

Did You Know the difference between HEPA Filters & Air Purifiers?

October 2026

By JoAnn Inserra



The Westport Public Schools does not provide HEPA Filters or Air Purifiers to individual classrooms or spaces. We have a comprehensive HVAC (Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning) preventive maintenance program which includes MERV filters in the HVAC systems being changed on a regular basis.

If a teacher or staff member has a reason to require an additional unit in their space, these are the requirements:

- It must be a True HEPA Filter not an Air Purifier. Air Purifiers vary considerably, and many have ionization properties to reduce odors. Ionizers put O₃ (Ozone) into the air which can be potentially harmful.
- HEPA filters usually have a pre-carbon filter and a HEPA filter in the unit. It is strongly suggested by the manufacturer to change the pre-carbon filter every 1-3 months and the HEPA filter once per year. These guidelines can vary depending on usage.
- Westport Public Schools does not provide these units, nor does the custodial staff or maintenance staff clean them, maintain them, or provide the filters or do the filter changes. If a teacher or staff member brings one into their space, they are responsible for these tasks.
- The teacher or staff member must notify the principal that such a unit has been brought into their workspace and must be the approved type of equipment or they will be asked to remove it from the room.
- If there is a concern about Indoor Air Quality in a classroom, common area or workspace, the preferred method of addressing it is for the teacher or staff member to notify the principal and head custodian so that a proper work order can be submitted and seen through to completion following our Standard IAQ Control and Improvement Protocol and HVAC Maintenance Protocol. It may require an IAQ Incident form be completed, a mini walkthrough be done and/or a TFS Team meeting to address the concern.