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## Superintendent's Update 9-21-18

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

Fri, Sep 21, 2018 at 10:02 AM



Dear Families of Westport Students,

Given the recent events of earlier this week at Coleytown Middle School where a number of students and staff reported not feeling well inside the school, the District had closed school yesterday and today to assess the status of the school. With an abundance of caution, the District will take the next few weeks to engage in a further analysis of the air quality in that school with additional professionals, including the resources of the Yale Occupational and Environmental Medicine Program. During this time of additional review of the entire facility, yesterday I proposed to the Board of Education that during this next month or so required to complete this assessment, that the CMS students attend school as follows: grades 6 and 7 would be placed at Bedford Middle School and grade 8 would be moved to a special wing of Staples High School where those students and staff would operate independently as a separate unit from the high school. If approved by the BoE, Monday would be a modified day for CMS students to visit their new school facilities, and Tuesday would be a regular day of school for all students in the District.

A few key highlights of this proposal:

- All students would remain in their same teams with the same team of teachers.
- The school day start and end times would remain the same.
- All students would take the same buses at approximately the same times, but bus drop off would be at both BMS and SHS.
- An additional lunch wave would be added to each school - BMS would mix both BMS and CMS students in lunch waves, but SHS would have a special lunch wave for only grade 8 students.
- CMS grade 8 teams would be located clustered together on the first floor of SHS near the Continuing Education entrance (right side of school as you look at SHS).
- CMS grade 8 teams would have their own set of lavatories and not share with SHS.
- CMS grade 8 students can access all clubs and activities at BMS after school.
- Additional security personnel would be in place at SHS specifically for the CMS 8th grade teams.
- CMS grade 8 students would not mix freely with high school students at any time, and the passing times of the grade 8 students would be different from the high school.
- Both BMS and SHS would be utilizing any existing open room time in their current classroom schedules and converting some non-instructional space to instructional space, e.g. library classrooms previously for general use would be used for assigned classes.
- Dr. Tina Mannarino, Assistant Supt. for Pupil Personnel Services, and Dr. Valerie Babich, Coordinator of Psychological Services, are creating a plan to support the social emotional welfare of our students during this transition.

The goal in this plan is to maintain as much continuity as possible in the educational program, but offer it in another location. At the conclusion of this review of the Coleytown Middle School facility, we will have information that either the students and staff can return safely or that an extended displacement might continue. Additionally, in our planning process, this proposed scenario was reviewed and approved for safety and security by the Westport Police Chief Koskinas and the Westport Fire Marshall Gibbons. If necessary, it is possible that the students of CMS may remain at BMS and SHS for the entire year.

The Board of Education will meet at 5:00 p.m. today in the Staples cafeteria to discuss this proposed option, and possibly vote on this interim option after a presentation by administration and public comments on the plan. Today's meeting will be broadcast on Cablevision channel 78, Frontier channel 6021, and by video stream at [www.westportps.org](http://www.westportps.org).

Sincerely,  
Colleen Palmer