

January 6, 2023

Dear West Sylvan Families,

We are so happy to be back with your Scholars, and hope that your New Year is starting off well! We have some important items approaching academically to share, which will impact some of the instructional time. Our Winter testing period starts next week. This is the time when Scholars take the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) tests in English and Math to assess progress between the Fall administration and Winter. We want to emphasize the importance of taking these exams very seriously. Math class placements depend largely on MAP test data and Educator recommendation based on the grade in the prior Math course. MAP tests are untimed, and Scholars are given time in their assigned Math and English courses to take the exam over the course of several days. If Scholars are absent, there will be scheduled times to retake the tests. To help prepare your Scholar for MAP testing, [here is a link](#) to a number of family resources.

Congratulations to 7th grader **Miranda Yesser** on being a published author! PPS Connect tweeted about Miranda's recent honor! If you don't already follow @PPSConnect, it is a good space to stay updated about all things from our School District.



Appreciations?

If you would like to share a kind note of appreciation with any staff member, please [share here](#). The kind notes go a long way in making our staff members feel seen and thanked!

Welcome!

We are so pleased and grateful to have **Mr. Shawn McVicar** join us at West Sylvan Middle School! Shawn started at WSMS on Tuesday this week, after spending over twenty years as a classroom teacher, and is our new Student Climate Specialist. His role has many layers, and he will be assisting with building school climate and culture, improving our school-wide interventions for Scholars, and working with Educators on tiered classroom interventions and culture-building strategies. Shawn will work very closely with School Counselors, Educators, and Administrators to support and build our systems for support and intervention.

Staff Departure:

Lindsey Wildman, our WSMS Choir Director, recently determined that she could no longer run our Choir clubs for WSMS. We are very sorry to see Lindsey leave, and we are thankful for the work she has started to rebuild a Choir offering and experience for WSMS Scholars. We will be looking for someone to fill this vacancy in the coming month.

Reminder: Bell Schedule Shift in January

For the month of January, we will be using the "[Morning Advisory](#)" bell schedule. We have shifted to this version of our bell schedule in January to dedicate time at the start of each day to reteach many schoolwide expectations and to focus on some important Social-Emotional lessons with our Scholars at the start of each school day. Re-engaging in school after a break can be a challenge, and we want to start the days with some lessons to reconnect and reestablish community each morning during January. The bell schedule can be viewed [here](#). The amount of time spent in instruction remains the same, and the Advisory class will be at the start of the day, rather than the end. We will be surveying Scholars, Educators, and Students in a couple weeks to determine which time of the day has the most support for the remainder of the school year.

"No Cell Phones" Policy:

After a couple weeks away from school, it's easy to return to extra screen time and then forget expectations upon return to school. Please help remind and reinforce our "No Cell Phones" policy during the school day in your discussions at home. This means that we ask that Scholars either leave phones at home or put them in their lockers during the day so that they are not a temptation. If a Scholar has a phone out in class or around campus during the school day, it is confiscated and held in the Office. If a Scholar has three or more violations already this year, we are asking that a Parent/Guardian pick up the confiscated phone to help reinforce expectations.

WSMS 2022-2023 Yearbook Orders:

Each year our Yearbook class, with Educator Mr. Gilley, creates the school yearbook. Go to yearbookordercenter.com, and enter code **6339** to order the 2022-23 yearbook. All sales of the yearbook will be *pre-ordered* directly through an outside company and will not be available for purchase through the school at the end of the school year. Don't miss your chance to get this keepsake for your scholar! The latest Yearbook class video is [here](#), also. The Scholars in Mr. Gilley's Yearbook class have been busy! We only place orders based on the preorders so that we don't waste school funds. Please order your yearbook in advance.

Run a club! Family Volunteers to Run Clubs on Fridays!

We had our first two days of club meetings during Friday Advisory, and we are looking for PPS-approved volunteers to help run clubs with Students. If you are interested in volunteering to run a club during the Advisory class period on Fridays from 9:15AM - 9:45AM [please complete the form here](#).

Marking Attendance through ParentVue

Families are now able to record future absences for their Students directly in ParentVUE without needing to contact the Main Office. Please remember, if a student is going to miss multiple days, it is up to the Student and/or Parent/Guardian to communicate absences with each teacher and make a plan for missing work and assignments.

If your Student is going to be Absent for a FULL DAY:

Log in to the ParentVUE website or download and open the phone application. In either case, look for the 'Report Absence' button to the right of your Student's photograph.

Select start date, end date, and a reason from the drop-down list. Remember to click SAVE, and you should receive a popup confirmation.

If your Student is Absent for a **PARTIAL DAY**:

Send an email to westsylvanoffice@pps.net with the date, times, and reason.

No internet access? Call West Sylvan's main line at 503-916-5690 and select the Attendance option.

School Volunteers:

We appreciate all family members who have been volunteering in our Main Office, our Library, and joining us for school lunch periods and recess to help with supervision! The additional adults around campus really help with these busier spaces and the busiest times of the school day! If you are already an approved PPS volunteer, you are welcome to come to campus any day of the week when your schedule permits, and we will find a way that you can help on campus! The lunch periods (11:30AM-2:00PM) and the end of the school day (3:00PM-3:45PM) are most needed for Lunch recess help and Office assistance! [Sign up to Volunteer! We want your help \(especially during Lunches or in the Main Office in the afternoons\)!](#)

Student Supports

6th Grade:	Counselor:	Ricky Almeida [ralmeida@pps.net]
	Administrators:	Jill Hunt [jihunt@pps.net] Ben Keller [bkeller@pps.net]
7th Grade:	Counselor:	Kandice Abney [kaabney@pps.net]
	Administrator:	Ben Keller [bkeller@pps.net]
8th Grade:	Counselor:	Rebecca Cohen [rcohen@pps.net]
	Administrator:	Jill Hunt [jihunt@pps.net]

MYP and WSMS:

Our MYP Learner Trait for January is “**Thinkers.**” Scholars are spending this month discussing and demonstrating that trait. Our Educator team submitted our application to become an authorized Middle Years Programme (MYP) Middle School, and we are waiting on feedback for a possible authorization visit this Winter! To find out more about the WSMS International Baccalaureate MYP authorization journey, [please visit this website!](#)



Opportunities for Family Connection and Scholar Extended Activities:

- [Sign up to Volunteer! We want your help \(especially during Lunches or in the Main Office in the afternoons\)!](#)

General Questions:

Office Email: westsylvanoffice@pps.net

Jerda Solonche, Administrative Assistant: jsolonche@pps.net (Staff, financial)

Kirsten Crombie, Administrative Assistant: kcrombie@pps.net (students, attendance, enrollment, withdrawals)

Here are some dates to save on your calendar now in preparation:

- ★ **Winter MAP testing Benchmark Assessment Window Opens:** Monday, January 9th
- ★ **No School:** Monday, January 16th
- ★ **Successful Schools Survey Window Opens:** Monday, January 23rd
- ★ **End of 1st Semester (2nd Quarter) and Final Semester Grades are Submitted:** Thursday, January 26th *(mailed the following week)
- ★ **No School:** Planning day for Educators ~ Friday, January 27th
- ★ **Start of Semester 2/Quarter 3:** Monday, January 30th *(some classes may change for the new Semester/Quarter)

Enjoy your weekend, and go Wolf Pack!

Jill and Ben