromptu conversations with staff throughout the day as well as bring individuals who might not otherwise have cause to go to the school the chance to meet there rather than at central office. I am very appreciative to all of the principals for providing me a small corner/space to work in when I am not out and about visiting classes. A special thank you to all of the students and staff who have been so welcoming and gracious when greeting me in the halls and making me feel a part of each of the schools.

Since the beginning of the school year, many of our community partners have reached out to me with invitations to visit meetings and or tour facilities to better understand who they are and how WPS might partner with them to best support our students. Early on, I met with folks from WestfordCAT and was able to tour their facilities along with the new Podcast studio . The Healthy Westford Committee invited me to one of their virtual meetings in early October in which we had some wonderful conversations about school lunches and increased outdoor activities over the past year. Additionally, The League of Women Voters asked me to attend one of their virtual Civic Social events, as well, and provided some great feedback in terms of communication with the Town at large beyond our WPS families. I thoroughly enjoyed a tour of the Roudenbush Community Center and hearing more about Jenny the ghost including the potential impact she has had on the air conditioning on the third floor. Last week, Westford Rotary invited me to their October meeting and it was great to hear from some of the members on their previous opportunities of connecting with the schools and building partnerships. Those have just been a few of the conversations and I welcome having more in the near future.

Our Test and Stay program started this morning at the centralized location here in the Millenium building. Everything went very smoothly and the results were positive...well, negative actually...21 negative tests for all 21 students participating. As reminder, please see this letter for all of the important information about participation: [WPS Test and Stay Parent Letter](#)

As we continue into the fall, and our weather takes on some additional elements, please know that while everyone is concerned about the time students have missed in-person learning over the past year and a half, remember that IT IS OK for students to stay home if they are not feeling well and need a wellness day. Please call the school absence line and list the reason why the student is absent and if it is illness related please share all of the symptoms that they might be experiencing so that our nurses can continue to track potential exposures. If you are not familiar with the COVID symptoms list, it can be found on page 3 of this [DESE Protocol PDF](#).

Sincerely,
Chris

Christopher Chew, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Source URL: <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/superintendent-schools/news/monday-mondayupdate-wps-11-1-21>