

From the Office of Assessment and Accountability

Christine Shea, Director

Westfield Public Schools Family Welcome Center - Open for Business

We have been busy! All children who enter our schools go through our Welcome Center in some way - either by visiting us at the Westwood building at 94 North Elm Street, registering electronically or some combination of both. Our hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and we are located on the first floor.



When you visit, you'll be greeted by any one of us pictured left to right), including Svetlana Adamtseva, District Ukrainian & Russian Translator, Laura Surprise, Secretary, Christine Shea, Director of Assessment and Accountability, Aixa Rivera, District Spanish Translator, and Sarah Kotarski, Central Registration.

As you see, we have a space for young children to play while parents and caretakers can receive help registering, updating information in the parent portal, or getting questions answered.

If you'd like to set up a time to come in to register, ask questions or email any documents, please email Sarah Kotarski at s.kotarski@schoolsofwestfield.org or call 572.6439. If you have questions about registration for English Learners, please email Laura Surprise at l.surprise@schoolsofwestfield.org or call 642.9320.

Anna Antropova, our English Learner Program Supervisor, has also been welcoming English Learners to our schools and determining educational programming to meet students' needs. She is also running the monthly **ELPAC** (English Learner Parent Advisory Committee) meetings. Translation is provided so that all families are able to participate. Our next **ELPAC meeting** will be held in the **Westfield Middle School cafeteria** on **Wednesday, October 25th at 4:30 p.m.** We welcome everyone to attend to learn about services and supports available, and let us know what additional services may be needed.



Data & Assessment Update

Spring 2023 MCAS results were released this month. In general, these results are intended to provide educators and families a look at student progress over the past year in Math, English/Language Arts and Science/Technology/Engineering. Overall results also provide a lens into how Westfield's curriculum, instruction, interventions and assessment support student learning.

Starting with 2023 MCAS results, the state set the long term goal for all districts to return to 2019 MCAS results attained prior to the pandemic. Each district has its own targets to meet over the next few years to achieve this goal. The good news is that Westfield has made 'Substantial Progress Towards Meeting our Targets'. The targets include MCAS achievement scores and growth, attendance, and progress toward attaining English proficiency for our English Learners. Additional indicators for our high schools are graduation, drop out and extended engagement rates along with the percentage of students completing advanced coursework.

An achievement for the Westfield community is the decrease in the percentage of students who miss more than 18 days in the full school year. Westfield decreased 8 percent compared to the state which decreased 5 percent. There is always room for improvement, especially since missed days in school are lost opportunities to learn and succeed. We recognize that reducing absenteeism is only achieved with the help and support of the entire community, and appreciate all your efforts in this regard!

We have also seen improvements in our MCAS results this year which is a good sign that all our efforts together to get students back on track are having a positive effect. In grades 3 through 8 and grade 10, the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations improved for both ELA and math. For our science scores, we have an increase in the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations for grade 10. In grades 5, we stayed the same and in grade 8 we decreased. The areas where we have increased scores, we look closely at what's working to spread those practices, services and supports to other classrooms and grades, and for those that stayed the same or decreased, we look to see where we need to make improvements.

There will be an opportunity to learn more about Westfield's 2023 MCAS results during an upcoming school committee meeting. Stay tuned for the date! Individual student results will be sent home with students (Grades 4-8) or mailed home (Grades 9 -11) in October. Families are encouraged to contact their students' school offices with any questions about individual results.



Westfield EATS News

Rachel Kania

Director of School Food Services

We would like to present our newest local vendor for the WPS district Wellspring Harvest! We will be purchasing our lettuce from this local farm and couldn't be more excited about how beautiful the product is!

Wellspring Harvest delivers fresh, high quality local lettuce varieties year-round to commercial and institutional customers in the Pioneer Valley. The greenhouse is located in the Indian Orchard neighborhood of Springfield and is the largest urban greenhouse in Massachusetts.

As part of the Wellspring family of cooperative businesses, the greenhouse provides jobs with on-the-job training and ownership opportunities for low income city residents.

**Wellspring
Harvest**



Locally Grown
Employee Owned



Special Education Updates

Deb Ecker, Director of Special Education and Related Services

The Milestone Program has expanded to offer 5 classrooms at Paper Mill Elementary School. This program is designed to ensure that all students with autism spectrum disorder have access to the least restrictive learning environment needed to access standard based curriculum and meet their own personal, behavioral, and academic milestone achievements. Students in Milestones classrooms receive empirically validated, evidence-based programming that emphasizes academic, safety, independence, social, and functional communication skills.

Westfield High School is piloting reverse inclusion in which general education teachers are instructing the Essential Learning Skills students in Math, English Language Arts, and Science. This will provide the students with more exposure to grade level curriculum.

Our Transition Program, which serves special education students ages 18-22, has expanded to provide an emphasis on career readiness by providing hands-on experiences in the instructional setting as preparation for the workplace. The special education department conducted a survey to gauge interest in a parent support group. Based on feedback from families, a support group will be created and offered to families soon.

The Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) and the special education administration team held a Meet and Greet on September 21st. The administrative team gave updates to parents, answered questions, and will continue to partner with SEPAC.

The next SEPAC meeting will be held on October 5th at 6:30 pm in Tiger's Pride at Westfield Technical Academy, the topic will be "Related Services". The meeting will be held in-person and virtually.

<https://meet.google.com/ktf-oyqe-oim?authuser=1&hs=122>

Join by phone

(US) +1 470-285-0489 PIN: 764 751 737#

Westfield Public Schools and the Westfield Police Department Release Drill Dates

Westfield Public Schools continues to update our school district's comprehensive safety plan in conjunction with the Westfield Police and Fire Departments. A team of Westfield Administrators and other staff members representing every level from elementary to high school, has been working collaboratively with the Westfield Police and Fire Departments to make sure our students, staff, and families have a current, research-based, and educationally sound safety plan.

As part of our continued work with Westfield Police Department and our ongoing training for students and staff, both city departments working together will conduct lockdown drills in our schools the week of **October 23-27** utilizing the enhanced lockdown procedures known as **A.L.I.C.E.** (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate). If you have any questions regarding our drills, please contact Mr. Christopher Rogers, Director of Operations and Safety for the Westfield Public Schools at 413-572-6495.

What is ALICE?

- **Endorsed by FBI, DOE, DHS, FEMA, KHP, OPD, US secret service**
- **A.L.I.C.E. provides OPTIONS for survival:**
 - **ALERT**
 - **LOCKDOWN**
 - **INFORM**
 - **COUNTER**
 - **EVACUATE**

ALICE
TRAINING INSTITUTE

Alert
Lockdown
Inform
Counter
Evacuate

WPS Nurse's Corner



Halloween Safety

Younger kids should stay with an adult, and older kids should stay in a group.

- Use a flashlight or glow sticks to make it easier to be seen after dark.
- Do not go to dark or unlit houses.
- Do not go into a strangers house
- Use crosswalks and make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.
- Check driveways for moving cars.
- Wear non-toxic make-up, and make sure any masks fit well and do not hinder vision.
- Make sure costumes aren't too long and shoes fit well to prevent trips and falls.
- Costume accessories should be soft and flexible; not hard and sharp.
- Do not eat any candy until an adult checks it.
- Eat only pre-packaged foods and candy,. Stay away from unknown/foreign candy and homemade foods from people you don't know.



Medications at School

Only medications that are medically necessary will be given at school. Whenever possible, medications should be scheduled outside of school hours to keep students in class and learning! Prior to medications being given at school, we need;

- A medication order from a licensed provider
- The parent's signed consent form
- The medication with a pharmacy label attached delivered to the school nurse by a parent/guardian during school hours.

Students may not transport medication except for asthma inhalers, Epi Pens, diabetic supplies, and cystic fibrosis medications. These still need a medication order, parents consent, and coordination with the school nurse.

Breakfast is Important!

Breakfast and lunch are free to all Westfield Public School students!

Research shows students do better in school when they start the day with a healthy breakfast. Students who skip breakfast may have more difficulty concentrating and may feel more tired, restless, or irritable. Research also shows us that students who eat breakfast at home or at school;

- Have better attendance
- Are tardy less often
- Are better able to concentrate
- Make fewer visits to the school health office
- Have fewer behavioral and disciplinary issues
- Perform better academically

Please encourage your student to eat breakfast everyday!



Tips for When to Keep Kids Home

- A fever of 100°F or higher. Your child should be fever free for 24 hours with no fever-reducing medications before returning to school.
- A contagious illness such as COVID, influenza (flu), or chicken pox.
- If your doctor has given antibiotics for strep throat, impetigo, or pink eye. Your child needs to complete 24 hours of antibiotics before returning to school.
- Diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours.
- Continuous cough or wheeze.
- Crusty eyes and/or green or yellow drainage from the eyes.
- Rash that could be contagious. Please have unknown rashes checked by your pediatrician.
- If diagnosed with scabies, return after completing 24 hours of treatment with a provider's note to return.
- If your child seems ill, has upper respiratory illness with significant sneezing, coughing, nasal congestion or discharge, or feels too ill to participate in school.

From The Office of Curriculum and Instruction

Susan Dargie, Director

Imagine you are faced with a conflict at work where a colleague was short with you and did not have time to help when you asked. You could do nothing, letting resentment build and making passive aggressive comments. Instead, you address it, and let the colleague know that you appreciate their expertise and value the relationship you have with them. You ask them to work through the conflict with you.

What allowed you to manage the situation so that the outcome was positive and the relationship was preserved? Social Emotional skills.



Common courtesy, good manners, and social norms are components of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) that begin with our families as our first teachers. In school, we build on these ideas with the SEL curriculum that addresses self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

Educators have been working with students on SEL skills for as long as there have been students! The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) first introduced the term Social Emotional Learning more than 20 years ago.

Why is SEL important? If our students are able to regulate their emotions and behavior, connect, and collaborate with others, and make good choices, they are much more ready to learn.

An SEL Curriculum Committee, made up of teachers and counselors from all school levels, researched and field tested many evidence-based SEL programs last year. The committee selected Choose Love for grades PreK-6 and Trails to Wellness for grades 7-12. Staff received program resources and training in August and began implementation of these programs with students this fall.

Choose Love is a program that was developed by Scarlett Lewis, mother of Jesse Lewis, a first-grade student that lost his life in the Sandy Hook school shooting. Choose Love uses high quality children's literature to reinforce lessons focused on courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion.

Trails to Wellness is a series of lessons taught over the course of the school year that foster empathy, self-awareness, and respect for others. Through discussions and role play of typical scenarios students face, they practice building healthy relationships, managing strong emotions, and making responsible decisions.

By providing high-quality resources aligned to our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework and scheduling time for SEL instruction for all students, we are strengthening skills students need to be successful in all areas of school and beyond.



The Importance of Regular Student Attendance to School

Christopher J. Rogers, Director of Safety and Operations

As we begin another school year, it is of utmost importance to emphasize the importance of our students attending school daily. Regular school and class attendance enables students to benefit from classroom discussions, presentations, and interactive activities. These shared experiences are important to the learning process and cannot be re-created or replicated.

Attendance Works, one of the most reputable and research-based organizations dedicated to reducing chronic student absenteeism, lists several facts about school attendance that everyone should know:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance.
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or be held back.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.
- Attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in positive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students.

In Westfield Public Schools student attendance is a top priority shared by our school community. We have a district level task force that monitors student attendance in every school, provides resources and support, and helps with consistent practice and adherence to school committee policy. Our administrators, counselors, teachers, and mentors work collaboratively with students and families to improve student attendance.

Our efforts have had a positive impact on all our schools overall. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has recognized our efforts as a district as we have made excellent gains! For grades 3 through 8 we exceeded our targets in lowering the chronic absentee rate and for our high schools we met or exceeded our targets in lowering the chronic absentee rate for almost all student groups!

Please note that a student must be at school, at a school-related activity (e.g., field trip), or receiving academic instruction for at least half the school day to be counted as present. Students who are not physically present at school but who are receiving academic instruction from the district for at least half the school day will be counted as present. Examples of academic instruction include tutoring, online or distance learning. Examples of what is not considered receiving academic instruction is taking home classwork or homework.

Of course, there will be times when a student must be absent from school, and we completely understand. Examples of when a student would be considered to have an excused absence include illness, injury or quarantine as documented by a doctor or other medical professional. Bereavement/funeral or serious illness within the student's family, a religious holiday or required court appearance. Examples of unexcused absences include repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional, truancy, family vacations, and undocumented absences.

If you have any questions about student attendance, please contact your child's school or feel free to contact Mr. Christopher Rogers, Director of Operations, and Safety, at c.rogers@schoolsofwestfield.org.



From the Desk of The Superintendent

Stefan Czaporowski, Superintendent
Christopher J. Rogers, Director

The top priority for the Westfield Public School System is assuring the safety of our students and staff. As a school district, we are committed to doing everything reasonably possible to protect your children against any threat that may arise while they are in our care. Our safety/security focuses on three things: Effective planning, physical security, and coordination with local emergency responders for potential emergency situations. This includes training our staff and students and conducting drills to practice our plans and strengthening our security technology and infrastructure. Our school system continually spends a considerable amount of time and effort planning and practicing safety and security measures appropriate for dealing with major critical incidents. We have very close relationships and strong lines of communication with the Westfield Police and Fire Department, first responders, and other emergency preparedness agencies.

The district has an Emergency Response Plan that is utilized by every school. These plans are reviewed and approved annually. In general, each plan involves the designation of a crisis management team; development of evacuation, shelter-in-place, and enhanced lockdown procedures; maintenance of a portable critical response kit that contains key information and supplies; designation of one or more evacuation sites; provisions for updating the plan; and resources for external assistance before, during and after an event. Our Emergency Operations Plan is reviewed by our police, fire, and health departments. Part of our plan is to conduct a comprehensive security audit of each of our schools and provide recommendations for improvements. We have used the results of these audits to prioritize budgeting for improvements at each school.

Entry into our schools during school hours is restricted using access control and a security protocol. Parents and other visitors coming into schools must check in at the main office, provide personal identification and receive temporary identification badges before proceeding. All adults who work with our students during and after school require background checks. All staff members wear WPS photo identification badges.

In an effort to improve our school climate, we have implemented the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program in all of our schools, ensuring that our students and staff feel engaged and connected.

We have a District Safety Committee with representatives from each school, key district staff members, and representatives from local emergency management. We develop goals and set priorities, review our plans, and coordinate our resources to have the most effective response to an emergency. School-based student support teams and safety teams support this process at their level. Trained School Resource officers (SROs) are assigned full-time to our high schools and half time at both the intermediate and middle school.

We have a detailed plan for the reunification of parents/guardians and their children in the event of a major emergency that would require the evacuation of a school. School psychologists, adjustment and school counselors have been trained in crisis intervention and are available to students and their families in all emergencies.

In an effort to provide timely, clear, and accurate information to our parents/guardians and families in an emergency, WPS will use the communications capabilities of our student information system, local radio and television stations, and local newspapers, as well as our website at <https://www.schoolsofwestfield.org/>.

It is critically important that family emergency contact information is up to date in PowerSchool. Parents/guardians can update contact information through the Parent Portal. For help, parents should contact their child's school. Since communication is a two-way process, we are encouraging everyone in our schools to communicate with us if they have a safety concern. If you see or hear something related to school safety, bullying, harassment, or any potentially unsafe situation, please say something by using our Anonymous Alerts Reporting System at <https://www.anonymousalerts.com/westfieldps/default.aspx> and/or by reporting it to a school administrator or School Resource Officer.

What can you do to help keep our students and staff safe? Start by talking with your child about safety issues and empower them to talk about their concerns and express their feelings. Communicate with your children's schools about what they are doing regarding safety and get involved with building a positive school climate.

The following website can provide some ideas on how to do this:
<https://www.mhanational.org/talking-kids-about-school-safety>.

For more information on emergency procedures and preparedness, please feel free to contact Mr. Christopher Rogers, WPS Director of Operations and Safety at (413) 572-6495 or c.rogers@schoolsofwestfield.org or Mr. Stefan Czaporowski at (413) 572-6403 or c.czaporowski@schoolsofwestfield.org.

Thank you for your continued support and for entrusting the safety of your children to us.



Tune into WSKB 89.5 FM, westfieldtv.org, or WCPC Channel 15 for "Superintendent's Spotlight" every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Each week, Superintendent Czaporowski and cohost Christopher Rogers talk with guests about our schools and community. Previous shows can be viewed on the WSKB Community Radio YouTube Channel and the Westfield, MA Public Schools Facebook Page.

Upcoming Shows:

Oct 5 Westfield High School Show Choir
 Oct 12 Westfield Public Schools Health Office
 Oct 19 STEM Week Live from Highland Elementary School
 Nov 2 School Safety
 Nov 9 Southampton Road Elementary School
 Nov 16 Gandara Center
 Nov 30 Abner Gibbs Elementary School
 Dec 7 Westfield High School

**WPS is
Hiring!**



Be a part of the Westfield Public Schools team! We are hiring multiple positions across the district including teachers, substitute teachers, substitute nurses, substitute clerical, classroom and 1:1 paraprofessionals, and many more opportunities that can be found at www.schoolspring.com and searching for "Westfield Public Schools". Thank you!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

event dates you need to know

October 2

School Committee Meeting
7:00pm

October 3

Abner Gibbs Elementary
School Open House
6:00pm – 7:30pm

October 4

Highland Elementary School
Open House
6:00pm – 7:30pm

October 5

Westfield Middle School Open
House 6:00pm – 7:30pm

October 5

SEPAC Meeting at Westfield
Technical Academy
6:30pm – 8:00pm

October 9

No School – Columbus Day
Holiday

October 11

Franklin Avenue Elementary
School Open House
6:00pm – 7:30pm

October 12

Fort Meadow Early Childhood
Center Open House
6:00pm – 7:30pm

October 16

School Committee Meeting
7:00pm

October 16-20

WPS STEM Week

October 17

Westfield Virtual School Open
House 6:00pm – 7:30pm

October 25

ELPAC Meeting at Westfield
Middle School 4:30pm

October 25

Early Release for Elementary
Schools/Parent-Teacher
Conferences

October 26

Open House at Westfield
Technical Academy 6:00pm

November 2

Daylight Savings Time ends

November 6

School Committee Meeting
7:00pm

November 7

Election Day: No school for
students/Staff development
day

November 9

SEPAC Meeting at Westfield
Technical Academy
6:30pm – 8:00pm

November 10

No School – Veteran's Day
Holiday

November 20

School Committee Meeting
7:00pm

November 22

ELPAC Meeting at Westfield
Middle School 4:30pm

November 23-25

No School - Thanksgiving
Recess

December 4

School Committee Meeting
7:00pm

ENGLISH: If you need assistance understanding this information, please contact your building principal to arrange translation services.

Arabic: إذا تحتاج مساعدة لفهم هذه المعلومات، الرجاء الاتصال بمدير المدرسة لتقديم خدمات الترجمة

NEPALI: यो जानकारी बुझ्न सहयोग चाहहएमा कृ पया तपाइको प्रधानाध्यापकलाई अनुवाद सुविधाको लागि सम्पर्कक राख्नुहोस.

RUSSIAN: Если Вы нуждаетесь в переводе, пожалуйста, сообщите директору школы, и школа обеспечит вас переводчиком.

SPANISH: Si Ud. necesita ayuda para entender esta información, favor de comunicarse con el Principal para los servicios de traducción.

UKRAINIAN: Якщо Вам необхідний переклад даної інформації, будь ласка, повідомте директору школи, і школа забезпечить вас перекладачем.