

**I truly don't know how to start this message. These are among the hardest messages to deliver and process as both a father and a member of the WPS community. Tonight, as I embrace and say goodnight to my 16 year old son, my mind will be miles away.**

**I am deeply saddened to inform you that one of our students, Staples High School Senior Max Harper, tragically passed away in a motor vehicle accident this afternoon. This loss is heartbreaking for our school and extended community, and I know many of you, along with our students, will feel its impact in the days ahead.**

**In moments like these, words just fall short. But what we can offer is our unwavering support to those affected by this tragedy, beginning with Max's family. Please come together during this difficult time—lean on one another and extend compassion to those who are grieving.**

**In order to ensure that our faculty and staff are fully prepared to appropriately receive our students tomorrow, Staples High School will operate on a [two hour delay](#). All other schools will open at their normal times. The entire faculty will come together, grieve, and be provided guidance and language on how to support our students when they arrive, when they see them in Connections, and also throughout the day.**

**For any students needing support prior to the opening school, the Staples counseling staff will be available to provide support to individuals and small groups of students.**

**Staples Principal, Stafford Thomas, will send a follow up email this evening to the Staples families and staff outlining the plans for the day, beginning with the early morning support, and the measures put in place to support students.**

**All athletic games will be canceled tomorrow but teams will be permitted to meet for light practices or team meetings in order to provide students a place to be with one another after school.**

**Finally, as you say goodnight to your children and loved ones, remember this moment and how precious our time together truly is.**

**With heartfelt sympathy,**

**Thomas Scarice**

**Superintendent of Schools**

**Westport Public Schools**