

Greetings West Sylvan Families,

We hope that you are looking forward to the long weekend! We are continuing to feel grateful for the hard work of our educators and our families to help keep us in-person on campus during a time when other campuses are struggling to safely run schools in-person. As a reminder, there is no school on Monday, January 17th for MLK Jr. Day.

Like most schools in the nation, we have had a busy week of contact tracing for reported cases of COVID-19, unfortunately. As is the case everywhere, we are seeing an increase in the number of reported positive cases to our school since the return from winter break. This week, there have been 10 reported cases who were on campus, either last week or this week. In many instances, we are hearing about the positive test results a number of days after the scholar has been absent from campus, as families are doing their best to keep scholars home when symptoms first appear. Per our contract with our educator team, we send out community notifications to our entire community when cases on campus are confirmed. The updates may start to feel overwhelming, but we have an obligation to continue sending notifications, even if they don't affect your family directly. Per new decisions from the Oregon Health Authority, look for revised information soon about how positive cases will be handled by schools.

We thank all of our families for all that you are doing to perform daily screenings of your scholars' health and to keep scholars home when you may have health concerns. Please be sure that you are notifying our attendance office directly about absences, whether COVID-19 related, or otherwise. We want to be able to contact trace as quickly as possible, and by sending calls directly to the main office, we can start our tracing processes, as applicable. Below, is the view of the test we use for our "Test-to-Stay" option if unvaccinated individuals are identified as "close contacts" during an on-campus exposure.



Test to Stay Program:

We launched the Test-to-Stay program last Wednesday. If your family has yet to complete the consent forms [here](#), please complete them and either scan them to nhartman@mesd.k12.or.us or have your scholar return them to the attendance office window. If a consent form is completed, any non-symptomatic scholar who may have been exposed to an individual with a positive COVID-19 result on

campus could test to stay on campus. We would give the BinaxNOW rapid nasal swab test on campus to non-symptomatic scholars who could have been in close contact with someone on campus with a positive COVID-19 test, and pending a negative result, scholars would return to class, rather than automatically being advised to quarantine at home. There would be one more necessary test on campus within 5-7 days from the initial close contact, also. [Here](#) is more information.

OHSU COVID-19 Screening Kit Information:

An easy and free way to test weekly!

PPS has partnered with OHSU to arrange for weekly COVID-19 screening test kits, which arrived just before the fall break. Test kits are for non-symptomatic home screening only. 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. We are distributing these once a week on Thursdays, during the last few minutes of 7th period, to all scholars who opted-in to the program and submitted completed consent forms. 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 each Friday, processes them, and sends results directly to families. 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.

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!

Educator Welcomes:

One of our special education educators, Jenny Payne, recently left WSMS for other opportunities, and we are happy to welcome Mr. Bret Emmerich to fill that vacancy. Also, Lisa Riffel, our choir club director, is leaving for maternity leave. We wish Lisa an amazing time with her first child, and we thank her for all that she has done to start our WSMS Choir again! Lisa has helped recruit Lindsey Wildman who will join us at the end of January to continue the work with our WSMS Choir.

Yearbooks:

Our Yearbook staff is still collecting pictures for this year's issue. Did you know it's easy to share photos to be included in the Yearbook? Just go to hjeshare.com and enter the code sylvan22 to upload your photos (use all lower case for the code). MASKS OFF please. We want to see our scholars' shining faces in the yearbook! Be sure to accurately label each photo with the scholar's name and grade. There's no guarantee every photo will be included in the book, but we will try our best. [Tutorial for using eShare](#). [Tutorial for using eShare from your phone](#).

All sales of yearbooks will be pre-ordered directly through an outside company. Yearbooks will not be purchased through the school. If you do not preorder, we will likely run out of books, and there will be no opportunity to get one later in the year as the company only prints a set number of copies, which are determined through preorders. To order your yearbook, go to yearbookordercenter.com and enter code 6339. Yearbooks are \$30 currently, and the price will go up after January 15th. We want all of our scholars to have a visual memory of their time back on campus during the 21-22 school year.

8th Grade Promotion Planning:

We are seeking interested volunteers to help plan our final culminating event, promotion, for our 8th graders. Mark your calendar now for the evening of June 9th for a culminating promotion at Lincoln HS. In past years, there was a PPS year-end culminating activity at Oaks Park. This is not allowed for the 21-22 year through our schools in the district with the unknowns related to COVID-19. Parties and events sponsored by our WSMS Foundation, however, could still proceed. Anyone interested in either helping plan events, set up events, or simply donate to help purchase items to make 8th grade promotion special for our 8th graders is encouraged to complete this interest [form](#). We will start meeting in February, 2022. All details related to specifics about the evening of the 9th are still pending and are dependent on COVID-19 protocols and restrictions.

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.

Seeking Essential Volunteers:

The Principal is afforded the discretion of defining "essential" as we move forward with our volunteers on campus. If adult family members are interested in volunteering on campus, we can use your help in our library and in various classrooms for instructional supports. If you may be interested in becoming an essential volunteer for WSMS, these procedures apply to all volunteers at all Portland Public School campuses. PPS Volunteers must have completed the [mandatory volunteer training and cleared the volunteer background check](#) prior to volunteering in a school. Only essential volunteers will be permitted to volunteer in PPS schools, as determined by the school administrator

Per Oregon's [COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement for Teachers and School Staff](#), all in-person Volunteers will be required to provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19. Their record must include the name of the person vaccinated, type of vaccine provided, date or dates given, and the name/location of the health care provider or site where the vaccine was administered.

Acceptable forms of documentation required to be uploaded as part of the in-person volunteer application include:

a copy of a COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card (issued by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control & Prevention or WHO Yellow Card); OR

a photo, or scanned copy of the Vaccination Record Card as a separate document; OR
Physical or digital documentation of the COVID-19 vaccination from a health care provider.
As a reminder, “fully vaccinated” means, per the CDC, you are considered fully vaccinated: 2 weeks after your second dose in a 2-dose series (e.g. Pfizer, Moderna) or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, (e.g. Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine) and a booster.

Daily Loaner Laptops for Scholars:

We have a very limited (less than 10) supply of loaner laptops when scholars forget their laptops at home. Please help remind our scholars to take their school laptop to and from school each day.

ID Cards:

By now, all of our scholars should have their new school ID card on a lanyard with a protective case if they took a school picture. We are asking scholars to wear their IDs throughout the day while on campus. This is helpful to quickly identify our scholars throughout the building. Also, the IDs assist with checking out materials in the library and during lunchtime, they help staff know who they are seeing in the hallways, and they will assist our transportation team to identify scholars as they enter and exit buses (if they ride transportation). Carrying a form of ID is a safety measure we are encouraging as we move through 2022 together. Please help reinforce this safety practice of carrying an ID in your conversations at home.

WSMS Drama Production 2022:

We are so pleased to announce that Kacey CdeBaca will be working with our talented scholars to audition for and put on a spring play for 2022! The flyer is [here](#).

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.” 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. 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](#). We will continue to remind scholars of this expectation throughout their school day.

School COVID updates:

Since returning from winter break, there have been 12 confirmed cases of COVID-19 for individuals who have been on campus. The upside with the recent reports is that there are far fewer “close contacts” needing to quarantine since many scholars are fully vaccinated, have continued wearing their masks correctly and continue following safety expectations in their classes. Our standard operating procedure is to notify everyone when a positive COVID-19 case is confirmed through MESD, even if your scholar was not a close contact. Sharing a class does not meet the threshold for being a close contact. We depend on families to self-report to our office in a timely manner when there is a positive COVID-19 case in the family. When a positive COVID-19 case is reported, the following may prevent a scholar from being identified as needing to quarantine, which is why it’s so important that we all continue to be safe by:

Being fully vaccinated
Wearing a mask correctly and consistently
Practicing appropriate physical distancing

The CDC recently advised that a 5 day quarantine was acceptable, and we are now following those recommendations. Anyone with a positive COVID-19 case will be asked to quarantine for five days from the date of the first symptoms. If fully vaccinated, scholars and staff who are symptom-free are not required to quarantine. When unvaccinated, and a close contact, there is the Test-to-Stay option to assist. In addition to assigned classwork to complete remotely, this PPS website has been created with a variety of resources for continued remote learning [here](#), in the case of a recommended quarantine.

Food Services and Lunches:

Breakfast and lunches continue to be free for all scholars throughout the year. As the temperatures have dropped, all scholars who want to remain indoors have indoor options for both eating and their free time during lunch. After eating, there are several alternate locations scholars spread out in such as the library, the lower gym, classrooms for lunch clubs, and our outdoor patio spaces. 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.

Picking Up Scholars:

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 3:15pm-3:45pm as 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 Secretary: jsolonche@pps.net (faculty, school business)
Kirsten Crombie, Secretary: kcrombie@pps.net (scholar/parent concerns, attendance, enrollment, help with scholar laptops, withdrawals)

Mark your calendar now in preparation:

Schools Closed for MLK Jr. Holiday: January 17th
End of 2nd Qtr/1st Semester: January 27th
No School for Scholars/Educator PD Day: January 28th
New Semester/Qtr 3 Begins: January 31st, Classes may change, depending on educators' schedules and electives for some scholars

Enjoy the long weekend! Go Wolfpack!

Jill, Evening and Ben