

March 11, 2022

Happy Friday West Sylvan Middle School Families,

We are a week away from Spring Break and are embarking on some changes next week with the masking mandates. These shifts may be exciting and scary for many of our community members and scholars. With this change in expectations, after two years of masking, we want to share a slidedeck [here](#) that may be useful for conversations at home over the weekend in preparation for Monday. Our educator team had the same slidedeck this week to use for talking points. Thank you for discussing your family expectations with your scholars this weekend! We will be honoring everyone's right to choose moving forward.

Mask, or no mask?



Please respect everyone's right to choose!

Forecasting began this week for the 22-23 school year elective choices for our current 6th and 7th graders and our incoming 5th graders. Our counselors have started visiting our feeder schools to explain middle school and talk about the electives. The information is [here](#) from the message that was sent this week.

Also, the window has been extended for the parent survey for the Student Success Survey. It is anonymous. To date, we have only 50 responses, so we would love to hear more feedback! The information is below if you did not have an opportunity to respond yet.

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).

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.

For 8th Grade Families:

- **JUST CHANGED:** For the first time in two years, **Lincoln High School** is hosting our 8th graders for a morning visit just prior to spring break! On Thursday, March 17th, our WSMS scholars need to arrive at our campus no later than 9:15 a.m. that morning, please. This date just changed due to several scholar groups at Lincoln being unavailable to run assemblies due to state competitions for which they just qualified. Buses to Lincoln will depart from WSMS at 9:30 a.m. sharp. There will be events planned at Lincoln lasting until 12:15 pm. Scholars will return to WSMS by 12:30, go to

period four, will eat lunch on campus at WSMS and then attend their afternoon classes. Permission slips have been sent home through block classes this week, and they must be signed and returned in order to go on the trip. Please return them on Monday.

- **JUST ADDED!** 8th Grade Oaks Park Trip (rides) on Wednesday, June 8th. Scholars who choose to attend will bus to Oaks Park from campus and return by dismissal. Scholars will need to be in good standing (no suspensions, referrals to administrators, patterns of unexcused absences, ect) to attend. This is a fun privilege, not an automatic right.
- **8th Grade Promotion** is at Lincoln High School on Thursday, June 9th at 6 p.m. so that you can start planning ahead. Each scholar will have two guest tickets for family members. More information will be shared as we get closer to the date.
- **WSMS Foundation Oaks Park Event for 8th graders:** This will be an optional evening event for our 8th graders hosted by our WSMS Foundation at Oaks Park on Friday, June 10th. More information will be sent in the coming months for those who want to participate.
- **Yearbook** sales have ended. There are no additional yearbooks available for purchase.

Resources for Family Extended Learning and Activities:

- Sign your scholars up for athletics! <https://www.pilathletics.com/>
- 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. We want to extend a gigantic **THANK YOU** to our WSMS Foundation that is, once again, helping our school to ensure that we have educational offerings that make WSMS a wonderful educational opportunity! Any changes in educators for the 2022-2023 school year will be shared with families prior to the start of school. We are hopeful that more families will continue returning to our public schools, as they feel more comfortable with in-person learning.

Changes to Masking Protocols Started March 1st and a New Decision for March 14th:

The newest update related to masking is [here](#) for your review, if you missed the email from PPS Communications. Starting Monday, March 14th masking will become *optional* indoors on campuses. Additional key points related to outdoors were shared in a PPS family communication last week. The full message is [here](#), if you missed the message. 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.
- March 14th: indoor masking becomes optional

COVID-19 Updates:

There were no positive COVID-19 cases reported this week.

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 thecrepeaux@gmail.com](mailto:thecrepeaux@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. This is still a big problem. **Outside:** Trash is being littered in most spaces outside, including the swings, tennis court perimeter, stairs, seating areas, basketball courts and grassy areas.

Inside: Our Custodian places four trash bins throughout the cafeteria. Trash is still left behind on a daily basis. Please discuss this with your student.

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:

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

Elective Classes Forecasting: Forecasting for the 2022-23 school year is open now for any current 5th, 6th and 7th graders (read section above and attached links).

8th Grade Field Trip to Lincoln High School: Just changed to Thursday, March 17th

Spring Break: March 21st-25th

End of 3rd Quarter / Planning Day: Friday, April 8th - No School for Scholars

4th Quarter Begins: Monday, April 11th *(some electives will change, if they are Quarter-long electives)

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

6th Grade Outdoor School: May 16-17th off campus *day* camps

7th Grade WSMS Foundation Sponsored Event: June 3rd WSMS Gym (6:30-8:30 p.m.)

8th Grade Field Trip to Oaks Park: Wednesday, June 8th (during the school day)

8th Grade Promotion: Thursday, June 9th 6 p.m. at Lincoln HS

8th Grade WSMS Foundation Sponsored Oaks Park Party: June 10th (evening)

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!

Enjoy the weekend! Go Wolfpack!

Jill, Evening and Ben