

# The Case House Gazette

November 2020

## Message from the Superintendent:

Dear Weston School Community,

With Thanksgiving upon us in this extraordinary time, I want to remind all of us that we have much to be grateful for. Thank you School Committee, administrators, faculty, staff and families for all the work you did to open school in September and continue schooling throughout the fall. Our community generously helped to provide PPE purchases and air purifiers in all of our learning spaces to make our schools safer. Our Buildings and Grounds personnel and custodial staff made sure that all of our HVAC systems are working to full capacity. They have moved furniture, marked hallways, and provided safe distancing signage in all of our buildings.

Educators in both Remote Learning Academy and in the hybrid models have all quickly learned many new skills, technologies, and teaching practices, and have shown bravery when providing instruction to all children. Our students are working hard, forming supportive in-person and online learning communities, and learning differently both in school and at home. They are a joy to teach.

We have all made sacrifices and accommodations this year in order to stay safe, and because of your ef-

orts, we have been able to remain open with very little disruptions to learning. We understand that not everyone is accepting or pleased with the decisions that we have made trying to balance safety and learning. We are doing what we believe is best for our children and we will continue with much passion and determination regardless of the struggles ahead. In this time of historical worldwide pandemic, we have fared quite well thus far. There are no perfect answers or clear paths to follow, but with such strong support, we will continue to work together successfully on behalf of the children of Weston. I am incredibly thankful and grateful for everything we have done as a community.

We have all been working very hard these past several months and we are looking forward to the upcoming long holiday weekend. I am asking all administrators, faculty and staff to be completely away from work, enjoy Thanksgiving with their loved ones, and take time to rest. Please join me in respecting their time off. We will be back, refreshed, and ready to work on Monday November 30th. Thank you and I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving.

With Much Appreciation,  
Dr. Midge Connolly

## About the Case House Gazette:

The Weston Public Schools Administration works in the historic Case House, and we publish this newsletter to share some seasonal WPS highlights with students, families, and the community.

Weston also has a weekly district newsletter, called [Westword](#)

## In this issue:

- Message from Dr. Connolly
- District Safety Team
- District Equity Committee
- WHS Athletic Department
- Holiday Travel Guidelines
- Upcoming Virtual Events

# District Safety Team

*Established 2015*

## What is the District Safety Team? What do they do?

The District Safety Team is led by Weston's Elementary School Principals Jen Faber and Erin Maguire. It includes administrators and school leaders along with first responders and multidisciplinary experts. They collaborate on preparedness, planning and prevention for a wide range of safety considerations.

This section highlights the work of Weston's District Safety Team, whose guidance has been instrumental to safe in-person learning. Weston is proud to have been one of the first MA communities to resume in-person learning this Fall. We remain among the only districts in the state with our elementary students learning in-person five days a week. Older students are safely learning in the hybrid model, and expanding in-person learning time is a top priority.

Everyone supporting our students' safe return to school this Fall deserves recognition and celebration. However, the District Safety Team's proactive leadership in coordinating health and safety planning efforts has been uniquely impactful in creating safe physical conditions for the rest of the Weston Public Schools (WPS) and Weston community.

In Fall 2015 Weston took safety planning to the next level, recognizing the benefits of more proactive, centralized, cohesive, and

comprehensive policies and protocols. A school safety non-profit helped Weston review and refine existing safety plans through a detailed and ongoing auditing process. Following findings from that process, the district created a safety team to develop guidelines and plans

based around contingencies to consider and problem-solve for. Additionally, each school also has its own local school-based safety team partnering with the district team to implement and improve plans in each school. The teams' mutual trust, diverse knowledge, and flexibility has helped Weston make diligent plans for a wide range of health and safety matters.

Their work encompasses all aspects of safe and healthy learning environments, ranging from arranging transportation logistics and emergency response protocols to protecting physical health and caring for students' emotional well-being.

PLANNING



# District Safety Team

By the time COVID-19 struck, Weston already had set up the policy frameworks and administrative infrastructure needed to coordinate health and safety protocols to return to in-person learning.

The team then refocused their expertise and safety-planning-capacity to help Weston hit the ground running in preparing for our students to return to their schools under the hybrid model.

Planning around the pandemic is different from safety planning during normal times: instead of anticipating what might happen, the team was responding to health and safety questions in real time, assembling toolkits and building flexible frameworks to address urgent issues right away.

Despite the unique challenges, the team successfully developed COVID-specific health and safety protocols into a new handbook. Their expertise helped Weston make massive changes to schools, meeting and surpassing CDC guidelines for social distancing and ventilation. They also helped develop viable implementation plans for mask breaks, hallway procedures, recess plans, snack protocols, and countless other school safety considerations.



Source: NicePNG.com



This year, the Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee ([WEEFC](#)) donated over 200 air purifiers, enough to put at least one in every classroom, and in many other rooms and offices around the district.

Thanks WEEFC and thanks families for [your support!](#)

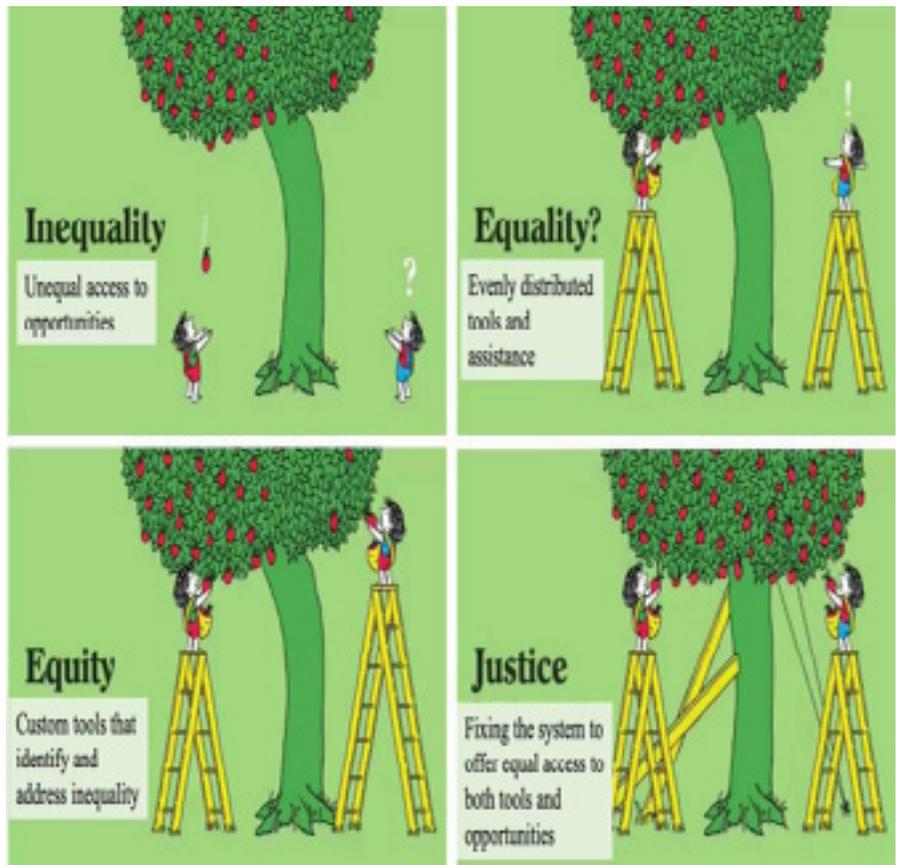
The team's approach appreciates that protecting students' wellbeing includes supporting mental health, resilience, independence, and connections with peers. It also recognizes that using new technology can help students safely access and engage with education, and it support students learning new ways to learn, and developing skills that will serve them for life.

The safety team intends to continue fostering joyful learning experiences. Their other ongoing goal is to continuously evaluate and assess for ever-safer school learning environments.

# Equity, Diversity, And Inclusion Committee

This November, WPS launched a new committee bringing students, parents, teachers, school leaders, administrators and community members together. The committee will be meeting monthly to discuss and address a wide range of equity, diversity, and inclusion work.

The scope of the committee's work includes anti-racism and culturally responsive teaching practices. They will also more broadly consider how systems, structures, practices, rituals, and beliefs in WPS contribute and connect to many different social inequities in our society.



**CULTURALLY**  
**RESPONSIVE-**  
**SUSTAINING**  
**EDUCATION**



One overarching goal is to ensure that all of our students have access to the opportunities, resources, and support systems they need to succeed. Weston also wants all of our students to feel like they belong in WPS, and that their race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity are assets to be cherished and celebrated.

The committee is still in the process of defining itself, as members collaborate to better understand these issues and how we can all come together as a community to confront them. Please stay tuned for updates!

# Weston Athletics



Back in early March, at the end of the Winter sports season, the WHS Boys Basketball team traveled to Tsongas Arena in Lowell to play in the MIAA State Sectional Finals. The Weston Athletic Department had already ordered equipment and hired new coaches for the Spring season, in which over 340 Weston student-athletes were set to participate.

Season schedules, field reservations, and bus logistics had already been finalized as well; but less than a week later, the NBA announced the suspension of its season due to the pandemic, upending the sports-world. After schools went all-remote in March, the Governor extended the statewide break from school sports through the rest of the spring, into summer. During that unprecedented time, we got to work grappling with the challenges involved in sustaining our school sports while staying safe.

Our Athletic Department had many questions to answer when this world-wide pandemic hit! What safety steps can we put in place to ensure teams will be able to play/practice safely? How do we create modified schedules that will allow for competitive play? How do we keep our coaches, student-athletes, and community informed and engaged while school sports are shut down? Early on, Weston Athletics stayed connected via social media and Zoom meetings with coaches and student-athletes.

After weeks of planning for a safe return in May, it became clear that sports would be shut down state-wide for the rest of the school year. Athletic Director Mike McGrath felt heartbroken when sharing the news that the Spring season could not go on. Coaches from each season checked in with student-athletes from their teams, providing support and personal home workout and conditioning programs, often going the extra mile to help our community try to stay positive. Trainer Andrew "Riz" Rizza continued to remotely help student-athletes care for injuries.

## FALL HIGHLIGHTS

**Boys Golf - Finished Season 10-0 as small-DCL Champions**

**Boys Soccer - Competed in small-DCL championship game**

**Girls Soccer - Finished season as the #3 seed in small-DCL**

**Boys Cross Country - Competed in small-DCL championship**

**Girls Cross Country - Tied 1st place in small-DCL regular season and won in DCL Championship**

**Girls Field Hockey - 1st place in regular season, and then won in DCL Covid Cup Championship**

WHS athletics administrative aide and "COVID-Coach" Colleen Lanata also organized a virtual WHS Wildcat Pride award night celebrating seniors, which was a wonderful event. We further honored accomplishments of dozens of student-athletes with the 'Spring Senior Student-Athlete Spotlight' on [Twitter](#) daily.

As weeks turned to months, the Weston Athletics team kept busy planning ahead for safe return in the Fall. In normal years that means securing officials, buses, schedules, equipment, student registrations, physicals, coaches, fields and more. It also normally involves many meetings with students and families, the MIAA, Dual County League (DCL), and others; but this was far from a normal year.

Safely returning to Athletics this Fall took everything that goes into a normal season, plus so much more. The unique challenges of planning and coordinating the fall sports seasons during a pandemic touched every part of the season, from scheduling logistics to how games and competitions themselves are played.

# Weston Athletics



Games were all held outdoors, and Weston only faced teams in the DCL, playing in pods with all teams following a special season schedule designed to minimize the risk of spread and help with contact-tracing if needed. Teams have done outstanding jobs in following all safety protocols, including always wearing a mask, social distancing wherever possible and avoiding close contact during practices, not sharing water, no handshakes, the daily cleaning of equipment, and more. Spectators and officials are required to follow all safety guidelines too, and have been following them responsibly.

Thanks to all the hard work and leadership from the Weston Athletics team, this year WHS offered student-athletes a safe—albeit atypical—fall sports season. Support from the community, Case House, the district's safety team and the medical advisory board, school nurses, and the Weston Board of Health made all the success of this season possible.

On behalf of the Weston Athletic department and all of our student-athletes, thank you all for reading, and for being fans of the Weston Wildcats!



## Weston Boosters

Boosters is a parent-run organization supporting local student athletes and encouraging community participation in Athletics and other extracurriculars

Please consider getting involved with Weston Boosters to help support our student-athletes and equip our teams.

Visit [WestonBoosters.net](http://WestonBoosters.net) or click here to [learn more](#) and [show your support](#)

"It has been great for all of us to see our student-athletes playing and competing together outside, getting exercise and bringing joy to themselves and our community." said Athletic Director McGrath.

## Winter Sports Announcement

Due to the timing of the expected MIAA recommendations release, the DCL has voted to start the winter sports season on

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14th. Games will likely start in January

The DCL Athletic Directors are working together to prepare for the season. Thank you all for your patience and understanding.

If you have any questions about past or upcoming sports seasons, ask Mike ([McgrathM@weston.org](mailto:McgrathM@weston.org))



# Holiday Travel Guidelines

WPS is working hard to ensure in-person learning throughout the holidays and winter months. It is crucial to maintain safe practices every day, including limiting travel whenever possible around the holidays. If you MUST travel:

Review the [Governor's Travel Order](#), which requires all returning residents to complete [Massachusetts' Travel Form](#) prior to returning, unless you are coming from a [designated low-risk state](#). Upon returning, you must quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative COVID-19 test result that was administered up to 72 hours prior to your return to MA.

If you plan to stay home, please continue to practice safe COVID-19 protocols, including: social distancing, mask wearing, and handwashing. The CDC developed [additional guidance](#) for holiday celebrations and small gatherings.

If you leave MA, you must quarantine upon return until receiving negative test results. Email results to your school nurse.

## Next Steps When Traveling Out Of Country Or To A State Designated "Red" for COVID-19 Risk:

You may return to school if you have a negative PCR test. If you choose not to be tested you must remain out for 14 full days, and may return to school on day 15 back in Weston.

Negative test results should be from a PCR COVID test (antigen test results cannot be accepted at this time). You should ask the testing center or doctor's office if the test they are providing to you is PCR. If not, you should seek a PCR test.

If you choose to complete the 14 day quarantine, the day you return to Massachusetts is day zero and be able to return on day 15.

You should obtain your Covid-19 PCR test no earlier than 72 hours prior to your return to the state. For example, if you travel to Florida on Thursday and plan to return the following Monday, then the earliest possible test date would be the Friday before your return.

**OR**

If you opt not to test prior to your return to the state you MUST quarantine at home until you are able to test at one of the state testing centers or with your Primary Care Physician.

You can return to school once the negative test result is obtained. Using the prior example, you return on Monday and begin your quarantine. You test on Tuesday, and your negative test result is received on Wednesday, then you are able to return to school on Thursday.

Please call your school nurse for guidance if needed.

**NOTE: ANY TEST RESULT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL NURSE PRIOR TO RETURN TO SCHOOL.**

Testing Center Locations can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-testing>

MA State Travel Guidance can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>

Low Risk States can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order#lower-risk-states->

# Upcoming Virtual Events

- (12/14) Winter Sports Season Begins
- (12/17 @ 6:30 PM) BWMPO Virtual Holiday Celebration (Zoom)
- (1/5 @ 7 PM) High School Return of the Graduates Ceremony (Zoom)

## Parent Teacher Organization (PTO):

- 1/12 @ 9:30 AM
- 2/9 @ 7 PM
- 3/9 @ 9:30 AM
- 4/13 @ 9:30 AM
- 5/11 @ 7 PM
- June TBD

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### MEETS ON ZOOM AT 7 P.M.

- Dec 7 + 14
- Jan 11
- Jan 25 + 28 (at 4 PM)
- Feb 8+ 23
- Mar 8 + 22
- Apr 12 + 27
- May 3 + 24
- June 14

[CLICK HERE FOR A FULL LIST OF MEETINGS, INCLUDING AGENDAS AND THE ZOOM LINK](#)

## SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS

- [Woodland School Council Meetings](#) 12/07, 2/1, 3/1, 4/5, 5/3, 6/7 @ 3:00 PM
- [Country School Council Meetings](#) 12/14, 1/11, 2/22, 4/26, 5/17 @ 3:00 PM
- [Field School Council Meetings](#) 12/7, 2/1, 3/1, 4/5, 5/3, 6/7 @ 3:00 PM
- [MS Council Meetings](#) 12/1, 1/26, 2/23, 3/30, 4/27, 5/25 @ 6:30 PM
- [HS Council Meetings](#) 12/10 @ 7:40 AM - (FUTURE DATES/TIMES TBD)