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Have no fear...plenty of summer left to enjoy!!!

I just thought it would be helpful to introduce myself for those of you who do not know who I am yet. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as the new Superintendent of Schools here in Westford. For the past seven years, I have been fortunate to serve as the principal of one of our two phenomenal middle schools and I now look forward to doing my best to focus my efforts on serving the entire district. The month of July did fly by, so I'm pausing to catch my breath. While commercials for back to school sales can increase the blood pressure, I remind myself we still have plenty of summer left. The Olympics help to distract a bit, but the constant reminder of 2020 can certainly confuse a weary soul. Many of you are familiar with my previous attempts to keep simple updates light and engaging; this first update is in the same vein. There will be plenty of opportunities for formality in the future. I want to help keep your summer reading easy and refreshing.

Tomorrow, our elementary families will receive information from the building principals as to the specific timeline when students will learn which classrooms they will be in this fall. Students in grades 6-12 received their schedules already and families can expect to hear from those building principals later in mid-August as we inch closer to our first day. Take deep breaths here and remember that we still have four full weeks before school starts. If you are dreading the idea that you have four full weeks left of students on vacation in your household then take two more deep breaths and know you are that much closer to the first day of school.

For those of you planning to purchase bus passes, it is important that you register for those passes before August 23, 2021 in order to receive them before the first day of school. Additionally, the bus stops will be determined by the registration received by August 23rd so that could be really important. You can get that done online by accessing to the transportation page of our website: <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/transportation>

Three paragraphs in and he hasn't mentioned the word mask yet...well, can you blame me...if anyone wants to stay in the mode of easy and refreshing summer reading, skip to the last paragraph of this update :-)

By now, I imagine most of you are aware of the information released on Friday with the most updated guidance from DESE and the MA DPH. If you have not read the actual announcement, you can access it here: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0730fall-2021-covid19-guidance.pdf>

We are committed to following the guidance and will examine how this latest information will impact Westford Public Schools this fall. Next week, I will be meeting with members from our local health department to review the guidance in context with our local data of vaccination rates along with the current number of active positive cases. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for

August 16th and I will be sharing my thoughts with them at that time regarding how we will plan to proceed.

So, in short, this is just a chance to check-in and let everyone know that more information is on its way. While I am very optimistic that our schedules will be more consistent and our physical classroom environments will be more flexible than what was necessary last year, your patience is appreciated as we venture into another school year of pivoting in a pandemic.

Cheers!
Chris

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