

Good evening families,

I hope you're all having a good week and staying safe. This week, I have several important items to share with you. In summary, they are:

- COVID-19 case increases in the schools
- What is the hybrid model schedule
- How families can help
- School budget process
- Community health survey
- Virtual Town Hall for Parents

COVID-19 INCREASES AND MOVING BACK TO HYBRID INSTRUCTION

I have made the difficult decision to move back to the hybrid learning model, effective December 14 until January 19. This decision is based on multiple factors, all directly related to the health and safety for students and staff.

In the days leading up to Thanksgiving, our schools experienced an increase in COVID-19 cases. The positive cases have continued to grow, with several more since my update on Monday. On a call this morning, the health district indicated that cases were starting to increase, as is the case across Connecticut. The Department of Health has also indicated that from now through January are anticipated to be some of the most challenging times in relation to the pandemic.

We believe we are less likely to need to move to remote learning again if we can keep the numbers of close contacts down. Moving back to the hybrid will allow for us to reduce the numbers of students in the building at one time - which increases social distance for everyone - while still having students in school part of the time. This may help us reduce the numbers of students and staff who require quarantine. We believe we are less likely to need to move to remote learning again if we can keep the numbers of close contacts down. And while 6 feet of social distance is not required by Connecticut's Department of Health, having 6 feet of distance does reduce those who are identified as a close contact.

Our goal is for students to continue learning in the schools, but we need to do that in a way that prioritizes the health and safety of all EWPS community members.

My hope is that this will be successful, and we will be able to return to our 4 day schedule for all students at that point.

HOW CAN YOU HELP

For the hybrid model to be successful, we need help from our entire school community. While we can do a lot at the school to mitigate risks of exposure, we have to rely on all of our parents

and families to help our school community. To remind you of what we count on you to help with, here are the areas of need:

- **It is absolutely critical that students stay at home when they show any symptoms at all** – if they come into school, they are increasing the risk to everyone around them, and more and more people will need to quarantine or will become ill.

If you haven't done so recently, review the symptoms. Remember, symptoms do not have to be severe for someone to be COVID-19 positive. Symptoms can be found on our website or on the Connecticut Department of Public Health website:

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Health-and-Safety>.

- **Students who have traveled to any state on the Governor's advisory list MUST quarantine for 14 days.** We have also had some students come to school after travel but before their quarantine period was over. This increases exposure to all members of the school community. We need to keep our exposure list low if we're going to keep in-school instruction going.
- **Students MUST stay home if they have gotten tested but have not received their test results.** Even asymptomatic people can end up testing positive and if someone comes into our schools before getting negative results, they potentially will have spread the virus. Please be reminded that we must have negative results from a PCR test – rapid (antigen) tests are fine to identify a positive case but are not reliable enough for a negative result.

I realize there is impact to families regarding childcare and work with the decision to use our hybrid model. **The Family First Coronavirus Relief Act provides benefits to families who have to miss work due to quarantine, care for a child due to illness or when schools are unavailable.** I encourage parents to look into the benefits available to them through that Act. A link to some Frequently Asked Questions is here:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions#70conn>

Finally, I'm sure most of you have seen information about updated CDC guidelines regarding length of quarantine. At this time Connecticut has not adopted the CDC guidelines and our health district has advised that we should continue our current practice at this time. Even if DPH updates the guidance specific to Connecticut, the guidelines for school may not change. I will provide an update if and when anything related to quarantine changes.

WHAT HYBRID MODEL ARE WE FOLLOWING

The hybrid model will be exactly what we used earlier this school year. Students whose last names are A – K will attend in person on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students whose last names begin with L – Z will attend in person on Thursdays and Fridays. All students will continue to learn remotely on Wednesdays. Some of our students with the highest needs will be able to attend 4 days per week as they did earlier this fall - those families will receive a School Messenger from Dr. Tudryn early next week.

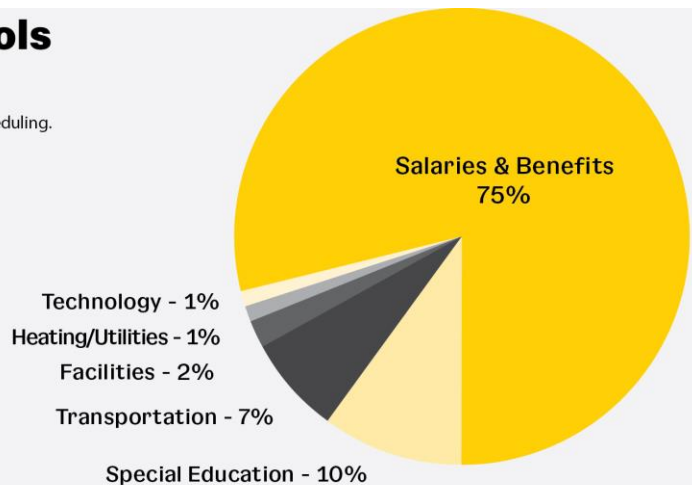
BUDGET

We have begun the process of building the FY22 budget. More information will be provided regarding the elements of the budget creation in the coming weeks and months, and we wanted to share with you a rough timeline for how we go about building the budget for our schools.

East Windsor Public Schools Budget Timeline*

*This timeline is fluid and changes slightly each year depending on scheduling.

November	<i>School leadership begins discussing needs based on community's education goals</i>
December	<i>Superintendent starts building budget for next year</i>
January	<i>Budget needs and priorities reviewed between superintendent and administrative team</i>
February	<i>Superintendent presents "Superintendent's budget" to the community and Board of Education workshops are held</i>
March	<i>Board of Education votes on budget and then Board of Education presents to Board of Finance</i>
April - June	<i>Board of Finance approval of budget for referendum and Board of Education makes modifications to the budget as needed</i>



Last year, the Board of Finance voted to create a reserve fund for the FY '21 budget. This savings account allows the school department a way to cover the cost of unbudgeted or unanticipated expenses.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

The Community Health Center has requested we forward the below survey so they can gather information regarding ways to serve the community better. Please take a moment to respond to the brief survey at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DSFDPCJ>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DTM6X8J>

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL FOR PARENTS

The Connecticut State Department of Education is hosting a Virtual Town Hall for Parents and Families to discuss remote learning during COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting incredible challenges not only for schools but also for families. Families are coping with new terms like hybrid, remote, and asynchronous, along with multiple online platforms and various technology issues, all while trying to keep their children safe.

Parents and families are invited to join members of the Connecticut State Department of Education, and community, education and child development experts to provide tips and best

practices, answer questions and highlight new resources to support students and families in remote learning in Connecticut. The Town Hall will be in a webinar format and participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of panelists.

Registration

[Click here to register](#)

December 8, 2020 from 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Contact: judy.carson@ct.gov

Thank you and take care

Christine