

**March 4, 2022**

**Happy Friday West Sylvan Middle School Families,**

We hope that March has started well for all of our families! We are preparing for our forecasting period with our current 6th and 7th graders, and our incoming students from 5th grade will be contacted mid-March to do their forecasting. More details will be shared next week with our scholars through their block classes to explain the process. Also, the window has been extended for the parent survey for the Student Success Survey. It is anonymous. To date, we have only 35 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](https://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 were no new confirmed cases 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 was the first day when scholars could 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 - [lrichards@pps.net](mailto:lrichards@pps.net)

West Sylvan TAG Administrator: Ben Keller - [bkeller@pps.net](mailto: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 8th Grade Families:

- For the first time in two years, **Lincoln High School** is hosting our 8th graders for a morning visit just prior to spring break! Our WSMS scholars need to arrive to our campus no later than 9:15 a.m. that morning, please. 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, will eat lunch on campus at WSMS and then attend their afternoon classes. Permission slips will be sent home through block classes next week, and they must be signed and returned in order to go on the trip.
- **Promotion** is at Lincoln High School on 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.

### 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.

### Families of upcoming 8th graders! *(Students in 8th Grade during the 2022-23 school year)*

Beginning with the 2022-23 school year we will be starting a travel abroad program with our 8th grade class! For 2023 we will be taking students on an 8 day whirlwind tour of Panama. There are limited spots available so, make sure you [RSVP via this link](#) and attend our first VIRTUAL informational meeting Wednesday, March 9th at 6:30pm! All of your questions will be answered!

## 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. 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. 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 today's email from PPS Communications. Starting Monday, March 14th masking will become *optional* indoors on campuses. Additional key points were shared in a PPS family communication last week related to outdoors. 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.

## 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:Lisette.Crepeaux@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](mailto:kaabney@pps.net) & Administrator: Ben Keller, [bkeller@pps.net](mailto:bkeller@pps.net)
- 7th Grade:** Counselor: Rebecca Cohen: [rcohen@pps.net](mailto:rcohen@pps.net) & Administrator: Evening Krauel, [ekrauel@pps.net](mailto:ekrauel@pps.net)
- 8th Grade:** Counselor, Ricky Almeida: [ralmeida@pps.net](mailto:ralmeida@pps.net) & Administrator: Jill Hunt, [jihunt@pps.net](mailto:jihunt@pps.net)

**General Questions:**

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

Kirsten Crombie, Administrative Assistant: [kcrombie@pps.net](mailto: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

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

**Spring Break:** March 21-25th

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

**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 Dance:** June 3rd WSMS Gym (5-8 p.m.)

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

**8th Grade WSMS Foundation Sponsored Oaks Park Dance Event:** June 10th (evening)

**Enjoy the weekend! Go Wolfpack!**

Jill, Evening and Ben