

**WESTFIELD ACADEMY AND CENTRAL SCHOOL  
Board of Education**

**Regular Business Meeting**

**PROPOSED AGENDA  
Monday, February 8, 2021  
7:00 p.m.**

**Addendum**

4.0 Information and Discussion Items

4.2 Discussion Items

a. Music Reopening Letter (Enclosure #13)

**ENCLOSURES – REGULAR MEETING – February 8, 2021**  
**ENCLOSURES FOR REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:**

13. Music Reopening Letter

# Westfield Academy and Central School

**Michael Cipolla**  
Superintendent of Schools

203 East Main Street  
Westfield, New York 14787  
Phone: (716) 326-2151  
FAX: (716) 326-2195

**Dennis Corsaro**  
Interim School Business Official

February 8, 2021

The Honorable Governor Andrew Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capital Building  
Albany NY 12224  
Via email: [gov.cuomo@chamber.state.ny.us](mailto:gov.cuomo@chamber.state.ny.us)

## **If High Risk Sports Can Reopen, Then Music Can As Well**

Governor Cuomo:

The Westfield Academy and Central School (WACS) is gladdened to see that New York State and our local county feel that the COVID situation has improved to the point that high risk sports can re-open. Sports can be a unifying activity for a local school and provide motivation for many students to remain focused on their academics. If the situation is good enough for high risk sports, it certainly is time to re-evaluate the music restrictions. Music programs are collapsing across the state, and less restrictive rules can allow the rebirth of music without causing an increased risk of COVID transmission.

Music is important at WACS. While mandatory courses may have high attendance, it is instructive to ask what electives students choose to take. At WACS, more than half of our high school student body chooses to be in chorus. (A Grammy award winning teacher helps!). For us, this means 125 students singing, but our full size auditorium can only hold 33 people at a 12 foot spacing. They are too spread out to actually be considered an ensemble to be able to hear each other. Likewise, our 60 person band can only have 8 students in our large band room. This 12 foot spacing is killing music education.

The 12 foot spacing was implemented because of concerns about additional spread of aerosols through more forceful breathing, either by singing or playing an instrument. Since that time, there has been additional knowledge gained about the spread of aerosols through instruments. Most wind instruments have a significant fraction of aerosols collect inside the instrument, and for the aerosols that do escape, masks have been developed to allow vocalists and instrumentalists to play (relatively) easily. For aerosols that may continue out of the instrument, there now are secondary masks designed to go over all types instrument air discharge points. Room ventilation has been increased. In short, with the new PPE available, the concerns that lead to the 12 foot spacing are no longer valid. The current standard spacing (now 6 ft ) is more appropriate. This change in spacing allows four times as many musicians, so at least ensembles can play together. We may not have the entire chorus together, but at least all the voices can perform as one. There could even be concerts, which are the musical equivalent of a game for an athlete, or graduation for a senior.

Music is one of the core subjects as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act. New York State's guidance for musicians needs to drop the 12 ft separation distance. This will allow student musicians to restart their sport. This change can't happen soon enough.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Westfield Academy and Central School Board of Education  
Administrative Team  
Westfield Teachers Association  
Internal Support Staff

Board of Education

Wendy Dymont, President  
Phyllis Hagen, VP  
Steve Cockram  
Barbara Fay  
Deanne Manzella  
Kimberly Maras  
Tom Tarpley

Administrative Team

Michael Cipolla, Superintendent  
Dr Mary Rockey, Elementary Principal  
Corey Markham, Secondary Principal  
Molly Anderson, Director of Curriculum

Westfield Teachers Association, Heath Forester  
Westfield Instructional Support Staff, Val Gelsimino

Cc: Dr. Howard Zucker, New York State Department of Health  
Senator George Borello  
Assemblyman Andrew Goodell