



## WRENTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent  
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Superintendent

### Superintendent's Bulletin Spring of 2017

Dear WPS Community,

It is strange writing the “spring” issue of the Superintendent’s Bulletin during a March snow storm. New England weather is tough! Fortunately, warm weather is coming.

Spring is my favorite time of year! The outdoor temperature is nice, flowers start to bloom, and we know that summer is around the corner. Spring is also prime learning time at Delaney and Roderick. Our students, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff members, and administrators are working very hard and getting a lot done. Below are some of the highlights:

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Thank you for your support. Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Yours truly,

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#### Core Values

Respect • Communication • Collaboration • Responsibility • Continuous Growth and Learning

## Massachusetts Earns Top Marks on Several Measures

As residents of this area, we know that there are many reasons to live in New England (the March weather is usually not one of them). Recently, Massachusetts received positive press from a variety of sources:

- [Massachusetts public education ranks top in the nation on the 2016 Education Week Quality Counts Report.](#)
- [If Massachusetts were a county, our students would rank number 1 in the world in reading, number 2 in the world in science, and number 12 in the world in math.](#)
- [Massachusetts is the top state in the nation in terms of the percentage of the class of 2016 that passed an Advanced Placement exam and has the highest five- and ten-year growth.](#)
- [US News ranked Massachusetts the number 1 state to live in, due in part to the educational attainment.](#)

## 2017 MCAS Information and Schedule

The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mitchell Chester, wrote an open letter about the newest iteration of MCAS that will be given to students next month. Below is an excerpt from the letter:

*This spring marks the start of the next-generation MCAS assessments in English language arts and math in grades 3-8. After considering for several years how to best update our already strong statewide assessment, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in November 2015 to maintain a test unique to our Commonwealth that would draw some of its questions from the existing MCAS, some of its questions from the PARCC assessment developed by a consortium of states, and some questions created specifically for the next-generation MCAS. This spring is the debut of that new test.*

*The Board also voted to transition to computer-based testing. For the next-generation MCAS tests this spring, most students will take the computer-based version in grades 4 and 8. Many schools have also chosen computer-based testing in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7; the remainder will be taking the paper version.*

*Many people ask us why we conduct statewide testing. These tests are required by both state and federal law, but more importantly:*

- *Test results help parents gauge whether their children are making academic progress.*
- *Test results help educators identify strengths and weaknesses in their curricula and instructional methods.*
- *A student's participation in statewide testing helps provide context to other students in the same school, students in other schools within the district, and students in other districts.*

*MCAS was first instituted as part of the 1993 Education Reform Law. The programs and funding in that law have led to nearly a quarter-century of steady improvement in our K-12 schools. Today **Massachusetts is number one in the nation in elementary and secondary education.***

Last year, our students performed very well on the MCAS. [Please click here to review the 2016 performance data for the district, Delaney School and Roderick School.](#) The students are ready for the 2017 administration. Here is the schedule:

**Grade 3:**

**ELA (4/25-4/27)  
MATH (5/16-5/17)**

**Grade 4:**

**ELA (4/10-4/12)  
MATH (5/15-5/16)**

**Grade 5:**

**ELA (4/4-4/6)  
MATH (5/8-5/9)  
SCIENCE (5/18-5/19)**

**Grade 6:**

**ELA (4/25-4/26)  
MATH (5/10-5/11)**

My wife and I want to help our children do their best on MCAS without causing them to stress-out over the tests. This is what we do in our house:

- We remind our children that MCAS measures what they have already learned. There is nothing new or surprising.
- We tell them that the MCAS tests are similar to all of the other tests that they take in school. The MCAS tests may look different and have a more formal structure, but they are not any tougher than any other test.
- We make sure they get enough sleep and eat breakfast.
- We tell them that the most important thing is to work hard and that we love them no matter what happens.

**2017 Spring Parent-Teacher Conference Schedule and Tips**

The dates for the 2017 Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences are March 22 (evening) and March 23 (afternoon). The teachers look forward to discussing your child's report card with you. We know from experience and research that a student's learning improves and inappropriate behaviors decrease when the student's teacher and parents or guardians communicate about the student. The [National Education Association](#) and the [Harvard Family Research Project](#) have suggestions for parents to make the most of the Parent-Teacher Conference. The tips include:

- Review your child’s report card and other work before the conference.
- Reflect on your child’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Ask the teacher about her or his goals for your child.
- Ask how you can support the goals at home.
- Schedule another time to talk with the teacher if necessary.
- Share the feedback with your child.

Please contact your child’s teacher if you have any questions about conferences. We’re looking forward to meeting with you!

### **2017-2018 School Calendar Highlights**

The Wrentham School Committee recently voted to approve the 2017-2018 school calendar. You can see the [calendar by visiting the district web page](#). Here are some highlights:

- First and Last Days
  - The first day for students will be Wednesday, August 30. The last day for students, with no snow days, will be Friday, June 15 (with 5 snow days the last day of school will be Friday, June 22).
- Vacation Dates
  - December: Monday, December 25 through Monday, January 1
  - February: Monday, February 19 through Friday, February 23
  - April: Monday, April 16 through Friday, April 20
- Report Cards and Conferences
  - Term 1:
    - Report cards are sent home on Friday, November 17
    - Fall Conferences: Monday, November 20 (afternoon) and Tuesday, November 21 (evening)
  - Term 2:
    - Report cards are sent home on Friday, March 16
    - Spring Conferences: Wednesday, March 21 (afternoon) and Thursday, March 22 (evening)
  - Term 3:
    - Report cards are sent home on the last day of school
    - Teachers will provide parents with detailed comments about their children’s progress on the final report card

### **Early Dismissal for Professional Development**

Many high performing school districts, including Norfolk, Plainville, and King Philip, dismiss students early from school a few days each school year to allow faculty and staff members to participate in professional development. In 2017-2018, Wrentham will dismiss students at 12:00 on four days for professional development. The additional learning opportunities for our teachers and staff members will enable them to continue to perform at the highest level. The dates for the Early Release professional development days with noon dismissal for the 2017-2018 school year

are **Wednesday, September 20, Wednesday, December 13, Wednesday, February 7, and Thursday, March 29.**

I understand how challenging early dismissal can be for families (my children are dismissed early from school in Walpole). We partnered with the YMCA to offer an extended day program for our school district at Delaney School. Parents may contact the Y if they want to sign children up for after school care on Early Release Days. The YMCA rates are reasonable and they will reduce or waive their fee for families with financial constraints. You may contact them at 508-384-1159. In addition, we aligned our schedule with the King Philip schedule, so older students are available for child care. Please let me know if you have questions or need help making the schedule work for your family.

### **2017-2018 School Department Budget Proposal**

The Wrentham School Committee will have the public hearing on the FY18 budget at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28, 2017, in the Roderick School library. [Please click here if you want to view the FY18 Budget Hearing presentation.](#) Here are the highlights:

- Wrentham Public Schools is requesting \$11,619,600 for FY18. This is an increase of \$476,336, or 4.27%, over the FY17 budget of \$11,143,264.
- The budget supports the academic achievement and social/emotional learning of all students, increases access to full-day kindergarten, supports new reading and science initiatives, and improves technology resources and infrastructure in the district.
- Class sizes will remain advantageous with approximately 18-22 students per class.
- The FY18 budget keeps Wrentham's per pupil expenditure among the lowest in Massachusetts. [Please click here for more information on per pupil expenditure.](#)

The FY18 budget advances the district's vision, mission, and strategic objectives. The School Committee and I will work with the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, and Finance Committee to develop the Town's budget. Wrentham voters will vote on budget at Town Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 5, 2017, at King Philip High School. Please contact me if you have any questions.

### **Kindergarten in Wrentham**

We are working to increase access to full-day kindergarten in Wrentham. For 2017-2018, we hope to make all of our kindergarten classes full-day and integrate the half-day students among the full-day classes. The half-day students would be dismissed when the full-day students go to lunch. This is budget-dependent, so we won't know if we will be able to make this change until after Wrentham Town Meeting on June 5, 2017.

We have two resources available to help people understand kindergarten in Wrentham:

- [Kindergarten Information Night](#) takes place on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, in the Vogel auditorium. At Kindergarten Information Night, administrators and teachers will share details about the kindergarten program and answer questions from the audience.

- We wrote an open [letter about kindergarten in Wrentham](#) that includes a list of frequently asked questions, including why we want to increase access to full-day kindergarten and the differences between full-day and half-day kindergarten.

### **School Safety Presentation for Parents**

School Resource Officer Steve Hearon and I facilitated a conversation about school safety with a group of our students' parents. The presentation reviewed our updated emergency response protocols for evacuating the buildings (for example, if there is a fire in the school), sheltering in place (for example, if there is a skunk in the hallway), and responding to an active intruder (for example, someone enters the building intending to harm others). We also talked about the opioid addiction epidemic in Massachusetts and the challenges we will face with the legalization of recreational marijuana. The parents asked many interesting questions and provided suggestions for improvement. [You may review the slide show with notes from the presentation by clicking here.](#)

### **Delaney School Roof Project Update**

The Delaney School roof replacement project is proceeding to schedule. We are working with the Massachusetts School Building Authority, who is paying for 46% of the project, to secure a contractor to complete the work. We anticipate work starting the day after school ends for the summer and finishing right before school starts. As a result, Delaney School will be closed for the majority of the summer. [Please click here to see a series of PDFs pertaining to the Delaney School roof replacement project proposal.](#)

### **Wrentham Elementary Schools Trust (WEST) Update**

- **WEST Funds New Grants!** In January, **WEST** funded 6 new educational grants totaling nearly \$12,000. These important, innovative programs run the gamut--robots that teach computer programming to K thru 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, a science field trip for the 5<sup>th</sup> graders, published books written by our 1<sup>st</sup> graders, engineering and building materials for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and much, much more. We are looking forward to our grant night in May when we will hear the next round of innovative and exciting ideas from our teachers. Parents can check out our website to read more about these and other **WEST**-funded grants. [www.wrenthamwest.org](http://www.wrenthamwest.org).
- **WEST's Battle of the Bands raises close to \$13,000.** On January 28th, parents, teachers and community members crowded Showcase Live to raise money for Wrentham's kids. They saw three great bands hit the stage—last year's champ, Berkshire Valley Boys, Ben Blakesley and the Haymakers and the 2017 Champion, Untapped Potential. All the bands were phenomenal and, with the incomparable Manny Barros emceeing and spinning tunes, it was hard to find space on the dance floor. **WEST** thanks our 2017 Battle of the Bands Sponsors—Wrentham Cooperative Bank, Landscape America, Printmaster, 1776 Financial, and ROI Communications—as well as everyone who attended and made the night a success. All proceeds from the evening will be used to fund educational programs during **WEST**'s next grant cycle.
- **2016 WEST Grants in Action.** Has your child taken a field trip to the Museum of Science recently? Heard author/illustrator Ralph Masiello show the process of making an idea into a published book? Gotten a visit from traveling scientists who bring the science

of sound to life? Learned about David A. Kelly's inspiration for his popular series, Ballpark Mysteries? These are just some of the exciting **WEST**-funded grants that have taken place over the past several weeks. We hope these experiences have had a positive impact on your children and sparked their interest, curiosity and love of learning.

- **WEST Backpack Auction Coming Soon!** Look for **WEST**'s Backpack Auction online in April. We'll have a lot of exciting items to bid on and the best part is that you can participate online from the comfort of your own home. Last year, our lucky winners won a signed Rob Gronkowski football, a ride to school with friends on a firetruck, a VIP parking spot at the school, a membership to the Adirondack Club and many more exciting prizes. All proceeds from the auction will fund educational grants at the school. If you have an item or service you'd like to donate for the auction, please contact us at [info@wrenthamwest.org](mailto:info@wrenthamwest.org). All donations are tax-deductible.
- **WEST Needs YOU!** **WEST** is always looking for volunteers to help us with our mission of fostering educational excellence at the Wrentham Public Schools. We have a variety of projects big and small so contact us at [info@wrenthamwest.org](mailto:info@wrenthamwest.org) to find out how you can help.

### **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Update**

The PTO would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped out with *Read Across Wrentham*, and the *Spring Scholastic Book Fair*. The schools earned Scholastic Dollars from the purchases, which we can use to purchase classroom materials, books, and supplies. We could not have done it without the help from our volunteers. Thank you!

We had two great events recently, the *Minute to Win It* for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade boys and *Girls' Spring Fling* for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade girls. Both events were very well attended by students and their families.

On Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, we are sponsoring **Movie Night!** We hope everyone will bring their blankets and comfy clothes to the Delaney School Gibbons gym at 6:00 p.m. to see the movie [Trolls](#). All Delaney School and Roderick School students and families are invited.

On Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, we are hosting Parents' Night Out from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Mansfield. Sign Make & Take Fundraiser! A portion of your ticket price will be going to the Wrentham PTO! There will be raffle items, appetizers and a cash bar. All are welcome so invite family and friends! Once tickets are purchased, tables of 8-10 people can be reserved by emailing [WrenthamPTO@gmail.com](mailto:WrenthamPTO@gmail.com). Each participant will make a 4x24 finished wooden sign in their choice of paint color with one of 50 provided sayings using quality vinyl lettering. Leave with it finished and ready to hang! Make a sign for yourself, or to give as a gift. Finally! An 'artsy' party that you don't have to be an artsy person-ANYONE can do it!

\$40 per adult to make 1 sign

If you would like to make additional signs...

\$23 for a second sign made by the same person

\$21 for a third sign made by the same person

For more information and to choose your sign, check out the event page at [www.facebook.com/events/245774532497755/](http://www.facebook.com/events/245774532497755/)

Tickets can be purchased at <https://squareup.com/store/artsypartiesandfacepaintingtoo>

Registration CLOSES at midnight on March 30th. Tickets purchased at the door will be \$50/adult.

Why is it important to support the PTO? The primary role of the PTO is to support the schools and students. The PTO provides assistance to teachers, raises funds for supplemental educational materials and experiences, supports school and family social interaction, and provides a non-biased forum for sharing information on issues that impact our children. It is our belief that the team effort of a parent-teacher organization offers the best possible learning environment for our children. All parents and teachers are part of the PTO! So far this year we have provided many social events and activities for students and families, and provided funding for many classroom materials, field trips, and helped redo the Delaney Office. Please come to our next PTO meeting to find out more and how you can get involved!

### **THANKS FOR READING!**

Thank you for reading the *Superintendent's Bulletin*! Please look for the next *Superintendent's Bulletin* in June. Have a great spring!



*The Wrentham Wildcat and friends at Literacy Night, 2017.*