

Parent Feedback

In August, we sent out a survey to solicit input and feedback from parents. It has been helpful for us as a staff to go through this input. Sometimes when people give feedback and nothing changes, it's easy to think they don't care. In some of these cases, there are explanations about why something is the way it is or factors that are outside of our school control. We want to make sure our parents and community are aware of the reasons some things remain unchanged.

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How do we manage pickup, dropoff, and parking safely?

An overview of our directions for safe and orderly driving and parking can be found [here](#). We always consider ideas from patrons about how to improve the safety and efficiency of our parking lots. Please consider the following:

- ***Safety is more important than convenience.***
- *Don't idle.* If you're hot or cold, park and come in the school.
- In the front lot, the right lane is for pickup and dropoff, but PULL FORWARD. Even if you're dropping off or picking up at the eastern door of the front, you still must pull forward. Your

student might have to walk down the sidewalk to reach you. If you want to be closer to that east end, then park in a stall.

- Don't use the east lot or the bus loop (see [Why can't I use the east parking lot or bus loop to pick up or drop off my children?](#))
- Educate your pickup/dropoff people. Parents, you get the emails, but if you have someone else managing transportation (grandparent, daycare, etc.) then they don't get the information unless you give it to them.
- No smoking/vaping, even if you're in your own car. If you are on school property, even inside a vehicle, you can't smoke or vape.

Why don't we have full day kindergarten?

Very few kindergartens in Davis District are full day. It comes down to funding. Since kindergarten is not required by state law, funding isn't the same. The schools that do have full-day kindergarten are usually highly impacted schools that are allotted extra federal funds to support a more at-risk population. Due to increased cost and decreased federal funds, even many of the school that have had full-day kindergarten are having to make the change to half-day.

Why are class lists posted so late?

Although preliminary lists are completed by the start of June, there are often many changes that happen over the summer, both among staff and students. June, July, and August are the peak months for moving (80% of people in the US who move in a year, move between May and August). This means a lot of enrolling and withdrawing, which affects the class lists in different ways. We have traditionally seen most of our enrollment changes in early August. Having to change students after class lists can be upsetting to students, but we don't want to create an inequity concern with severely unbalanced classes. Additionally, in the last six years, we've had one or more teacher changes that happened over the summer.

We do want to get supply lists out earlier though. The plan for next year is to develop a grade-level supply list that we can post before school gets out. That way parents who want to shop the early sales can do so.

We also want to make sure that kindergarten parents know earlier whether their student will be in AM or PM kindergarten. We plan to make parents aware of that much earlier next year.

Why do we have that northeast portable, if there are no classes in it?

Davis District only moves portables from one location, if another location needs a portable. There is no location to store portables. If we ever do need to lose another portable, that northeast portable will be the first to go.

Why are the prep classes (PE, computers, art) only once a week?

Teachers are given a certain amount of preparation time during school that can be used for these separate classes. The time is divided among these three prep classes. Teachers still do PE activities, teacher computer skills, and integrate art in their classrooms, but the separate classes can only fit into this allotted time.

Why don't we have students go to recess before lunch?

Recess before lunch is a scheduling technique that has seen some positive results in some schools. For the last six years, this idea has been addressed by the staff and the community council. Schools that have tried this in Davis District have had mixed results. Some of the hurdles we have here are:

- Cost—we would need at least one, possibly two additional staff. We decided that if we ever had the funds to add extra staff, we would prefer to have them on the playground instead of escorting classes to the restroom and cafeteria.
- Restroom access—students need to wash hands between recess and lunch (hand sanitizer kills germs, but doesn't really clean). We do not have student restrooms close to the cafeteria, which would mean each class would have to walk past several classrooms to get to and from the restroom.
- Time—to accommodate transitions, we would need to spread the lunch sections out. Right now, lunches start at 11:25 and end at 1:10. We would need to extend this by about an hour, and we can't go later than 1:15 because of early-out days and bussing. That would put some students eating lunch at 10:45. Parents and teachers have agreed that anything before 11:00 is just too early.

Nearly all of the schools in Davis that have tried recess before lunch have abandoned it—sometimes for the reasons we haven't done it, but also because it hasn't had the desired effects. Most of these schools found that students didn't seem to be eating any more or even eating at a slower pace. Students finished lunch and then were stuck waiting, either at tables or on steps like those in our cafeteria, for the lunch time to end. This led to concerns with behavior.

In short, it's not a bad program or idea. It's just one that hasn't fit at West Clinton.

Why are there restrictions on sleeves and cold shoulder tops in the dress code?

A few years ago, we relaxed the dress code to allow sleeveless tops. It was a disaster. We had many parent and even student complaints about how far some students went. We are more concerned with student safety and learning than spending time worrying about measuring inches and finger widths. Elementary presents a unique challenge because we have more diverse body types and sizes among students. To resolve the issue, we carefully considered Davis District's [policy](#) for dress and grooming (5S-100.12.5). The principal then met with the principals at West Point Jr. High and Syracuse High—schools

that West Clinton students feed into. We opted to adopt their dress and grooming policies here to create a policy that could apply K-12. We presented this to the community council, and they unanimously supported the policy.

Why don't we start earlier for elementary students?

School start times are uniform throughout the school district. They are driven largely by transportation. The same busses are used for elementary, junior high, and high schools. This makes it so the start times have to be staggered. Some might then ask, "Why doesn't elementary start first and have high school start last?" The primary argument against that was that working parents need their older children home when their elementary children get there, so that the small children aren't home alone.

How come West Clinton doesn't have a before and after school program?

Before and after school programs are funded using federal Title 1 money. Because West Clinton is not a Title 1 school, we do not have these funds to run a program.

Why don't we do Back-to-School night earlier?

Teachers get only three contract days to work before the first day of school. They need that time to get ready to welcome new students.

How is recess used? Are kids held in from recess?

We make efforts to avoid taking recess away as a disciplinary tactic, *unless* the problems are taking place at recess. Occasionally parents may request that teachers hold their child in from recess to help when the child has been absent. Those arrangements are made by parents.

We also hold indoor recess when weather or air quality dictates.

Recess is part of the physical education time allotted to elementary students. At West Clinton, we have a walking program where students can walk a marked area to earn little feet for each mile. We try to have a variety of equipment and designated play areas so there is something for everyone.

How come the lunch food doesn't seem as yummy as it did when we were kids?

Federal regulations regarding school lunches changed in 2010 to try to make food healthier. They put calorie limits and restricted certain ingredients. For example, any bread product must have at least 50% whole wheat. That's fine for the dinner rolls, but a whole wheat cinnamon roll might not seem as tasty as the kind we had as children.

We do always have a good salad bar with fresh fruit and vegetables (see pictures), milk, and multiple main item options. Some children will throw away an enchilada, but they love an Uncrustable peanut butter and jelly sandwich. If you ever have time, stop by Nutrition Services at Building G4, Freeport West in Clearfield. They do an amazing tour to show how Davis District feeds 40,000+ children every day.



How come there are so many kids in the class?

Class size is a big deal! Each school is given a number of teachers based on the overall student population at the school. In some cases, if a particular grade level is really large, we might receive additional teaching or aide help. Sometimes it's necessary to arrange classes in "splits" where a class is part one grade and part another grade. Davis District funds as many teachers as we can. When one school gets an extra teacher, it usually means that teacher or the teaching position has been lost by another school.

At West Clinton, we try to create opportunities for students to do portions of their learning in small groups. Our reading intervention program is one such example, where students can receive extra attention in groups no larger than 6 students. We also use blended learning strategies to make the time with teachers more personalized. For example, while most students are working independently on a program like ST Math, the teacher works with individuals or small groups to meet student needs. It's not quite the same as having a small class, but it's a great solution to meeting students' academic needs.

Why does the school do fundraisers?

Fundraisers help provide enrichment opportunities for students that wouldn't be possible otherwise. We use the bulk of the money raised from our school fundraiser to pay for field trips so that every grade can do at least one field trip every year. Without the money raised, we would have to do an alternating schedule where only two grade levels would do a field trip each year.

It seems like we do tons of fundraisers. Businesses will do “give back” nights where a percent of spending on a certain evening will go to the school. Although we take advantage of these offers, we don’t want families to feel any obligation to participate in these extras.

We really do ONE fundraiser as a school and our great PTA does ONE fundraiser. As a volunteer organization, PTA has to raise funds to provide what they do—grand breakfasts, student prizes for spirit days and other activities, refreshments at school events, etc. The PTA has done *Snack Shack* at the request of students and parents, but they don’t raise money from it. It mostly pays for itself, and PTA eats the cost of items that don’t sell. We truly appreciate any participation in these TWO big fundraisers. If anyone has contacts with big business or wealthy patrons that could sponsor West Clinton, please contact the principal.

How much communication is right?

We got lots of mixed feedback about school-to-home communication. We had some say they get too many phone calls and email. We had some say they want more phone calls and emails. Some don’t like emails and prefer paper notes sent home. Others state that paper notes get lost, so we should always communicate via email. Some use Facebook, some Twitter, some PeachJar, some Instagram, some nothing.

Because preferences are so diverse, we will try to communicate clearly and regularly to our best ability. If you ever have questions or concerns, please contact the principal.

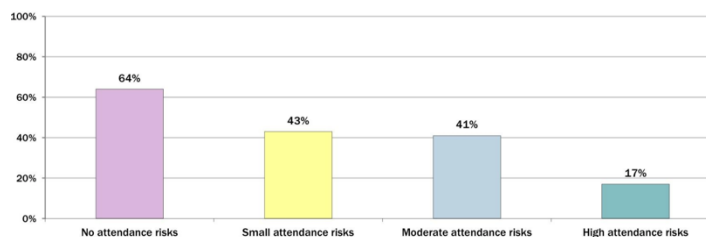
What are these attendance letters?

A few years ago, the University of Utah did a comprehensive study of school attendance throughout the state. The findings showed that when a student is chronically absent (absent 10% or more), there are several risk factors that increase dramatically.

Their research showed:

- Children chronically absent or tardy in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absences or tardies are a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- A child is chronically absent if he or she misses just two days every month!

Percent Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on 3rd Grade ELA Based on Attendance in Kindergarten and in 1st Grade



To help address this concern, Davis School District created some form letters that schools use to notify parents when a student’s attendance is a concern. The first letter comes from the teacher. Teachers are

also required to communicate to parents when attendance or tardiness is having a noticeable impact on student learning and growth. The second letter comes from the assistant principal, requesting contact to discuss a student's attendance. The third letter comes from the principal and requests a meeting to be set with administration to address the issue. Administrators are legally required to report failure to address attendance issues with local law enforcement, Davis District case management, DCFS, and ultimately juvenile courts.

What extracurricular activities does the school have?

During the 2019 – 2020 year, we currently have planned:

- Choir (4th – 6th grades)
- Orchestra (6th grade)
- Coding and MBots (mixed)
- Beginning and Advanced Chess (4th – 6th grades)
- LEGO Mindstorms Tug-of-war (4th grade)
- LEGO Mindstorms Maze (5th grade)
- LEGO Mindstorms Sumo (6th grade)

We can run additional extracurricular programs, if there are paraprofessionals who would like run them. For example, several years ago, there was a 6-week jump rope club. If you or someone you know is interested in running an extracurricular program, have them talk to the principal.

How much homework is right?

Many years ago Davis District established research-based guidelines for homework. Students should not have more homework than 10 minutes per grade level. So a fifth-grade student shouldn't have more than 50 minutes of homework a night. Many teachers have eliminated most or all homework because the impact on student growth is minimal.

One exception to this is reading. Every student should spend time reading and/or being read to every day. This reading time is not included in the 10-minute per grade rule.

How does West Clinton prevent bullying?

Each year we begin with a safe schools presentation that includes education about bullying. The counselor and/or administration deliver this information to every class. You can view the slide show of this presentation [here](#). We try to help students understand:

- The difference between interpersonal conflict and bullying.
- How to promptly and appropriately report incidents to adults.
- How to best help as a bystander.
- More productive ways to deal with disagreements.
- The importance of reporting early.

We solicit ideas from students and parents about how to reduce bullying and other conflict at school. One of the repeated ideas from students is to include older students as part of the adult support before school, after school, and at recess. Although we do not want students in charge of any kind of supervision or discipline, we do want to empower them to be helpers for other students. During the 2019 – 2020 year, we are creating a Junior Hope Squad, which we believe will help increase awareness, vigilance, and reporting practices.

Our school counselor teaches specific lessons every other week in each class to help train students to improve their interpersonal skills, deal with frustration appropriately, and solve problems more effectively. She also meets with individuals and small groups to address more specific student needs.

Sometimes it's necessary to use no-contact rules and contracts to limit a student's possible interaction with another student. Fortunately these are rare, but they can be helpful to prevent a negative situation from escalating.

Why can't I use the east parking lot or bus loop to pick up or drop off my children?

When a school is fortunate enough to have a bus loop, it becomes a restricted area. Busses have extra rules that drivers have to follow. For example, you may have noticed that school busses have to stop at railroad crossings, even if there are no lights flashing. Restrictions on a bus loop are one of those safety regulations that are in place that we have to follow.

The east parking lot is only accessible by crossing the bus loop or crossing an entry/exit. Students would also have to move between vehicles to reach a car in the one lane of that east lot. Safety is always more important to us than convenience. We don't want students to risk crossing an area where cars are moving.

Why does my child spend time on computers or iPads at school?

There are some truly amazing educational tools to help with learning. These programs can't replace a teacher or tutor who can connect with children in a way that makes learning meaningful. However, we use them to enhance learning and sometimes do things that can only be done well through technology.

Technology for Assessment

Teachers use many methods to try to measure learning. We need these measurements to know where a student needs to go next. Sometimes, the tool we use to measure may not be measuring what we want.

For example, Jimmy struggles with reading. He loves science and has a great understanding of the knowledge and skills in science. If the teacher gives him a multiple-choice science test or short answer test, is the teacher going to really see what Jimmy knows and can do in science? Probably not. His

weakness in reading is going to affect his performance on the science test. Instead, we give him an iPad and have him create a Nearpod video about the science. He talks and demonstrates in his little video that he has top-notch skills when it comes to science. Could this be done without technology? If a teacher were to try to assess students one-on-one orally, it would take over 2 hours. Using the video method allows all the students to do their assessment simultaneously, and the teacher can watch them when they don't have their students.

Technology for Personalization

Technology can help us personalize education in a way that we otherwise could not. Adaptive diagnostics built into the programs identify where students are in their learning and where they might have gaps.

For example, Jimmy is fourth grader who takes an adaptive diagnostic in an online program. It determines that although he is on a fourth-grade level, he is missing one concept from second grade. The next day when he spends time on the program, it gives him fourth grade activities, while also inserting the occasional activity that reteaches the missing second grade concept. Gradually, as he shows mastery of that second grade concept, it won't be included in his daily activities in the program. This level of personalization would be impossible for a teacher to determine and manage for 25 students on a daily basis.

For an excellent overview of gamification in learning, check out [this article](#) from Johns Hopkins University.