



Warrensburg-Latham Community Unit School District #11

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Dear W-L Families,

The Warrensburg-Latham Board of Education recently approved the 2019-20 school calendar. Students first day of school will be Thursday, August 15, 2019. Next year's calendar will look slightly different as students will be dismissed at **2:00 pm every Wednesday**. During this time staff will be engaged in continuous professional learning. Staff will be engaged in data analysis, curriculum development/alignment, and instructional strategies to meet students' academic, social and emotional needs. Research tells us "continuous and sustainable improvement requires three ingredients: a shared language, an empowered leadership group, and time" (Lezotte, L.). W-L staff and administration feel this time is needed to help ensure our students meet and exceed at high levels.

Q: Why can't the school find time during the school day for teachers to do this work?

A: In order to provide middle school and high school students with schedules that best meet their needs it would be impossible for all teachers within one department to have planning at the same time. Currently MS and HS teachers have PLCs from 7:45 through the end of advisory period (30 minutes today). Thirty minutes is not enough time to do the important work that needs to be done especially when there are students who may need to meet with or speak to the staff. Additionally, research shows that administrators who are involved in the PLC work have more success and show greater achievement. It is extremely difficult for administrators to meet with PLCs during their current time because students, parents, and staff typically need them or want to speak with them first thing in the morning.

Q: What will staff do after students are dismissed?

A: W-L teachers, support staff, and administrators will be engaged in meaningful activities for the purpose of improving student learning. Examples include:

- School improvement planning and review
- Review and analysis of assessments
- Curriculum development and alignment
- Data analysis
- Academic and social emotional initiatives
- Professional development
- Grade level, department, and cross grade level collaboration

How will this early dismissal impact the amount of instruction my student receives?

A: The 2019-20 school calendar provides for more days of student attendance than the 2018-19 school year. We believe the quality of instruction will improve as a result of department and grade level teams working together to: align standards, curriculum, and develop common assessments; analyze data and make

necessary adjustments in a timely manner; and improve instructional techniques. All of these actions will allow WL to be more consistent from teacher to teacher and from one grade to the next.

Q: How will this impact student athletes who have practice at 3:15?

A: If students have practice at 3:15 and do not consistently have a ride back for practice on Wednesdays we have discussed having support staff supervise students until 3:15. We will need to know who is staying and have them report to a certain part of the building. More information will be available on this later.

Q: Will there still be Cardinal Time on Wednesdays?

A: Yes, Cardinal Time will look similar to how it runs in the MS. HS Cardinal Time will be revamped to provide students who more enrichment, SAT prep, and remediation.

Q: Do any other districts do this?

A: Yes, Riverton, Springfield, and Ball Chatham school districts do this and Tri-City will begin doing this during the 2019-20 school year as well. DPS #61 is planning to do this at their high school levels (easier to do since they have different bus schedules for ES, MS, and HS) with the hope of eventually extending this across the district.

Q: What can you expect from WL?

A: To use the time wisely and keep our community informed of what we are doing and how it is impacting students.

Q: How will we know if early release days work?

A: District administration will collect data and evaluate the effectiveness of the early release days. Principals and the superintendent will provide updates to the Board of Education prior to the 2020-21 school calendar being developed.

Q: Who should I contact if I have more questions?

A: Feel free to contact your child's building principal or the superintendent.