

February 25, 2022

Happy Friday West Sylvan Middle School Families,

We hope that you enjoyed the shorter week. We are wrapping up our short month of February with time allotted for our scholars to take the Successful Schools Survey and to finish door decorating in their Advisory classes in honor of Black History Month. We also had some fun sprinkling of snow this week, which added to our excitement! This week, we kindly request that you take time to give us your feedback through the Successful Schools Survey link below. Your input is both anonymous and appreciated, so that we can use the data to inform our school decisions as we move into the 22-23 school year. Many of the questions are about your feelings and opinions related to your experiences with WSMS this school year. Please take a few minutes to give your honest feedback. The final day for collecting responses is March 4th.

Website: surveys.panoramaed.com/portlandor/ppsfamily

Drop down menu: select West Sylvan M.S. (you can complete this survey multiple times for the various schools in PPS where your scholars attend).

Available languages: [Available Languages](#): *English, Spanish, Russian, Somali, Vietnamese, & Chinese*

When finished: Family members will hit the blue **“Submit”** button to enter their survey. If you do not hit this button, responses will not be saved.



Thank you for continuing the daily health screenings with your scholars! There was one new confirmed case of on-campus COVID-19 this school week. Please keep scholars home when you may have health concerns, and notify our attendance office directly about absences, whether COVID-19 related, or otherwise. Educators can be contacted via email to see how to access missed assignments remotely while absent. March 1st is the first day when scholars may choose whether they wear their mask when outdoors (lunch, recess, outdoor class time). Please discuss this with your scholar so that it is a family decision.

TAG UPDATES

For students nominated for TAG (Talented and Gifted) last year (2020-21), final decisions are coming within the next few weeks! Keep an eye out for a letter from our PPS TAG department, who sends out all official communication about TAG identification.

For students nominated for TAG this year (2021-22), we are currently completing Mathematics and Reading testing, and will begin Intellectual testing later this school year. We expect to be able to complete this testing by the end of this school year so that identifications can be made during this school year.

A note about delays: Our TAG TOSAs (Teachers On Special Assignment) who coordinate our TAG office at the district level have been having to substitute teach due to Covid-related substitute and staffing shortages, meaning that we are behind our ideal schedule when it comes to TAG nomination and identification. Thanks for your patience, and please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

West Sylvan TAG Coordinator: Laurel Richards - Irichards@pps.net

West Sylvan TAG Administrator: Ben Keller - bkeller@pps.net

West Sylvan [TAG Website](#)

ACCESS ACADEMY APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

[ACCESS Academy](#), the PPS elementary and middle school that serves the needs of highly gifted students, is accepting applications starting now through April 15th. On a lottery and application basis, ACCESS admits highly capable students who perform at the 99th percentile on nationally normed tests.

If you are interested in applying for ACCESS, [click here to learn about how to apply](#), and [click here to access the School Mint Application](#). ACCESS also hosts [information sessions](#), including one on Wednesday, March 2nd, between 9-10 AM.

For Rising 6th Graders (Students in 7th Grade during the 2022-23 school year)

Please read [this letter](#) carefully about Math placement for our scholars who will be in 7th Grade during the 2022-2023 school year. This letter outlines the process for requesting Compacted Math. Please consider this information prior to submitting your survey response, which is also included in the letter. Letters in additional languages can be viewed here: Chinese Vietnamese Spanish Russian.

Resources for Family Extended Learning:

- [VIBE of Portland Art Camps, Classes, No-School Workshops](#)
- [VIBE of Portland East Winds Summer Camp](#)
- [OSU Discover the Scientist Within February Workshop \(English\) \(Spanish\)](#)
- [OSU Summer Reading Program](#)

- **Multnomah Early Childhood Program: ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#)) ([Vietnamese](#))**
- **Portland Parks & Recreation Preschool [2022-2023 Registration](#)**
- **OSU STEM Academy [AWSEM Club](#) (includes Spanish flyer)**

Updates on Enrollment and Staffing:

Though our district and school enrollment has decreased over the last three school years, we will continue with the same contracted educator team for 22-23. Any changes in educators for the 2022-2023 school year will be shared with families prior to the start of school. Educators who are considered long-term substitutes or temporary educators are not guaranteed positions for the 2022-23 school year. They are encouraged to apply for teaching openings that are posted throughout PPS. At WSMS, statewide trends in enrollment declines have occurred over the last two years of the pandemic, with our enrollment declining from a total of 802 scholars enrolled in 2020-21 to a projection of 713 scholars in 2022-23. Thank you to the five families who already provided feedback. We would appreciate any feedback that you would like to share as we finalize plans for 2022-23, by completing this [form](#).

Changes to Masking Protocols Beginning March 1st:

These key points were shared in a PPS family communication last Thursday. The full message is [here](#), if you missed the message. There is currently no change to *indoor* masking policies during the school day. Below, are the key points:

- Outdoor masking on campuses will become optional.
- School dances and other in-person school events may resume.
- Civic Use of Building permits – which allow for use of school buildings by community groups and individuals during non-school hours -- may be approved for indoor use (the CUB office will begin accepting permits for review on February 15).
- Overnight field trips may resume.

OHSU COVID-19 Screening Kit Information:

An easy and free way to test weekly! Especially while tests are hard to find in stores, this is an easy and free way to have your scholars tested weekly for your own family's knowledge. Scholars will do the saliva test at home and return the kits the following day at the Main Office. For scholars who opted-in to the program and submitted completed consent forms, we are distributing the at-home saliva test kits once a week on Thursdays, during the last few minutes of 7th period. Scholars will do the saliva test at home the next morning and return the kits on Friday morning at the Main Office. OHSU picks up the kits the day after distribution, processes them, and sends results directly to families. **If you do not receive an email with your scholar's results, please check all spam/bulk email folders and then contact OHSU via their family support contacts:** email at k12covidtesting@ohsu.edu or call 833-376-1027 between 8am-5pm, Monday to Friday. *The school does not have access to any of the testing results.* Please note, OHSU advises that you suspend participation in the screening program if your scholar has had a positive test for Covid-19 in the last 90 days, as the test will likely be inaccurate. Scholars may drop off signed forms to our attendance window, or families can scan and send them via email to jsolonche@pps.net. If you haven't signed up and are still interested, the forms are below.

Consent forms to sign and return to West Sylvan:

- [OHSU Weekly Screening Authorization Form](#)
- [General Consent School Opt-In Form](#)

Uploading Proof of Vaccinations:

Families can also upload their scholars' vaccination status when they complete the yearly registration verification processes. Directions to upload items are [here](#) for ParentVUE. When families have items uploaded, this information shows up in ParentVUE under the documents tab on the scholar page for internal administrative review.

COVID-19 Updates:

There was one positive COVID-19 case reported this week who was present on campus as of this week. Anyone immediately involved was already notified directly.

Notes of Appreciation?

Thank you to the families who have submitted notes to WSMS team members! These notes really do brighten the days of our educators! If you have a kind note to share, we'd love your feedback [here](#) to celebrate the ways in which WSMS adults support your scholars and your families! A little appreciation goes a long way and can really uplift someone's day!

Yearbooks:

Sales are now closed. There will be no more yearbooks available to purchase or order.

WSMS Foundation:

Please support our WSMS Foundation! Every contribution helps our school by allowing us to fund educational opportunities and events for your scholars! Please consider donating to WSMS Foundation to help support important instructional additions for our scholars in the coming school year. Every donation helps!

You can donate and find out more information about our WSMS Foundation and their amazing work for our scholars [here](#). Also follow them on Instagram [@west.sylvan.foundation](#) and check out our West Sylvan students in their [school](#), [sports](#), [performances](#), [events](#)...

If you have a scholar event, announcements related to scholars and their achievements, or you'd like to advertise let us know. [Email Lisette Crepeaux at thecrepeauxs@gmail.com](mailto:thecrepeauxs@gmail.com).

Daily Loaner Laptops for Scholars:

We no longer have a supply of daily loaner chromebooks to issue when scholars forget their chromebooks at home. Please help remind our scholars to take their *fully charged* PPS-issued chromebook to and from school each day. We recently distributed BumpArmor cases to all scholars, and we ask that you please encourage your scholar to use the case to protect and extend the life of their device.

Help with Cell Phones:

Our catch phrase that we use at WSMS regarding cell phones during the school day is, **“Out of sight and away, unless we say.”** Any additional monitoring you can put in place to keep an eye on your scholars' social media activity is also greatly appreciated! There are times when scholars may need to access their devices for family reasons or even in instructional settings, and we encourage speaking with an adult if such a need arises. Also, several families have had concerns with their scholars' use of cell phones throughout the day for non-instructional reasons. We will continue to remind scholars of this expectation throughout their school day. If scholars post inappropriate content on social media, please report the account for review.

Some families have inquired about apps that can restrict various features on cell phones for scholars throughout the day so that they are not on social media and are not tempted to engage with others through social media platforms. Here are some tips we have given families: **NY Times Article:** [The Best Apps for](#)

[Managing Your Kids Phone](#); [Support for Apple](#); [Support Google](#); [Family Time Article & Tips](#); [Verizon Support](#).

Food Services and Lunches:

Breakfast and lunches continue to be free for all scholars throughout the year. During lunches, scholars who want to remain indoors have indoor options for both eating and their free time. After eating, there are several alternate locations scholars may visit to spread out such as the library, the lower gym, classrooms for lunch clubs, and our outdoor patio spaces and field area. Regardless of the temperature, many scholars still feel most comfortable both eating outdoors and remaining outdoors throughout recess to engage in outdoor play. Please encourage your scholar to dress for the weather if they are choosing to play outdoors in colder temperatures. Understanding that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to this unstructured lunch time, we are allowing scholars to choose indoors or outdoors, assuming that it is not pouring down rain.

Please remind your student(s) to take care of their lunch trash each and every day.

Our Custodian places four trash bins throughout the cafeteria and bins outside. Trash and containers left behind on tables and on the ground, both inside and out, have gotten a little better, however, it is still a problem each day. Thank you for your help in this matter!

Picking Up Scholars:

Per Oregon law, *an approved adult is required to sign out any scholar* who leaves campus before the end of the school day. Our office has been experiencing heavy family traffic prior to our 3:45pm dismissal, due to daily early pick-ups. If possible, we ask that you avoid picking up your scholar between 3:00pm-3:45pm as you will not find parking, and our office staff is limited in the afternoons. Any planning around that time frame is appreciated.

Scholar Counseling Supports:

6th Grade: Counselor: Kandice Abney: kaabney@pps.net &

Administrator: Ben Keller, bkeller@pps.net

7th Grade: Counselor: Rebecca Cohen: rcohen@pps.net &

Administrator: Evening Krauel, ekrauel@pps.net

8th Grade: Counselor, Ricky Almeida: ralmeida@pps.net &

Administrator: Jill Hunt, jihunt@pps.net

General Questions:

Jerda Solonche, Principal's Administrative Assistant: jsolonche@pps.net (faculty, school business)

Kirsten Crombie, Administrative Assistant: kcrombie@pps.net (scholar/parent concerns, attendance, enrollment, help with scholar laptops, withdrawals)

Mark your calendar now in preparation:

Black History Month: February is in progress

March: National Disabilities Awareness Month and Women's History Month

Successful Schools Survey to Families: Please take the survey linked above.

Forecasting for next year: In early March scholars will have opportunities to select *elective* choices for the 22-23 school year

Spring Break: March 21-25th

Panoramic Picture for 8th Graders: April 12th (outdoors and unmasked for those who choose to participate)

Enjoy the weekend! Go Wolfpack!

Jill, Evening and Ben