

Monday Memo for December 4 to December 8, 2023

Hello Families,

I have received feedback around the way I have been identifying new information in the Monday Memo. Thank you to those folks who reached out to let me know how their viewing experience was going. I am going to now put the new information in a box, as the highlighting was not working for all users.

Building a West Bedford School culture and climate:

I would like to acknowledge that I am aware that there are some who are not happy with the how things are moving forward with the school. There are feelings of being “boxed out” from providing ideas and opinions to the Admin team. I want you to know that I value the information that our families have provided to date. There have been some great ideas raised and valid feedback provided to us. I want all within our WBS community to know that I am listening and working through matters with individual families or with our team, on broader student body matters, as they arise.

Opening a new school, offers many different opportunities, challenges, perspectives, priorities, and requests that need to be balanced within a large and diverse school community. I am listening and I do value input.

As the Principal, I work with my Admin team to review the feedback and prioritize our work. It will not always be possible to accept or action every suggestion or to do so within the timeframes that families might be expecting, but I do remain committed to listening, to continuous improvement, and to working through priorities with a focus on supporting students and their success, while also getting the school set up and established.

Feedback topics to date:

School Population:

As a school, we are 55 days old (as of December 1, 2023). We continue to enroll students, but we also have students moving away. Our current enrollment is 1276, PP-8. Our class numbers range from 17-29 students in Grades P-6 and 20-31 in Grades 7 & 8.

In September, WBS opened at 150% capacity. With the continued building development within the community, we know that our population will continue to grow, and this is not sustainable for the school.

As the administrator, I understand & share your concerns about growing enrolments and continued population growth in the area. I have met with our HRCE colleagues, and they are aware and are working to develop a long term plan. More concrete ideas will be

communicated with the community after February- which is the registration month for 2024-2025- and once next year's initial student numbers are known.

Universal Washrooms:

We have heard & we share your concern about unclean washrooms. We have established a more rigorous cleaning schedule for the bathrooms and have also provided lessons to our younger students on how to use the washroom properly - we are seeing progress, but we aren't there yet. We'll keep at it until all students have a clean washroom to use.

Pre- Primary Washrooms:

A privacy stall has been created in the Pre-Primary washrooms that still allows for students to be safely supervised and supported, but also provides privacy from others.

Operational Aspects:

Library: We would love to be able to accept parent volunteers to help us set up the shelving and books in the library, however, due to procurement rules we are only permitted to have our contracted suppliers to do this work. Rest assured we want the library set up ASAP too and are working with the supplier to get it done as soon as possible.

Cubbies: The timeline given to us for the additional cubbies will be December. Until they arrive, we are going to be asking students to put their outerwear on the back of their chair. We are also looking at costing out putting up temporary hooks in the hallway for student items.

Bike Racks: We are working with our HRCE Operations team to acquire more bike racks and have them placed in different locations around the perimeter of the WBS side of the building. It is wonderful to see how many students travel by bike or scooter to school.

O Canada and Announcements: We have been trying different times and ways O Canada and announcements are done at WBS. After hearing from some in the community and speaking with staff and some students, we have decided to go back to playing O Canada and sharing the daily announcements with the whole school at 8:30 am.

Volunteering at WBS:

We do believe that "many hands, make light work". In the first few months of opening, it was difficult to know how to use volunteers within the school. As we move through the year, we are finding more volunteer opportunities for our community to be a part of. If you have your volunteer paperwork complete, please send it in to Katelynn.Armstrong@hrce.ca or MGale@hrce.ca. To complete your paperwork, please check out <https://www.hrce.ca/volunteer>

Volunteer opportunities:

1. Morning and afternoon parking lot attendants- we would welcome volunteers to help with the safe drop off and pick up of our students each day. The morning shift would be from 7:50-8:30 am and the afternoon shift would be from 2:00-2:40 pm. If this is something you would be able to help with please email wbs@hrce.ca.
2. Lunch time class monitor P-3- We are looking for people to be monitors in individual classrooms while students eat and then to support students to get ready to go outside. This position can be volunteer based or a paid position. If you would like to join the paid lunch monitors, please reach out to Courtney Smith at Courtney.Smith@hrce.ca. If you would like to volunteer, please email wbs@hrce.ca. The time commitment would be 11:55-12:20 Monday to Friday; If you would like to volunteer to supervise outside as well, the time commitment would be 11:55-12:45 pm.

We will be continuing to look for more opportunities to welcome volunteers into WBS as the school year continues.

Did you know?

When student issues/conflicts are brought to the attention of the Admin team, we use the Provincial Code of Conduct <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/provincialschoolcodeofconduct.pdf> to guide our decision making. The code of conduct provides us with options for consequences that we can assign to student behaviour. Along with the code of conduct, we also consider the student's age and cognitive capacity. We investigate all sides of the situation and provide the opportunity to hear from all who are involved. We then follow up with families to keep you in the loop.

A respectful workplace:

(I share the following information with you because it affects our whole WBS School community).

On an almost daily basis, the staff and Admin team at WBS have been experiencing verbal abuse and physical intimidation from some members of the school community. This has mainly been happening during the morning drop off and afternoon pick up in the parking lot and around the campus.

The procedures for drop off and pick up have been created to support the safety of ALL students. When cars park in the staff parking lot, in no parking zones, drive around to the back of the school, or run over the pylons, it creates an unsafe environment.

Some people, when they have been approached to move their vehicle or told they cannot be where they are, have responded in anger, swearing, and/or making threats directly towards the staff member. This has created situations where staff are starting/ending their day in tears and are then not in a good place to go and be with students. We all have a right to a safe and respectful workplace. Please respect the morning and afternoon procedures that are in place.

Upcoming Events:

West Bedford's First Band Concert- Wednesday, December 6th

Doors open for 6:15 pm; Concert 6:30 - 7:15 pm

Students and Parents are encouraged to stay and listen to the other bands.

If school is canceled due to weather, the concert will be on Monday Dec 11th

Scholastic Book Fair at WBS:

Our amazing Library Support Specialist, Heather MacIntyre has organized a Scholastic Book Fair to run December 11th to December 14th.

- Set up of the book fair on Friday, December 8th from 12 pm onwards.
- During the school day to support students/ families with their browsing and purchases. Monday, December 11th- Thursday, December 14th, 2023
- Clean up of the book fair is on Friday, December 15th from 9:00 am onwards.

Ms. MacIntyre will be coordinating a volunteer schedule and will reach out to those who have expressed an interest in volunteering for this event.

Holiday Concert: Our Holiday Concert will be for our students in Primary to Grade 3.

The dates for the concert are:

Wednesday, December 13th- 10 am show and 12:30 pm show

Thursday, December 14th- 10 am show and 12:30 pm show

Friday, December 15th- snow date

Each show will be the same, which allows families to choose the day and time that works for their schedules to attend. This also allows for extended family members to attend as we are not having to assign tickets or days to specific grades and classes.

****Our students in grade ¾ classes, grades 4 to 6 will be a part of the musical production *Peter Pan* in the spring time.**

West Bedford School Yearbook: West Bedford School has partnered with Jostens to produce the first ever WBS Yearbook!

(1) Starting December 1st, yearbooks will be sold for \$40.00, with an additional \$5.00 for personalization.

(2) Final sales will run from Feb 1st to March 8th. The yearbook will be sold at full price \$45.00 with additional \$5.00 for personalization options.

Please view the WBS website main page for the online sales link or click [here](#). Yearbooks will be delivered close to the end of the school year.

Upcoming dates

December 4- Professional Development Day (No School for Students)

December 6- Band Concert 6:30-7:15 pm

December 11- Band Concert (Snow Day Date)

December 13th- Holiday concert P-3 at 10 am and 12:30 pm/ Scholastic Book Fair

December 14th- Holiday concert P-3 at 10 am and 12:30 pm/ Scholastic Book Fair

December 15th- Holiday concert (snow day date)

December 18-20- WBS Spirit Days (more information to come)

December 20th- Last Day of School

January 2, 2024- First Day of School after Winter Break