



WEST DES MOINES
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

RESOURCES FOR ALL WDMCS EARLY CHILDHOOD
PRESCHOOL FAMILIES

2026-27

Handbook Language Statement

English	The handbook includes important information about your student's school. You can request oral translation or interpretation of this information. Contact Natalie French, WDMCS Multilingual Program Director, at 515-633-5173 or frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Arabic	يتضمن الكتيب معلومات مهمة حول مدرسة الطالب. يمكنك طلب ترجمة شفوية أو كتابية. اتصل ب ناتالي فرينج المسؤولة عن برامج متحدثي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة ثانية، على 5156335173 او frenchn@wdmcs.org
Dari	در این کتاب رهنما معلومات مهم در مورد مکتب شاگرد شما موجود است. شما می توانید برای ترجمه شفاهی این معلومات درخواست کنید. با ناتالی فرینج مسؤول پروگرام چند زبانه برای مکاتب ویست دیماین از طریق شماره ویا ایمیل آدرس 5173-633-515 frenchn@wdmcs.org در تماس شوید.
Dinka	Athör ë thöñjë kãñ anɔñj thön/wël thiekiic në biäkke thukul ë menhdun-thukul. Yin lëu ba thiëc në wërë yic ë wël cïke göt cï geriic ka/wälë wël ë thok cï luel cïke wariic e thön këñë. Yuöpë/cɔl Natalie French, Bëny ë WDMCS ESOL, në 515-633-5173 ic ka/wälë frenchn@wdmcs.org
French	Le manuel comprend des informations importantes sur l'école de votre élève. Vous pouvez solliciter une traduction orale ou une interprétation de ces informations. Contactez Natalie French, Directrice de WDMCS ESOL, au 515-633-5173 ou frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Hakha Chin	Hi handbook ahhin abiapi mi na fa sianginn kong a tial. Tamdeuh theih na duh holhlet na herh ahcun; Natalie French, WDMCS Multilingual Program Director, at 515-633-5173 or frenchn@wdmcs.org ah request tuah khoh a si.
Pashto	په دي لارښوود کتاب کی ستاسو د زده کوونکي د ښوونځي په اړه مهم معلومات شامل دي. تاسو کولی شئ د دی معلوماتو شفاهی ترجمی لپاره غوښتنه وکړئ. له ناتالی فرینج د ویست دیماین د ښوونځیو د څو ژبني پروگرام له مشري سره د تېلفون د 5173-633-515 شمېرې یا دي برېښنالیک frenchn@wdmcs.org له لارې اړیکه ونیسئ.
Somali	Buug-gacmeedkan waxaa ku jira macluumaad muhiim ah oo ku saabsan dugsiiga ardaygaaga. Waxaad codsan kartaa turjumaan afka ah ama turjumaada macluumaadkan. Kala xiriir Natalie French, Agaasimaha WDMCS Multilingual Program, lambarka 515-633-5173 ama frenchn@wdmcs.org
Spanish	El manual incluye información importante sobre la escuela de su estudiante. Puede solicitar traducción o interpretación oral de esta información. Comuníquese con Natalie French, Directora de WDMCS Multilingual Program, al 515-633-5173 o frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Swahili	Kitabu cha mwongozo kinajumuisha maelezo muhimu kuhusu shule ya mwanafunzi wako. Unaweza kuomba tafsiri ya usemi au ukalimani wa maelezo haya. Wasiliana na Natalie French, Mkurugenzi wa WDMCS Multilingual Program, katika 515-633-5173 au frenchn@wdmcs.org .
Tigrinya	እቲ ናይ መምርሒ መጽሓፍ ብዘሰጠሉ ትምህርቲ ተምሃራይ/ሪትኩም ኣገደስቲ ሓበሬታ ዘማለእ እዩ። ናይዚ ሓበሬታ ናይ ቃል ትርጉም ወይ መስተርጓሚ ክትሓቱ ትክእሉ እኹም። ን ናታሊ ፍረንቻ (Natalie French)፣ ኣይሪክተር WDMCS Multilingual Program፣ ብ 515-633-5173 ወይ frenchn@wdmcs.org ርኹብዎ።
Vietnamese	Cẩm nang bao gồm những thông tin quan trọng về trường học của con em bạn. Bạn có thể yêu cầu dịch thuật qua miệng hoặc bằng văn bản thông tin này. Liên hệ với Natalie French, Giám đốc Multilingual Program WDMCS, theo số 515-633-5173 hoặc frenchn@wdmcs.org

Eddy Cisneros Spanish Family Engagement P: 515-633-4660 E: cisnerose@wdmcs.org	Ana Hayes Spanish Family Engagement P: 515-633-5906 E: hayesa@wdmcs.org	Klever Miranda Spanish Family Engagement P: 515-633-5783 E: mirandak@wdmcs.org	Angelica Moreno-Rangel Spanish Family Engagement P: 515-633-4793 E: morenoa@wdmcs.org	Dinia Sloan Spanish Family Engagement P: 515-633-4070 E: sloand@wdmcs.org
Biak Thang Hakha/Burmese Family Engagement P: 515-633-5729 E: thangb@wdmcs.org	Wafi Alkozi Dari/Pashto/Farsi Family Engagement P: 515-633-4077 E: alkoziw@wdmcs.org	Mengis Tsehaye Tigrinya/Amharic Family Engagement P: 515-633-6273 E: tsehayem@wdmcs.org	Samara Quntar Arabic Family Engagement P: 515-633-5156 E: quntars@wdmcs.org	Natalie French Multilingual Program Director P: 515-633-5173 E: frenchn@wdmcs.org

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Special Section — West Des Moines Community Schools Districtwide Handbook

West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) Overview

Mission

Educate, empower, and inspire lifelong learners.

Vision

WDMCS cultivates belonging, engagement, and mutual respect for our diverse cultures, lived experiences, and values. We strive to ensure:

- Inclusive and safe learning and work environments.
- Academic excellence.
- Robust growth opportunities and pathways for students and staff.
- Fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

Core Values

Equitable Access: We celebrate and culturally affirm the human differences of our community. We strive to have transformative policies, practices, and procedures that meet the needs of each student, family, and staff.

Evidence-Based and Personalized Instruction: We adapt to meet each student's needs. We have high expectations, culturally relevant instruction, and a strengths-based approach.

Meaningful Collaborative Relationships: We foster authentic relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with students, families, staff, and community. We hold all relationships in high regard, including adult to adult; adult to student; and student to student.

Systemic Implementation and Accountability: We continuously measure, assess, and improve our effectiveness and the quality of our programs and services.

Strategic Directions

1. Improve our practices in teaching, learning, assessment, and cultural responsiveness to increase student learning outcomes.
2. Provide equitable structures, processes, and supports that meet each student's needs.
3. Foster a workplace that nurtures a healthy and accountable culture.
4. Create authentic family-community partnerships with sustained systems of communication and engagement.
5. Empower staff to leverage data to improve operations, decision-making, and organizational effectiveness.

Boundaries

Covering 36.6 square miles, our district boundaries are rather irregular but generally lie:

- north of Warren and Madison County lines,
- south of Urbandale Avenue,
- east of the Dallas County line, and
- west of 63rd Street.

The following is a list of schools in our district that provide — or feed — our secondary schools with students as they progress in their education. These are called “feeder schools.”

- Indian Hills Junior High: Clive, Crestview, Crossroads Park, and Westridge
- Stilwell Junior High: Fairmeadows, Hillside, Jordan Creek, and Western Hills
- Valley Southwoods Freshman High School: serves grade 9
- Valley High School: serves grades 10-12
- Starting 2026-27, WDMCS Alternative Education Program is supported at multiple sites.

For information about elementary school boundaries or a map of the district, please visit <https://discover.wdmcs.org/boundaries>.

About Our Tiger Cubs Preschools

The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and Preschool Administrator provides leadership, support, and accountability for all preschools in WDMCS.

ESCE and Preschool Administrator: Dr. Jeannette Barnes, barnesj@wdmcs.org

Clive Learning Academy (grades PK-6)

1600 73rd St.
Windsor Heights, IA 50324
515-633-5800

Principal: Shelly Pospeshil,
pospeshils@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Ashley Schott,
schotta@wdmcs.org

Crestview School of Inquiry (grades PK-6)

8355 Franklin Ave.
Clive, IA 50325
515-633-5700

Interim Principal: Sue Lawler,
lawlers@wdmcs.org

Interim Assistant Principal: Dan Stoa,
stoad@wdmcs.org

Crossroads Park Elementary (grades PK-6)

1050 50th St.
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-633-5600

Principal: Tricia Kurtt,
kurttt@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Tyler Denton,
dentont@wdmcs.org

Fairmeadows Elementary (grades PK-6)

807 23rd St.
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-633-6500

Principal: Brandon Pierce,
pierceb@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Leah Holcomb,
holcombl@wdmcs.org

Hillside Elementary (grades PK-6)

713 Eighth St.
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-633-6200

Principal: Kelley Harrison, harrisonk@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Jackson Anderson,
andersonjac@wdmcs.org

Jordan Creek Elementary (grades PK-6)

4105 Fuller Rd.
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-633-5200

Principal: Annie Orsini,
orsinia@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Chad Jamison,
jamisonc@wdmcs.org

Western Hills Elementary (grades PK-6)

600 39th St.
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-633-5900

Principal: Jenna Pressley, pressleyj@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Erin Willoughby,
willoughbye@wdmcs.org

Westridge Elementary (grades PK-6)

5500 E.P. True Pkwy.
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515-633-5400

Principal: Jody Kerchal,
kerchalj@wdmcs.org

Assistant Principal: Tyson Heuton,
heutont@wdmcs.org

Tiger Cubs Welcome

Our program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program that meets each child's needs, including children with disabilities. Our preschools provide a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for children to take part in planned, active learning experiences guided by the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Our preschool programs are part of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program to provide children with access to high-quality early childhood education and follow the [Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards \(IQPPS\)](#). We have dedicated, high quality staff whose knowledge, experiences, and commitment to early education make our program effective in meeting students' learning needs.

Before working with children, staff members are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of program operation.

Educational Non-Discrimination Statement

The West Des Moines Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equal Opportunity Coordinator, Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Culture and Access, [3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265](#); Phone: 515-633-5040; Email jokd@wdmcs.org. (Adherence to bona fide occupational/educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory.)

General Preschool Information

Eligibility

Tiger Cubs Preschool

The Tiger Cubs preschool program operates in all eight (8) West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) district buildings: Clive, Crestview, Crossroads Park, Fairmeadows, Hillside, Jordan Creek, Western Hills, and Westridge Elementary schools. All schools serve 4-year-olds.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)

Students are eligible for our SVPP classrooms at all WDMCS Tiger Cubs locations and community partner preschools Sacred Heart and West Des Moines United Methodist Early Learning Preschool. Additional community partners Cadence Academy Preschool, Grand and Cadence Academy Preschool, Ashworth, have SVPP sessions within their day for full-day students. SVPP is for students who are 4 years old on or before Sept. 15 of the school year for which they are enrolled. Students who are low income and/or WDMCS families may be given priority. SVPP is funded through the Iowa Department of Education.

Inclusion

Our preschool programs provide for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs, through a variety of options. Each Tiger Cubs location serves students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Modifications to the environment and staffing patterns are made to support children with diverse needs.

Staff members are aware of each child's identified needs and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. We believe that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children, and their families.

Our preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

Program Options and Fees

Below is a listing of the Tiger Cubs Preschool locations at West Des Moines Community Schools buildings.

Tiger Cubs at Clive Learning Academy

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. or 1-3:45 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Tiger Cubs at Crestview School of Inquiry

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 8:20-11:05 a.m. or 12:25-3:10 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Tiger Cubs at Crossroads Park Elementary

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. and 1:10-3:55 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Tiger Cubs at Fairmeadows Elementary

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. and 1:10-3:55 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Tiger Cubs at Hillside Elementary

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days;** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. and 1:10-3:55 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Tiger Cubs at Jordan Creek Elementary

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. and 1:10-3:55 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs..

Tiger Cubs at Western Hills Elementary

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. and 1:10-3:55 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Tiger Cubs at Westridge Elementary

- 4-year-old program
- 3 to 5 year-old program for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Children must be 4 by Sept. 15.
- **Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- **Hours:** 9:05-11:50 a.m. and 1:10-3:55 p.m.
- **Cost:** Tuition will be paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP) for the 4-year old program and by Special Education for the 3 to 5-year old program for students with IEPs.

Preschool Students with IEPs

Students ages 3-5 with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will be funded through Special Education. No registration fee or tuition is charged.

Cub Care Wraparound Childcare

Tiger Cubs is a half-day program. New for the 2026-27 school year, WDMCS offers a fee-based, wrap-around childcare option for families that offers full-day care for Tiger Cubs Preschoolers. The program will operate out of Clive Learning Academy and is open to all WDMCS families.

- Students attend Tiger Cubs Preschool in their home building and attend Cub Care at Clive Learning Academy.
- Midday transportation will be provided.
- Space is limited.

Families must pay for Cub Care or qualify for financial assistance through the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Families can indicate their desire for wraparound childcare during the online enrollment process. Staffing for Cub Care Wraparound Childcare will be provided by WDMCS Kids West.

Community Preschools Offering Statewide Voluntary Preschool for 4-Year-Olds

Children must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 15. Tuition will be paid through Statewide Voluntary Preschool. The following locations are private preschools which operate independently yet coordinate with WDMCS to provide consistent and comparable programming. All programs meet the requirements set forth by the Iowa Department of Education for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. Students with IEPs may also be served in community partner preschools and will work in collaboration with the district to meet the needs of students.

Cadence Academy Preschools

The Cadence Academy Preschools offer families the option of full-time preschool and care. The daily preschool session is paid through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, and parents/guardians pay

costs of wrap-around child care. Cadence Academy Preschools hold preschool Monday through Friday, with morning or afternoon sessions.

- **Grand Location:** 1809 Grand Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50265; Erica Austin, director, 515-225-1837
- **Ashworth Location:** 5859 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines, IA 50266; Kaitlyn Sheesly, director, 515-226-9791

Each of the centers listed below offers half-day sessions, four days per week. Hours and days vary slightly per center.

- **Sacred Heart Preschools:** 1653 Grand Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50265; Scott Ehlinger, director, 515-223-1284
- **West Des Moines United Methodist Early Learning Preschool:** 720 Grand Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50265; Amy Borness, director, 515-279-8897

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program designed for children who are age-eligible for Kindergarten but may need an extra year of development before they are ready. Transitional Kindergarten will create an academic setting focused on social-emotional growth, language development, and foundational skills. It gives children additional space and time to further develop the necessary social and academic skills.

Students will be introduced to kindergarten-level math, literacy, science, social studies, and social-emotional learning at an appropriate pace. They will also have specials (art, music, library, PE, and guidance) like their K-6 peers.

TK is a full-day, five-day per week program that follows the same school-year calendar as our kindergarten students. For the 2026-27 school year, TK will be offered at Crestview School of Inquiry and Hillside Elementary. Learn more at discover.wdmcs.org/tk.

Who Works in the Preschool?

Our preschool programs comply with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our programs follow requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. Student/teacher ratios may be different at each site based on the continuum of services provided.

Hiring procedures include a review of a criminal background check, the sex offender registry, and the central registry for child abuse. In addition, we verify education credentials, age, completion of high school or a GED, and review personal references.

Early Childhood Special Education and Preschool Program Administrator

The early childhood special education and preschool programs administrator supervises Tiger Cubs classrooms and coordinates continuity between the classrooms to meet quality standards. The preschool

directors in community partner preschools are designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool programs.

Teachers

Teachers are licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and hold both an Early Childhood Endorsement and/or Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement.

Teacher Assistants

Teacher assistants in each classroom carry out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistants are specially trained in early childhood education and the individual needs of the staffed students. Many are completing paraeducator certification and/or have college degrees and meet standards as outlined in QPPS.

School Nurse/Child Care Nurse Consultant

Preschools in WDMCS elementary buildings have access to an on-site school nurse. Community partner preschools have access to a child care nurse consultant. The school nurse or center director maintains health records that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The nurse or director also updates student health records and attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. The nurse or nurse consultant is available for parent consultations when necessary.

Support Staff

Heartland AEA collaborates with Tiger Cubs and Community Partner classrooms to support early childhood programming. Staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist, or others.

Staff participates in joint and collaborative events with other community programs and service agencies throughout the year. They are encouraged and given the opportunity to participate in community or statewide early childhood affiliations.

Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning opportunities are formal and informal. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day: small group and large group learning, self-initiated learning, creative expression, social emotional learning, early literacy and math experiences, and fine and gross motor activities. Play is planned for each day.

Bi-weekly newsletters will be sent home by the teacher. Each teacher maintains their own communication log system for individual students' families.

Curriculum

Our preschool programs use the [Frog Street Pre-K Curriculum](#) and [Conscious Discipline](#) for social emotional learning. Frog Street is a pre-kindergarten curriculum that includes a research-based scope and sequence for literacy, math, science, social studies and social-emotional content domains. It acknowledges the individual needs of each learner with:

- Adaptations for special needs

- Strategies for English for Speakers of Other Languages

Preschool classrooms implement the Brain Smart Start components of the Conscious Discipline model. Students start their days with opportunities to consciously and intentionally:

- Unite
- Commit
- Connect
- Calm

A family's culture and the child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important part of the child's growth and development. The curriculum goals and objectives will guide teachers' planning and instruction based on the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool and/or other research-based assessment tools.

Each day, the children will have an opportunity to self-select where they might like to play and work. Here is a list of some of our centers and some typical activities:

- **Art:** Students may choose a variety of art materials to create works of art.
- **Blocks:** Students can build with different types of blocks and also engage in imaginary play with play people, dinosaurs, animals, etc.
- **Dramatic Play:** Students may role-play and pretend with props and settings, as well as utilize social skills
- **Library:** Students have an opportunity to enjoy a variety of books independently or with peers.
- **Science:** Children will explore their world with a variety of science materials.
- **Sensory Table:** Students can develop their senses and cognitive development through play in a sensory table. Items may include: water, sand, snow, pasta, rice. Materials are rotated on a regular basis to sustain interest and maintain cleanliness.
- **Technology:** Students will have learning opportunities using various media and technology.
- **Toys and Games:** Children will develop cognitive skills, such as counting, problem-solving, categorizing, and matching, as well as play games with rules through a variety of toys, learning materials, and games.
- **Writing:** Students have access to a variety of writing utensils and materials.

Assessment

Children may be assessed in any of the following ways:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD®
- Ongoing observations help to ensure a child's progress during daily activities.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and may include assessments and child work samples that are collected on an ongoing basis.
- Information shared by parent/guardians

This assessment information is used to help guide instruction based on each child's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan individualized and effective instruction.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during conferences in the fall and spring. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time. If the observation and/or assessment data indicates a need for further assessments or screening, the teacher can assist the family through the process, then work together toward making an action plan.

Outside Play and Learning

- Daily opportunities for 20 minutes of outdoor play as the weather permits. Students are asked to dress appropriately for the weather, including coats, hats, gloves, and boots. Any families who need support in obtaining clothing or shoes should contact the school office.
- Sunscreen and/or insect repellent may be applied at school with written parent permission.
- The outdoor play equipment is age and developmentally appropriate, fenced to avoid hazards, and arranged so staff can easily supervise children. A playground safety checklist is completed and on file.
- Outdoor play is held except during inclement weather. During inclement or extreme weather (Real Feel® of at/below 0 degrees and at/above 100 degrees), supervised, indoor play occurs.

Supervision

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Children will be supervised primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (such as those who can use the toilet independently). Each preschool classroom provides at least 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child.

Water Activity

Staff supervises all children by sight and sound during water activities. When a water play table is present in the classroom for the children to stand and play with their hands in the water, the following procedures will be followed.

- Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate.
- Children are not allowed to drink the water.
- When the activity is complete, the water table is drained, sanitized, and refilled with fresh water.
- Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers, as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities.

Attendance

Our role in preparing our students for postsecondary learning, careers, and life is best fulfilled when we are all HERE. We want your student to feel connected and that they belong HERE in WDMCS.

Why Attendance is Important

Research shows consistent attendance:

- helps children reach early academic and developmental milestones,
- helps students develop positive relationships with peers and staff,
- prevents students from falling behind academically,
- connects families to additional community resources, and
- increases graduation rates.

Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

A student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% percent of school days in a grading period, which is 18 or more days in a year. This equals only two days a month, nine days per semester or six days per trimester. A student is considered truant if they miss 20% of school days in a grading period, which is 17 days in a semester and 12 days in a trimester.

Compulsory Attendance

Children over age six and under age 16 by Sept. 15, in proper physical and mental condition to attend school are subject to compulsory attendance at WDMCS ([Board Policy 501.03: Compulsory Attendance](#)). Those students must also comply with Iowa Senate File 2435, which outlines intervention measures school districts must take in response to chronic absenteeism. This includes:

- Notifying the county attorney and sending a notice to parents when a student misses 10% of school days in a grading period
- Initiating a school engagement meeting between the student, parent/guardian and school official when a student misses 15% of school days in a grading period. The purpose of the meeting is to create a prevention plan. The school will monitor compliance with the plan and contact the parent/guardian once per week.
- Refer to the county attorney if the plan is violated or the student's absences surpass 20% of school days in a grading period.

Truancy determinations and required actions are not applied to a student who meets one of the following exemptions:

- Completed requirement for graduation or obtained a high school equivalency diploma
- Excused for sufficient reason by a court of record or judge
- Attending religious services or receiving religious instructions
- Unable to attend school due to legitimate medical reasons(s)
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) that affects attendance
- Section 504 plan under the Federal Rehabilitation Act that affects attendance

Notifying Your School

If your child needs to stay home or be late for school, please call the school office before the start of the school day and report your child's name, homeroom teacher, and reason for the absence or tardiness. If you know of a planned absence, you can report that information through Infinite Campus. View instructions at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/report-absence-online>. If a child is reported absent by the homeroom teacher and the school has not been notified, the secretary or school nurse will contact the home to ensure the child's safety. In the case of excessive absences, a physician's note, school nurse, or building administrator's documentation may be required to excuse the absence. If there is anything our school can do to help your child attend school regularly and on time, please contact your student's school. Find more attendance resources online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/HERE>.

Nutrition

Snacks/Foods

We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, enjoy and request a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy.

Children are offered one snack during the preschool session. Our preschools serve a wide variety of nutritious snacks, and encourage children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered.

Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach, and foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served. High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be

served. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

Allergies

WDMCS promotes a safe and inclusive allergy aware environment for all students. For every child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and a specialist involved in the child's care.

Miscellaneous Information

Objects From Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside their backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Pets/Service Animals

Student safety and the cleanliness of the building are put at risk when animals accompany their owners for a drop-in visit at school. Pets are not allowed in WDMCS facilities without prior written consent by a building administrator. In keeping with state and federal law, WDMCS recognizes there may be a need for employees or students to use or have access to qualified service animals. Students or staff who need service animals, which are defined by law as "animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for persons with disabilities," are welcome to consult with their building administrator.

Transportation

If your child is eligible for and uses district transportation based on services noted in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) for special education or participates in midday transportation through the Cub Care Childcare program, teaching staff will go to each bus as it arrives to greet and assist the student off the bus. At dismissal, teaching staff will accompany each student to the bus and assist the student onto the bus. All students will be in an appropriate harness, seat belt, or restraint.

Communication and Family Involvement

Technology and Chromebooks ([Board Policy 605.08: Technology Use By Students](#))

Chromebooks are available for usage with our PK classrooms, but not available for home access.

District-provided technology resources exist solely for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching. The use of these resources will be consistent with the district's educational mission and policy, as well as state and federal laws and regulations. Chromebooks are the property of WDMCS. Students should have no expectation of privacy related to content created, websites searched, or documents saved.

Learn more about WDMCS technology services, including frequently asked questions, student and family Chromebook responsibilities, and details on the district's partnership with web-filtering and online safety vendor, Securly, at discover.wdmcs.org/technology-department.

Arrival and Departure

Only parents/guardians and persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to drop off and pick up a child from preschool. Each preschool building has specific procedures for drop-off and pick-up, including the requirement that an adult drop off and pick up the child from a designated preschool classroom team member. This ensures that all children are accounted for before, during, and after transport and assures the safety of all children as pedestrians and passengers. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them. Preschools have the option to charge a fee for late pick up.

Communication with Families

All teachers use the TalkingPoints two-way communication platform.

Talking Points is used for:

- teachers to communicate about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, etc.
- teachers to send photos, notes, and daily reports with families.
- families to share information with teachers

Teachers will also communicate in-person and via email, notes, and phone calls.

Parents/guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents/guardians and visitors will check in at the elementary school or director's office of a partner preschool. The preschool staff wants parents/guardians to feel confident that their child is being well cared for and is receiving a quality experience at school.

Surveys

WDMCS distributes various student surveys throughout the year. Parents/guardians will be informed of any state-mandated surveys. Parents/guardians may be informed in advance of student surveys and asked to provide written or electronic permission based on guidelines outlined in the [State of Iowa Senate File 496](#).

Family Engagement

We welcome and encourage family engagement and partnership in their child's education. Teachers use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication.

Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year for all Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program students. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

The preschool invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways and welcomes other ideas as well:

- Share information about your child's interests and abilities.
- Keep the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child and allow the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
- Attend family meetings.

- Attend conferences in the fall and spring semesters.
- Take time to read the family bulletin board.
- Check your child's backpack each day.
- Participate in field trip activities.
- Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or items from trips you have taken.
- Share any of your family's cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
- Help with special events.
- Read all the material sent home with your child.
- Come to play!

Parent/Guardian-Teacher Organizations

Parent/guardian-teacher organizations are independent groups that help support the district. WDMCS has no oversight or control over their funds. They collaborate with school administrators to understand and support building goals.

Each school in the district has an active, dedicated parent/guardian-teacher organization. Your membership and active participation are encouraged. There are many ways parents/guardians can get involved and connected to the district in addition to joining their school's parent/guardian-teacher organization. Reach out to your school's principal to learn about other opportunities.

We warmly invite each parent/guardian-teacher organization to have a representative join our School Community Network (SCN). This friendly group meets several times a year to collaborate and connect. We also welcome district representatives to some meetings to share valuable information for you to bring back to your organization.

We are happy to welcome parents and guardians into our building. Please use the front door and follow the protocol outlined in the Visitors and Volunteers section of this handbook.

Visitors and Volunteers

WDMCS welcomes visitors and volunteers to its school buildings. Visitors are individuals who come to watch an assembly, eat lunch with their child, or visit their child's classroom. Visitors usually arrange their visits 24 hours in advance with the classroom teacher and keep them brief. Visitors should not disrupt class or discuss individual concerns when students are present. Young children or visiting students must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Volunteers are individuals who offer their time to assist with school projects, support classroom activities, or serve on committees. Unlike visitors, volunteers are typically engaged by the school to help with specific tasks or programs. These opportunities include classroom assistance, participation in building and activity support groups, and serving on districtwide or building committees. To learn more about volunteering, contact your school office. Volunteers may be required to complete additional screening. For more on volunteer background check requirements, visit <https://www.wdmcs.org/engage/volunteer>.

Both visitors and volunteers must use the front door, check in at the office, and pick up a visitor badge with each visit. Please bring personal identification, such as a state-issued ID, passport, military license, Consular ID card, or Permanent Resident card. Your ID will be screened through Raptor, and you'll state your location

in the building to assist staff during emergencies. Those who do not pass the Raptor screening will not be admitted.

Because WDMCS adheres to state and federal laws, all visitors and volunteers on school grounds must comply with the [State of Iowa's Senate File 482](#), which states individuals must use the restroom of their assigned gender at birth. Each school has multi-stall, gender-specific, and individual restrooms available.

Student Conduct

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teachers work with children to help them identify emotions so they can work on managing stress, impulse control, and developing and maintaining positive relationships. We believe as children develop strong social and emotional skills, we will see growth in their positive behavior and connections with others.

Teaching staff will:

- provide positive guidance.
- use redirection when needed.
- explain expectations in ways preschoolers can understand.
- be consistent in discipline.

They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn how to take turns.

Challenging Behavior

The Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children (PTR-YC) model is the research-based strategy all team members use to reduce challenging behaviors. All teachers and paraeducators serving our preschoolers are trained to use the five preventative practices:

- 5:1 ratio of positive attention
- Use predictable schedules
- Establish routines within routines
- Directly teach behavioral expectations
- Directly teach peer-related social skills

The teaching staff in our preschools is highly trained in behavior management. Aggressive physical behavior toward children or staff is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive in order to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. Teachers will communicate with parents/guardians about their child's behavior, and seek their input. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff and parent/guardians with support from AEA consultants will determine the most effective strategies for the student to successfully participate. All teachers and assistants will be trained in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention strategies. Nonviolent Crisis Intervention focuses on prevention strategies equipping staff to safely diffuse behaviors at the earliest possible stages. Our district Tiger Cubs classrooms are equipped to support children on Individual Behavior Plans.

Permissible Methods of Discipline

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting), staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for

managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve.

Staff may:

- separate the children involved;
- immediately comfort the individual who was injured;
- care for any injury resulting from the incident;
- notify parent/guardians of children involved in the incident;
- review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Expulsion/Suspension

Preschool and administrative staff will provide alternatives to expulsion and suspension so they are infrequent or unnecessary. Expulsion and suspension will only be used as a last resort when a serious safety concern cannot be eliminated with reasonable modifications.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children, nor threats or derogatory remarks.
- Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
- Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to abuse.
- Withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Student Dress and Appearance

Students and their parents/guardians are primarily responsible for what a student chooses to wear to school each day. When a student is comfortable in what they wear, including expressing their individuality and/or personal and family culture, they can better focus on learning. WDMCS expectations for student dress and appearance are based on safety and showing respect for others.

- Students are asked to dress appropriately for the weather, including coats, hats, gloves, and boots. Any family who needs support in obtaining clothing or shoes should contact the school office.
- Shoes must be worn at all times for student safety.

Clothing or other apparel promoting products illegal for use by minors or displaying obscene material, profanity, or reference to prohibited conduct are not allowed. If worn, a student will be asked to change or be given something different to wear for the day.

Safety and Health

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow the guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Safety

Safety Drills

WDMCS conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of emergency protocols and procedures. Each school in our district performs severe weather, active threat, evacuation, ELF (Evacuate, Lockdown, Fight) and fire drills. Special assistance will be provided for students needing specific supports.

Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents

Our preschool programs have written emergency plans for all children, as well as printed plans for emergency health procedures. These documents follow district procedures and include the following:

- emergency phone numbers
- fire procedures
- severe weather
- bomb threats
- physical threats/armed intruder
- evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures — WDMCS buildings
- accidental injury or illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- school crisis team members and a checklist — WDMCS buildings
- list of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in each building

Inclement Weather and Cancellation Due to Weather

- **For Students in Community Centers:** Center directors will provide you with information regarding cancellations and dismissals.
- **For Students in District Buildings:** The district's emergency notification system also will be used to notify families of unplanned cancellations, early dismissals, or other emergencies. Calls are made to home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, and/or work numbers as provided to the school and entered into the Infinite Campus data system.

Early dismissal and delayed starts will not be made up.

Mandatory Reporting ([Board Policy 402.02: Reporting of Child and/or Dependent Adult Abuse](#))

WDMCS strongly supports Chapter 232 of the Iowa Code and requires that all employees who are mandatory reporters under this Chapter be familiar with the requirements therein.

In compliance with state law and to provide protection to victims of child or dependent adult abuse, incidents of alleged abuse will be reported to the proper authorities. All employees are encouraged, and certain employees, including teachers, coaches and paraeducators, and all school employees 18 years of age or older are mandatory reporters as provided by law and are to report alleged incidents of abuse they become aware of or reasonably suspect within the scope of their professional duties.

The law provides immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, to anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report or in the judicial proceedings that may result from the report.

Health

Absences (Reasons)

Regular attendance is a very important part of your child's education. Children should be fever free for 24 hours WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medicines such as Tylenol or ibuprofen. **If your child is ill, please call the school secretary/nurse before the start of the school day.**

Students should stay home if they have:

- Diarrhea (must be diarrhea free in the 24 hours prior to returning to school)
- Fever (over 100.4) within the last 24 hours
- An illness that caused vomiting two or more times during the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is known to be caused by a condition that's not contagious
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has been started. Impetigo is a skin infection with erupting sores usually under the nose or in the lip area. This drainage is generally described as “a golden crust”.
- Conditions that suggest the possible presence of a more serious illness, including a fever, rash, sluggishness, persistent crying, irritability, or difficulty breathing

You can help prevent the spread of infectious diseases by keeping your sick child home from school or childcare until the illness can no longer be spread to others. .

Services of the School Nurse

If a student becomes ill during the school day, permission or a pass from class will be requested, and evaluation will occur from the school nurse. The nurse will use professional judgment and follow the WDMCS Illness Guidelines online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/health-resources> to determine if it is necessary for the student to go home. To ensure student safety, under no circumstances are students allowed to go home or leave student grounds without contacting the school nurse or the office. In cases when parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the school will contact the listed emergency contact. In the event of an emergency and no one can be reached, emergency services will be called and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital if necessary.

Student Injuries

Students who suffer injuries should be brought to the nurse's office. The school nurse maintains a record of all accidents resulting in injuries to students. Any change in the student's condition occurring throughout the day should also be made known to the nurse. Injury to a student shall be promptly reported to Administrative Services by the building administrator or designee on the WDMCS Student Incident Report.

Health Fact Sheets

The district website has a variety of health-related resources, including fact sheets on:

- COVID-19
- Bed Bugs
- Chickenpox
- Fifth Disease
- Head Lice
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Mono
- MRSA
- Pink Eye
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat

To learn more, visit <https://discover.wdmcs.org/health-resources>.

Health Records

By keeping adequate health histories, we are better able to evaluate, understand, and be responsive to your child's individual needs. Please send a note or call the school nurse regarding any developments concerning your child's health. This would include hospitalizations, all medications (type, amount, and time given), fractures, all recent diagnoses of medical conditions, and any other medical information that would be pertinent to the student's performance and attendance.

Student's medical information is collected within a Health section of their record in Infinite Campus. Confidentiality of this information is a priority. This tab is only visible to nursing staff and a very small number of other district employees who help support nurses.

- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [506.03 Student Records, Use Of Records And Student Rosters](#)

Immunizations and Health Screenings

Iowa Law requires all students, grades PK-12, to have evidence of a valid Iowa Immunization Certificate, Provisional Certificate of Immunization, or Iowa Certificate of Immunization Exemption on file to be enrolled in the WDMCS. This certificate may be obtained from your provider's office or from the school nurse. Students with immunizations partially completed will be issued a Provisional Certificate allowing for a maximum of 60 days to complete the remaining immunizations. Communication will be provided to parents/guardians regarding immunization requirements and timelines, and further assistance will be provided from the school nurse. If the student hasn't met the requirements at the end of the provisional period, it is necessary by law to exclude the student from school. Student's transferring from another school system within the United States may be granted a Provisional Certificate until documentation of current immunizations are obtained and validated.

To support healthy students, Iowa's health screening programs are regulated by the state and are implemented by the schools. These screenings include: immunizations, dental, vision, and lead. Hearing screenings are also conducted by audiologists from the Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) annually for students in selected grades, which vary from year-to-year. Information regarding hearing screenings will be communicated by your school. Please notify your school nurse prior to the communicated screening dates if you would not like your student to participate. Further information regarding school screenings can be found [on our website under Health Screenings](#) and will be provided by your school nurse.

- [Learn more from Iowa Department of Education: Student Health Requirements](#)
- [Learn more about immunizations, health screenings, including dental, hearing, and vision screenings.](#)

Medication Guidelines

- The Health Office must have written authorization from the parent/guardian. Please include the student's name, name of medication, amount to be given, time of medication is to be given, reason for the medication, and parent/guardian signature.

- The medication must be in the original current container (**NO** plastic bags or envelopes with loose pills).
- The directions on the medication container must match the parent/guardian authorization.
- **ALL** medications (prescription and over-the-counter) must be kept in the Health Office at all times. The only exception to this policy is if a student has provided a completed Self- Administration Consent form that is signed by a healthcare provider. This provides a student authorization to self-administer asthma/other airway constricting disease medication or Epinephrine auto-injector medications.

Non-Prescription Medications

The WDMCS health offices stock non-prescription medications including Tylenol, ibuprofen, and Tums.

- All elementary school students (grades PK-6) will be provided a maximum of four doses of stock non-prescription medications during the school year.
- All junior high and high school students (grades 7-12) will be provided a maximum of eight doses of stock non-prescription medications.
- Cough drops may be supplied by the parent/guardian but will not be provided as a stock medication.
- If further doses are necessary after the maximum number has been reached, the parent/guardian will be responsible for providing the medication to the health office and a doctor's note may be requested by the school nurse.

Cleaning and Sanitization

Classroom areas will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated will be removed immediately and disinfected prior to using again. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47, of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible. Clorox wipes are not permitted per OSHA regulations.

Hand-Washing Practices

Frequent hand washing is key in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink.

Diapering Procedures

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. The teacher and/or director will work with the family to develop a toileting plan for a child who is not toilet trained before school begins. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines that are set forth by the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Special Section — West Des Moines Community Schools Districtwide Handbook

West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education & Learning Resource Center

Board of Education
Superintendent's Cabinet

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West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation

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Nutrition Services
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Transportation
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Teaching and Learning Services
 Curriculum
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Annual Notices and Board Policies

West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education & Learning Resource Center

West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education

The West Des Moines Community Schools Board of Education holds regular meetings usually at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Most meetings are conducted in the Community Room at the Learning Resource Center, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines. All meetings are open to the public unless the Board calls for a closed session. For an item to be considered for placement on the agenda, interested citizens must submit the item in writing to the Superintendent's Office by noon on the Wednesday preceding the regular meeting. Most meetings are streamed on the district's YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/@wdmcs>.

During each meeting, an open forum time is conducted when citizens may speak to the Board. Individuals may have up to five minutes to speak.

Seven elected members serve four-year terms without pay on the School Board. Elections are held in odd-numbered years. A new president and vice president are elected every November. In addition, up to three high school students are elected each spring to serve their senior year as non-voting members. View current Board of Education information online at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/board>.

West Des Moines Community Schools Learning Resource Center

3550 Mills Civic Parkway
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265-5556
Phone: 515-633-5000

Superintendent's Cabinet

Dr. Matt Adams, Superintendent
Kurt Subra, Chief Financial Officer
Brian Abeling, Executive Director of Information and Technology
Bryan Geelan, Executive Director of Communications
Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Culture and Access
Michelle Lettington, Executive Director of Elementary Education
Steven Schappaugh, Executive Director of Secondary Education

TBA, Chief Human Resources Officer

General Information

Area Education Agency (AEA) Services

Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) supports educators, families, and the community to improve student learning. Heartland is one of nine area education agencies in Iowa created to ensure educational opportunities for children from birth to age 21. Support to local schools is provided in three areas: educational services, media services, and special education services (assessment, consultation, speech-language, hearing screenings, and others). Visit the Heartland AEA website at <http://www.heartlandaea.org> for more information.

West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation

The West Des Moines Community Schools Foundation benefits the students, teachers, and school district by offering quality fundraising resources for WDMCS.

The Foundation began in 1988 as an independent, nonprofit organization that works closely with the school administration, staff, and community to provide resources for students. It strives to encourage student participation, creative teaching, and community-school partnerships by making funds available to all schools in the district. Learn more about the WDMCS Foundation online at www.wdmcsfoundation.org.

Departments

Business Services

Strong financial management and high-quality facilities play a key role in supporting learning in our classrooms. The department works with community representatives and staff to ensure our buildings and funding support student learning. The department oversees the district's budget, manages accounting, and generates financial reporting to provide transparency to its stakeholders. Learn more about WDMCS budgets online at discover.wdmcs.org/business-office.

Nutrition Services

Nutrition Services participates in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. Meals and snacks must meet the standards set forth by the USDA. The department oversees breakfasts and lunches throughout the school year and helps provide a summer food service program to ensure children continue to receive nutritious meals. Learn more about nutrition services, free and reduced meal qualifications, and meal pricing online at discover.wdmcs.org/nutrition-services.

Operations

Operations provides maintenance and custodial services for more than 1.5 million square feet of space, including more than 500 classrooms. It also provides services that support the delivery of education to our students. Learn more about operations online at discover.wdmcs.org/operations.

Transportation

Transportation strives to serve the needs of our students who live within district boundaries by providing safe, efficient transportation to school and school-related activities. Free transportation is provided to the following groups meeting the listed criteria (Iowa Code Section 285.1):

- Students in grades K-8 living more than two (2) miles from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence. The area inside two (2) miles is the walk zone.
- Students in grades 9-12 living more than three (3) miles away from their assigned schools as determined by their primary residence. The area inside three (3) miles is the walk zone.

- Capped out students, who are students transferred by the district to a school other than their designated attendance center. This may occur due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., part of a safety plan).
- Students experiencing homelessness, even if they move outside district boundaries.

Students who do not qualify for free transportation and live outside the walk zone for their assigned school are eligible for paid transportation. Transportation is not available for families who live inside the walk zone.

Any student who lives in the paid transportation area and qualifies for the free and reduced-priced meal program may also apply for free and reduced-priced bus pass fees. Please contact your school's office to apply.

An internal transfer is a student who attends a school other than the assigned school within the district due to a family request granted by the district. Internal transfer students may ride a district school bus if they meet the established criteria.

Students are expected to remain seated, obey the driver, and maintain a safe, quiet environment at all times. Violations result in a Bus Conduct Report and corrective action, escalating from parent notification to loss of riding privileges. Serious misconduct (such as fighting, vandalism, or endangering safety) may result in administrative intervention or suspension of transportation services.

For more detailed information on transportation, including registration, payments, and bus conduct, visit discover.wdmcs.org/transportation.

Communications

Communications supports WDMCS district-wide and school-specific communication. From weather alerts and crisis notifications to event reminders and sharing student success stories, the communications department provides timely, relevant information to district staff, students, families, and the broader community. This department also manages the academic and activities brands.

When school must be canceled, delayed, or dismissed early because of weather conditions or other emergencies, the communications department works to inform district families and staff in a timely manner. Learn more about the communications department at discover.wdmcs.org/communications.

Community Education

Community Education supports and serves students, families, and the community through classes, the Kids West before- and after-school childcare program, intercultural outreach, service opportunities, and facility rentals. Learn more about the opportunities available through Community Education at communityed.wdmcs.org.

Culture and Access

The WDMCS Culture and Access department builds communities of care and ensures all in our system can access resources and opportunities. The department champions a supportive work environment, authentic school-family-community collaboration, and equitable experiences for each human we serve. Learn more about the department and contacts at discover.wdmcs.org/culture-and-access.

Human Resources

Human resources oversees one of the district’s greatest resources — its employees. The department strives to provide students and families with a talented, knowledgeable, and dedicated workforce by:

- recruiting quality and diverse staff members
- supporting professional development and training
- fostering an engaging and caring work environment

Human resources leads a talented group of individuals who support more than 1,900 employees, district substitutes, and a retiree recognition program. Learn more about the human resources department online at discover.wdmcs.org/human-resources. View career opportunities online at discover.wdmcs.org/careers.

Teaching and Learning Services

WDMCS offers a comprehensive education with variety, depth, and rigor in the following areas:

Curriculum

WDMCS curricula are based on proven, research-based strategies. Teachers endeavor to implement these strategies and skills that reflect the ever-changing technology and cultural shifts in our society, as well as the needs of our learners. The Director of K-12 Curriculum and their team provide critical leadership, expertise, and curricula guidance in WDMCS.

Multilingual Program

The WDMCS Multilingual Program supports K-12 multilingual learners and authentic school-family partnerships. Staff collaborates to prioritize the cultural wisdom of English Learners. They provide comprehensive opportunities to support students’ academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary success.

All students are required to fill out a Home Language Survey when enrolling in school in the state of Iowa. If a student’s primary, most-used, or first-learned language is something other than English, the student will be screened for possible language services. Learn more about ESOL services online at discover.wdmcs.org/ESOL.

Gifted/Talented (GT) Program

The WDMCS Gifted/Talented Program is a comprehensive K-12 program designed to identify and serve students who possess outstanding abilities, talents, and potential for high performance when compared with same-aged peers, and who require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. In addition to differentiated classroom experiences, students meet in small groups in their own buildings with specially-trained teachers to work on group and individual projects according to their needs, abilities, and interests. Learn more about GT at discover.wdmcs.org/gifted-talented.

Youth Who Are Experiencing Homelessness ([Board Policy 501.16](#))

WDMCS ensures children and youth experiencing homelessness have equitable access to the same free, appropriate public education. “Youth who are experiencing homelessness” means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled up”);
 - Living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations;
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or

- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify if they are living in circumstances described above.
 - Includes youth who have run away or youth being forced to leave home.

Learn more about enrollment procedures and support services available online at discover.wdmcs.org/homelessness-resources.

Home Schooling

The WDMCS Home School Assistance Program (HSAP) has offered support to families who wish to educate their children at home since the early 1990s. Today, approximately 500 home-schooled students are enrolled in grades K-12. Teacher-assisted and enrichment classes like writing, science, physical education, Spanish, drama, and art are provided to supplement parents' home schooling efforts. Additionally, a wide array of field trips are provided throughout the year. Learn more about home schooling opportunities online at discover.wdmcs.org/HSAP or visit www.wdmcs-hsap.org.

Special Education

The goals for the WDMCS Special Education program are aligned with state law and the federal Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) law, which:

- Assures all children with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet their unique needs.
- Protects children's rights and the rights of their parents/guardians.
- Assists state and local districts in providing education that assesses students' strengths and weaknesses and assures the effectiveness of the educational efforts.

Families who move to the district and enroll a child with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will find similar student-focused programming and services at each of our schools. Learn more about Special Education support services online at discover.wdmcs.org/special-education.

Technology ([Board Policy 605.08: Technology Use By Students](#))

WDMCS strives to create a technology-rich environment for its entire learning community.

Students in grades K-12 receive a Chromebook for educational purposes. District-provided technology resources exist solely for the advancement and promotion of learning and teaching. The use of these resources will be consistent with the district's educational mission and policy, as well as state and federal laws and regulations. Chromebooks are the property of WDMCS. Students should have no expectation of privacy related to content created, websites searched, or documents saved.

Chromebooks provide integration with Google tools such as Docs, Sheets, and Slides, as well as the Canvas Learning Management System. WDMCS uses Google services including Gmail, YouTube, Google Earth, and Google Maps. Access is also granted to Google Gemini. If you would like to restrict your student's internet access to not include services like YouTube, please email your building principal to make the request.

Learn more about WDMCS technology services, including frequently asked questions, student and family Chromebook responsibilities, and details on the district's partnership with web-filtering and online safety vendor, Securly, at discover.wdmcs.org/technology-department.

Annual Notices and Board Policies

Annual Notices

State and federal regulations, as well as some district policies, require the district to annually post certain notifications to the public. Please reference the list of annual notices on the WDMCS website at <https://discover.wdmcs.org/annual-notices>.

Board Policies — <https://discover.wdmcs.org/board-policies>

- [502.02 Anti-Bullying/Harassment](#)
- [503: Discipline Of Students Who Make Threats Of Violence Or Cause Incidents Of Violence](#)
- [503.01 Discipline](#)
- [503.09: Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices](#)



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The West Des Moines Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and socioeconomic status in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the district's Equal Opportunity Coordinator, Dr. Dau Jok, Executive Director of Culture and Access, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265; Phone: 515-633-5040; Email jokd@wdmcs.org. (Adherence to bona fide occupational/educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory.)