

August 15th, 2019

**Tuesday August 27th: New Student Orientation
(7th and 8th graders new to West Sylvan – see website)**

**Wednesday August 28th: First day for 6th grade (6th Grade
Orientation)**

Thursday August 28th: First day for 7th/8th grade

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the staff at West Sylvan Middle School, I am happy to welcome you to the 2019-20 school year! We are looking forward to a great year with you and your child, working to ensure each student grows as a learner and can achieve their highest potential. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and school. In order to better support your child's needs we will be sharing with you much of the work we do in the building this year. We are hoping that the conversations can continue at home.

PPS & West Sylvan Vision and Mission

Over the past school year, stakeholders from across Portland participated in a visioning process. The process included insights and feedback from students, families, educators, district staff, as well as civic, business, community, and philanthropic leaders. The vision is comprised of four main areas: a graduate portrait; a set of Educator Essential; a set of educational shifts and a set of core values. I was fortunate to be able to participate in the process and struck by the similarities between the graduate portrait as the West Sylvan Mission Statement that our community developed the previous year.

PPS Graduate Portrait

- Inclusive and Collaborative Problem Solver
- Inquisitive Critical Thinkers with Deep Core Knowledge
- Transformative Racial Equity Leaders
- Resilient and Adaptable Lifelong Learners
- Powerful and Effective Communicators
- Positive, confident, and connected sense of self
- Influential and Informed Global Stewards
- Reflective, Empathetic, and Empowering Graduates
- Optimistic, Future-Oriented Graduates

West Sylvan Middle School Mission Statement

West Sylvan Middle School fosters a climate of respect where culture and diversity are valued.

The staff provides relevant and rigorous instruction with real world application that promotes life-long learning. Students learn to embrace challenges through critical thinking and collaboration to become compassionate global citizens.

International Baccalaureate's Middle Years Program (MYP)

The MYP is a curriculum framework provides students with academic challenge, relevant real-world connections, and the support and guidance to develop as learners. It is also a whole-school

activity – allowing each student in our community to grow as learners. **I am excited to announce that West Sylvan is a candidate school for the MYP.** What does this mean? This year our community will begin to examine our teaching and learning practices, increasing inquiry based assignments, helping students see the connections of concepts across content areas and beginning to build the structures to become an official MYP school. Throughout this year we will be highlighting the work at the building level through our newsletters, school events, website and through our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We are also planning to have two exhibitions of work this year.

Growth Mindset

The middle school years are marked by great change as students gain independence and strive to stake their own path. This year, in order to better support students, we are continuing our efforts to help students develop a growth mindset. A growth mindset stresses the importance of effective effort, strategies for learning and reaching out to others when we hit a roadblock. We want to ensure that every student feels comfortable to take academic risks and realize that setbacks, and failures, are opportunities for learning and growth.

It will take continued effort from all in the community to develop a culture that celebrates process and growth and allows students to change their perspectives about intelligence, learning, and their ability to grow. Throughout the year we will be reaching out to let you know what we are doing here at school, provide research and resources for you at home and work to ensure that these important conversations are occurring throughout the community. Resources are posted on our website, please revisit often as more will be added as we grow as a learning community.

Schedule

Schedules will be available on parentvue and studentvue beginning this Wednesday, August 26th. For those new to West Sylvan, login information is coming in your registration packet. If you have trouble accessing, please call our office at (503) 916-5690.

Our assistant principals, Ben Keller and Robbie Davis have been working all summer to make sure that each student has a schedule that will challenge and engage. Our hiring and scheduling is done based on the forecasting information that students provided in the spring. As a result, class changes are not possible.

Our team will be available to discuss scheduling issues, such as:

- Wrong level class (math and/or world language)
- Access to continuing in a world language and/or band
- Courses assigned through teams meetings last spring

If you have questions please reach out to Kimberly Hess Torbert at khesstorbert@pps.net to schedule an appointment with either Ben Keller (grades 6 & 7) or Robbie Davis (grade 8).

Volunteer

Please consider volunteering this year! There are many areas to help in, and parents are always welcome, our students can greatly benefit from your involvement and contributions to the school's program and its operations. We seek volunteers to help us with the following activities:

1. Front Office
2. Teacher-led instructional support, usually in the classroom
3. Lunch Help
4. Library Help
5. Maker Space Help
6. School-wide events, field trips
7. Student community service and outreach efforts (Sparrow Club)

More information about this will be coming in the next couple of weeks.

The West Sylvan staff and I feel privileged to be a part of this school family. We thank you for your support and look forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Cherie Kinnersley
West Sylvan Middle School Principal

Go Wolves!

