



**Superintendent of Schools**  
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**Mr. Stefan Czaporowski**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

July 30, 2020

Dear WPS Families,

I am writing with another update on our planning process for the start of the new school year. Earlier this week, the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) reduced the number of school days required for students from 180 to 170 so that districts will have ten days to provide professional development and safety training to all staff. As a result, we are tentatively scheduled to resume student learning on September 15, 2020.

DESE has instructed school districts to submit our draft reopening plan by July 31, 2020. This plan must address the feasibility of three options to serve students at the start of the school year. Those options include a full return to daily, in-person schooling, a hybrid plan combining in-school learning and remote learning, and finally, a 100% remote learning program. Each district's final plan, approved by the School Committee, must be submitted to DESE on August 10, 2020. Given the significant changes these plans will require in the way that schools operate, we also must negotiate our proposal with all employee unions impacted. Some of these negotiations are underway. I know that many families and staff members are asking for specifics about our back to school plan but many of the details cannot be established until all negotiations are complete.

In the meantime, our planning process continues to be guided by monitoring of public health data in Westfield and in our surrounding communities. We are encouraged that indicators about the virus across the state continue to move in the right direction. Massachusetts has been successful by gradually reopening in phases relying on compliance with health and safety precautions. We believe that reopening our schools in the same way will help to ensure that we can successfully bring our students back to school.

We know that under normal circumstances, students would be best served in schools every day, interacting with their peers, and engaged in live classroom learning. In order to adhere to the school reopening guidance provided by DESE, consistent with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the American Pediatric Association, we also know that we cannot meet physical distance requirements with all students and staff in our buildings at the same time. However, we do believe that we can make changes in our school schedules and operating procedures to make a partial return to in-person learning possible this fall. This will require strategies to ensure physical distancing and other health and safety measures including wearing masks, washing hands frequently, cleaning and sanitizing facilities, and staying home when sick, among others. Our objective is to implement a comprehensive set of strategies and investments to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus.

We recognize that the circumstances of every family are different, and that ultimately, no plan will satisfy everyone in our community. Rest assured that we are working diligently to explore every option available to us. As of now, our proposal will include bringing subsets of students back to school every day. However, most of our students will rotate between in-person and online learning on a weekly basis. We are also working with community partners to establish Remote Learning Centers that students can attend in the event they do not have appropriate supervision and support during remote learning weeks. Families that are not comfortable sending their students to school may also select a full remote

learning option. If your family is contemplating remote learning exclusively in the fall, please let us know by calling 413-572-6403 extension 9 if you have not done so already. Families will still be able to change their minds either way, but this information will facilitate our scheduling.

As our district moves closer to a final plan, we continue to welcome input and feedback from all our stakeholders. We invite you to share your questions, comments, and ideas to help inform and reinforce our plans at [2020reopen@schoolsofwestfield.org](mailto:2020reopen@schoolsofwestfield.org). We will continue to keep you informed about our progress by email, our district website, and Facebook page. Interested families can tune in to our next School Committee Meeting on Wednesday August 5, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. by visiting <https://www.cityofwestfield.org/511/Community-Access-TV>. At this meeting, the draft plan submitted to DESE on July 31 will be shared and discussed. Thank you again for your patience and cooperation in these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Stefan Czaprowski  
Superintendent of Schools  
Westfield Public Schools