



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

EMILY J. PARKS
Superintendent of Schools

COVID-19 UPDATE – WED., MAR. 11

March 11, 2020

Dear Members of the Westwood Community,

Late this afternoon, I was informed by the Westwood Health Director that a Westwood resident received a presumptive positive test for COVID-19 and that this individual has children who attend Westwood High School and Thurston Middle School.

- The family made the decision to keep the students out of school prior to this becoming a presumptive case. Therefore, the students have not been in school since last week. We were also notified that both students are healthy and not exhibiting any symptoms.
- The children and family are following the quarantine protocol from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) until cleared to return to school.
- As you know from prior communications, all school buildings were cleaned and disinfected using electrostatic sprayers over the weekend. We continue with daily cleaning protocols in schools and on buses.

After consulting with the MDPH, we are planning for an on-time opening of all schools tomorrow. This decision is consistent with neighboring school districts and communities who are experiencing similar scenarios. The [Westwood Board of Health](#) remains the primary point of contact for any communicable disease information. They can be contacted by phone at 781-320-1085. Their work is informed by the MDPH and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We will continue to take our lead from their direction and guidance.

In an effort to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19, we have made the difficult decision to cancel all evening and community events in all our facilities effective immediately and until further notice. Additionally, all field trips will be cancelled immediately. This decision is consistent with the State's latest guidance for public events which was announced yesterday during the Governor's press conference. We want to acknowledge that our students, staff, and families have invested a lot of time and energy in preparing for these events. However, at this point, we need to make decisions that safeguard our community in the long term.

The use of school buildings by non-school groups will be discontinued until further notice. Affected parties will be notified individually. Here are some examples of events that are cancelled or postponed beginning tomorrow:

- Community events and meetings
- Student performances
- PTO meetings and other parent events
- Indoor athletic facility rentals for sports

We will continue to offer before-school and after-school care at our elementary schools (Extended Day). At this time, we have not cancelled school-based extracurricular activities including athletics and clubs.

I want to specifically alert you to two important events that are being impacted. The 8th grade trip to Washington, DC is cancelled. As with other cancelled events, I am sure that this news will be quite disappointing for our 8th grade students. We will be communicating with our travel company in the coming days about the ramifications of that decision. The administration at Thurston will be in touch with 8th grade families when they have details to share.

Unfortunately, this week's performances of the high school musical *The Addams Family* will be limited. The musical will have a single performance tomorrow evening for cast and crew family members only. The cast will be notified directly of next steps. Our hope to be able to have a full run of the musical at a later date.

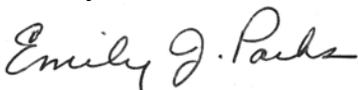
We will continue to track the trend data for illness in all of the schools. Anytime there is an outbreak of a virus or illness, it can be very unsettling for families and staff, therefore keeping everyone informed, safe and healthy remains our priority. We share this information in the interest of full transparency so families can make decisions accordingly.

The District is continuing to take proactive steps to make sure our school buildings are healthy places to work and learn. We are conducting cleaning and disinfecting protocols tonight throughout our schools. You can help keep the school system safe and healthy by ensuring that anyone who is ill remains at home. We ask that you please consult with your primary care physician if you have any questions or concerns about sending your child to school. For up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, you can:

- Visit the MDPH COVID-19 website at www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus
- Call MDPH Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences 24-hour emergency hotline at (617) 983-6800
- View more detailed information and additional guidance is available from the CDC at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov.

This situation is evolving, and we will continue to provide updates as news develops. All of us in the District appreciate the many parents who have communicated support for the District's actions and decision-making. As always, working together as a community continues to be one of the best responses we have available.

Thank you,



Emily J. Parks
Superintendent of Schools