



# WEST LONG BRANCH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

135 Locust Avenue  
West Long Branch, NJ 07764  
TELEPHONE: (732) 222-5900 FAX: (732) 222-9325

*Mrs. Christina M. Egan*  
Superintendent of Schools

March 15, 2021

Dear West Long Branch Families,

It is hard to believe that it has been a full calendar year since the day we were all unexpectedly shifted into an uncharted educational landscape, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been a challenging year for all of us, but as I continue to orient myself to our district's history, strengths, and needs, I am very impressed by the tremendous feat that West Long Branch accomplished by opening school for five in-person days of instruction right from the beginning of September. Our in-person WLB students have benefited this entire year from consistent, sustained access to daily in-person instruction, and our virtual-only students have benefited from a truly synchronous, seamless, unified experience on the fully-virtual platform. This is a remarkable accomplishment, and I have great respect for all of the hard work, collaboration, and dedication that have gone into the district's pandemic response to date.

This letter is to update our school community about several pieces of important information regarding Spring Break, adjustments to our travel-related quarantine protocols, and planning for the future of the West Long Branch schools.

### **All-Remote/Virtual Days April 6<sup>th</sup> – April 9<sup>th</sup>**

I am excited and grateful to share that for the last several weeks, West Long Branch has been engaged in a highly-successful vaccine pilot partnership through the VNACJ to expedite the vaccination of interested WLB staff members. Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> was our most successful day yet, with over 15 appointments scheduled. We anticipate that there may be a relatively large number of staff absences following the second vaccination appointment, which is scheduled to take place at the end of our scheduled Spring Break. Additionally, we have been made aware that many members of our school community are planning for travel over the Spring Break and will be required to quarantine.

As a result of these anticipated absences, and after engaging in collaboration with our Pandemic Response Team, it has been determined that **the district will engage in fully-remote learning for the four days immediately following the break: April 6, 7, 8, & 9.** This brief remote learning period will allow for PCR COVID testing and required quarantine (see updated guidelines below) of affected individuals, so that we can ensure a safe **in-person school return on April 12, 2021.**

I understand that this decision has an impact on our families, and it is my hope that advance notice of these remote days will support the district and community in planning for travel, family schedules, quarantine, and high-quality remote instruction on those days.

### **Updated Travel-Related Quarantine Guidelines**

From the beginning of the school year, the West Long Branch school district has maintained its requirement for a full 14-day quarantine period for students following a return from travel outside the immediate area (NY, PA, DE, and CT). In light of the recently updated NJ Department of Health and CDC travel quarantine guidelines, our Pandemic Response Team has determined that we are ready to revise our quarantine protocols. Effective immediately, individuals who travel outside the immediate area will be expected to quarantine for either 10 days **or** for 7 days if they receive a negative **PCR** COVID Test result.



# WEST LONG BRANCH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

135 Locust Avenue  
West Long Branch, NJ 07764  
TELEPHONE: (732) 222-5900 FAX: (732) 222-9325

*Mrs. Christina M. Egan*  
Superintendent of Schools

---

As a reminder, “rapid” test results are not accepted by the district – only PCR tests are considered confirmation of either positivity or negativity.

To further clarify these guidelines in terms of the upcoming break:

- If you are traveling outside the immediate area **and return to NJ on or before April 2<sup>nd</sup>**, your 10-day quarantine will end in time for a return to in-person learning on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- If you are traveling outside the immediate area **and return to NJ on or after April 3<sup>rd</sup>**, you will need to have a negative PCR test reported to the school in order to return on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.
  - **PLEASE NOTE:** This PCR test must be administered **no sooner than 3-5 days after you return to NJ.** If you plan to travel and wish to return to in-person learning on April 12<sup>th</sup>, we recommend scheduling your PCR test appointment now for a date 3-5 days following your return.
- If you are traveling outside the immediate area **and do not get tested**, your quarantine period will be **10 days** before returning to in-person learning **on or after** Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Please note that the new guidelines apply *only* to travel-related quarantine. Our exposure/close contact-related quarantine guidelines remain at 14 days for students, in alignment with continued Health Department guidance.

## **Celebrating Success & Planning for the Future**

With Spring headed our way and so much hopeful news regarding vaccines, I have received a few questions about full reopening and what school will look like for West Long Branch next year. It is my expectation and hope that next year will bring more of a sense of normalcy to our schools, and we are planning proactively to address full reopening to the greatest extent possible while we await important guidance from the Department of Education. Two of the most critical considerations for our planning include social distancing requirements in schools, as well as the current option for families to select a fully-virtual instructional model. The specifics of the guidance in these matters will greatly impact our in-person numbers, how we build our class rosters and master schedule, how we plan for efficient and safe use of space, and how we best optimize our staffing and programming.

Educators are lifelong learners, and we never stop looking to grow and improve to meet our students’ needs. Their success and well-being are always at the forefront of our minds, and I want our community to know that we are currently working together as a team to assess and build upon the strong instruction that our students are receiving each and every day. We are also collaborating on ways to ensure a fun, safe, celebratory Spring 2021. More information to come!

I want to thank the West Long Branch community for your ongoing support as we navigate these complex times. Please stay safe and well.

Sincerely,

Christina Egan  
Superintendent of Schools