



SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION FOR OUR WTS FAMILY

~ Friday, May 22, 2020 ~

As we welcome the Memorial Day weekend, I hope this school-home communication finds you and your family healthy and safe. As New Jersey begins the cautious, thoughtful process of easing (somewhat) the restrictions we have experienced due to the pandemic I would like to take this opportunity to remind us all just how important it is to take care of “You” so you can be at your best for your family and students. I remain in awe of how the adults of our fine community have worked with such diligence and care to support every child throughout the health crisis we are experiencing ... **THANK YOU!** Everyone here at your Washington Township Schools is eager to support you and the children as we enter the final three weeks of the 2019-2020 school year ... and beyond, for certain. As always, please feel free to reach out should you be in need of any assistance or guidance from our faculty and leadership team. As our school year together begins to wind down, I would like to share a few important information items as we get set to enjoy the upcoming weekend and get ready for Week #10 of “at-home learning ...

Memorial Day this Coming Monday: As a reminder, there will be no classes for students or faculty this coming Monday as we observe the Memorial Day holiday. May we all take a moment this weekend to remember and honor the courageous women and men who lost their lives fighting for the freedoms we enjoy here in our United States.

Looking Ahead to June 12th and 15th: The final two days of the school year are Friday, June 12 and Monday June 15. These two school days will reflect a slight change in the hours we have grown accustomed to during this period of at-home learning. The hours for both of these days will be **8:30am to 12:30pm**. There will be no formal lunch period for these final two days and a snack break will be provided.

School Bond Referendum Update: Back in late January our community overwhelmingly passed a school bond referendum and, since that time, the projects have all gone out for public bidding. Due to the timing of the bids as well as the unpredictable market, the District’s architect feels that the bids came in much higher than expected for a host of reasons: Over the course of 4 months (December - March) the United States implemented new tariffs on metals and other raw materials; the construction economy was really strong with contractors having no capacity; and the lead times of equipment was at an unprecedented length. In addition our architectural firm has been told that contractors were factoring in penalties into their bids because they knew they could never hit the construction windows with a late bid. Unfortunately, the aforementioned conditions have added hundreds of thousands of dollars to the costs of the projects. The economy is currently experiencing turbulent times due to the pandemic and the world is at risk for a recession. In the long run it is the professional opinion of the architect that the cost of these projects will decrease once the economy gets back on track and the bid is released at a more favorable time. As a result of these factors, the Board’s Finance Committee decided to rebid the OFRS and LVMS roofing projects and the OFRS electrical upgrade; and those bids were successfully awarded as part of the Board’s May meeting. The OFRS air conditioning project will be rebid in the fall as work can only be completed during the summer season when schools are closed. The target date for completion is Summer/Fall 2021. Although this is not the experience we had all certainly hoped for, WTS and the Board of Education remains deeply committed to the projects supported by the citizens of our community.

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Planning for the New School Year: During last week's Board of Education meeting I explained that the WTS Leadership Team is in the process of planning for the new school year. A reopening of school remains a possibility and the planning effort is underway and is being examined through 7 critical lenses: *Physical Health; Mental Health/Well-being; Instruction/School Operations; Transportation; Facilities; Technology; and Communications & Governance*. Most certainly WTS will be seeking input from our faculty and parents, and I will be providing updates as the District's planning process continues in the weeks and months ahead.

Take good care, please stay safe, and **thank you** once again for all that you are doing for the children of our WTS community ... Enjoy the holiday weekend!

❤️ ***We WILL Get Through This TOGETHER!*** ❤️

Jeff Mohre
Superintendent of Schools
May 22, 2020