
District Planning Update 12-19-18

Westport School District Outreach Message <Connect-ED@westportps.org>
Reply-To: Connect-ED@westportps.org

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WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Families of Westport Students,

It has been a challenging few months as we have worked together to create a plan for next year. Throughout the process, your feedback and insights were invaluable and appreciated. Even though I could not respond personally to all of the emails, every message was read and integrated within the body of work before us.

At the center of all our concerns continues to be the best interests of our students, and I am grateful to serve a community in which education is a cornerstone of the quality of life within Westport.

There was no easy solution going forward, but our entire Westport Public Schools' team is committed to the success of our plan for next year. Your children's welfare is at the heart of our District's mission. We are Westport; we can do this well.

So what are the next steps? Where are we going?

Short-term Planning

- We will now create a Transition Design Team of front-line educators and administrators to work collaboratively to develop the final schedule and all aspects of how we implement grade 6 at our five elementary schools next year. This team will work throughout the second half of the year to ensure every detail of this shift is planned in detail from lockers to the creating a cohesive learning community of our rising sixth grade students. After the holidays, we will launch this group so they can get started with the compendium of work needed for a smooth transition. We will also be reaching out to our parent community to ensure that your voices are heard, as well as inviting our grade 5 students along the way to share their hopes and dreams for next year's experience.

Long-term Planning

- We will be working with Dr. Richard Lemons, Executive Director of CT Center for School Change, and his professional group to facilitate a community conversation

to help define our vision of the future of Westport education. The work will begin in January with a completion target of April, involving an inclusive process of all stakeholders.

- In January, the District expects to award a contract for the complete review of all of our facilities by a team of architects/engineers to enable development of a 10-yr. plan that addresses any infrastructure issues of all our schools. This is expected to be completed by next summer.
- As the educational vision is defined in April, these concepts/goals will then be transferred to the architects/engineers reviewing our schools to create options for the kinds of facilities to enable those learning experiences to happen. We anticipate this will be completed by fall 2019.

Our target is by fall 2019 to have a fully articulated vision of the future of education in our District, with a specific plan for facilities that supports how we actualize this vision. This will define if we continue to have two middle schools, one large one, a kindergarten center, a sixth grade academy, etc. By fall 2019, we will have our master plan for the next 10 years defined in both in terms of the direction of the District and how we will house our students. There is exciting work before us, and we look forward to your input and partnership in this journey.

I wish you and your family a most joyous holiday season!

Sincerely,
Colleen Palmer