

2022-2023

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
PARENT / STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

School Addresses/Phone Numbers

Great Lakes Elementary School	786-1200
3200 - 152nd Ave., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: David Stefanich
Principal's Phone: 786-1209	Secretary: Cynthia Flores
Principal's Email: stefanichd@westottawa.net	Clerk: Julie Edgley
Lakeshore Elementary School	786-1400
3765 N. 168th Ave., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: Scott Follett
Principal's Phone: 786-1409	Secretary:
Principal's Email: folletts@westottawa.net	Clerk: Denise Cobb
Lakewood Elementary School	786-1300
2134 W. Lakewood Blvd., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: Mike Ghareeb
Principal's Phone: 786-1409	Secretary: Sue Noble
Principal's Email: ghareebm@westottawa.net	Clerk: Charlene Farnor
North Holland Elementary School	786-1500
11946 New Holland St., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: Kevin Westrate
Principal's Phone: 786-1509	Secretary: Sheila Webb
Principal's Email: westratek@westottawa.net	
Pine Creek Elementary School	786-1600
1184 - 136th Ave., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: Jessica Rios
Principal's Phone: 786-1609	Secretary: Debbie Oropeza
Principal's Email: riosj@westottawa.net	Clerk: Rebecca Jimenez Estrada
Sheldon Woods Elementary School	786-1700
15050 Blair St., West Olive, MI 49460	Principal: Dennis White
Principal's Phone: 786-1709	Secretary: Angie Helder
Principal's Email: whited@westottawa.net	
Waukazoo Elementary School	786-1800
1294 W. Lakewood Blvd., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: Samuel Lemmon
Principal's Phone: 786-1809	Secretary: Sherri Kouw
Principal's Email: lemmons@westottawa.net	Clerk: Maribeth Zeinstra
Woodside Elementary School	786-1900
2591 N. Division Ave., Holland, MI 49424	Principal: Greg Rutten
Principal's Phone: 786-1909	Secretary: Patti Freers
Principal's Email: rutteng@westottawa.net	Clerk: Ignacio Davila
Food Service	786-2101
Director: Jenna Stamp	
Transportation	786-2040
Director: Paul Wegmeyer	

Jens Milobinski – Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources-Title IX Coordinator

Email: milobinskij@westottawa.net

Phone: 616-786-2082

West Ottawa Public Schools Website.....www.westottawa.net

Foreword

This student handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that you and your parents may have during the school year and to provide specific information about certain Board policies and procedures. This handbook contains important information that you should know. Become familiar with the following information and keep the handbook available for frequent reference by you and your parents. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, you are encouraged to talk to your teachers or building administrators.

This handbook summarizes many of the official policies and administrative guidelines of the Board of Education and the District. To the extent that the handbook is ambiguous or conflicts with these policies or guidelines, the policies and guidelines shall control. This handbook is effective immediately and supersedes any prior handbook and other written material on the same subjects.

This handbook does not equate to an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student, but only reflects the current status of the Board's policies and the School's rules. If any of the policies or administrative guidelines references herein are revised the language in the most current policy or administrative guideline prevails.

Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of this District to provide an equal education opportunity for all students.

Any person who believes that s/he has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her race, color, disability, religion, gender, or national origin, while at school or a school activity should immediately contact the School District's Compliance Officer at (616) 786-2050.

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with the procedures as described in the Board policies. Any student making a complaint or participating in a school investigation will be protected from any threat or retaliation. The Compliance Officer can provide additional information concerning equal access to educational opportunity.

Parent involvement is very important here at West Ottawa! Our volunteer program strives to include everyone who is available and willing to serve in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, and with PTA/PTO/PTC programs. There are volunteer coordinators at each building who help facilitate the parent and community volunteers.

There is a Volunteer Profile form for you to complete which indicates your interest and availability. Once the form is completed and turned in at your building's office, a background check will be made according to the Volunteer Pledge, and your name will go into the volunteer database. You will be contacted by the teacher or chairperson of an event to schedule your participation. Please check with your building coordinator for further information, or call me at 786-2073.

*Hannah Weeldreyer
District Volunteer Coordinator*

West Ottawa Elementary Parent/Student Handbook

2022-2023

Table of Contents

Attendance	4
School Start/End Times	4
Scheduling and Assignment	5
School Meal Program	5
Communication with Parents/Families	5
Parent Involvement/Volunteer Opportunities	7
Your Child's Safety: Our Priority	8
Health	9
Student Records	10
Academics	11
Student Dress	15
Student Responsibilities	16
Areas of Authority	17
Board of Education Policies	18

Attendance

Regular and prompt attendance is essential for a child's academic success at all grade levels, and absences and tardiness adversely affect student achievement.

We do not recommend, however, that children come to school when they show signs of a communicable illness.

When an absence is necessary, these procedures must be followed:

- Please call the school office by 10:00 a.m. giving the child's name, your name, and the reason for absence.
- If phone contact is not made, a note from the parent stating the date of the absence and reason must be presented to the office on the day of return to school, or the absence will be unexcused. You may leave a voice mail message outside of school hours.

Types of Absences

- **Excused Absence** - Absences due to illness or other reason, which makes attendance impossible, about which the school has been properly notified, are excused absences.
To better ensure each child is in attendance every possible day, a letter of concern may be sent when a child's excused absences reach five (5). Letters indicating concern, as well as those requesting meetings, may be sent at ten (10), fifteen (15), and twenty (20) absences. When excused absences reach fifteen (15), the Ottawa County Truancy Officer may be notified and further action taken at the county level.
- **Unexcused Absence** - Oversleeping, babysitting, shopping trips, work at home, or "skipping" are examples of unexcused absences. In addition, if contact is not made with the school confirming an absence, it will be unexcused. Parents will be contacted after three (3) unexcused absences for a planning meeting to eliminate such absences. Further absences will result in a referral to the Ottawa County Truancy Officer.
- **Vacations** - Parents are encouraged not to take their child out of school for vacations. When a family vacation must be scheduled during the school year, the parents should discuss the matter with the principal and the student's teacher(s) to make necessary arrangements. It may be possible for the student to receive certain assignments that are to be completed during the trip.
- **Tardiness** - Students should be in their classrooms when school begins and should remain there the full day. Leaving early will be counted as tardy for recording purposes. It is the responsibility of both student and parent to be on time.

School Start/End Times

Arrival to School

So that children may be supervised at all times while they are at school, we ask for the cooperation of parent(s).

For the safety of all students, if your children walk to school or are dropped off at school, please plan for them to arrive not more than ten minutes before the start of the school day. This will allow for the supervision of the children. In extreme or inclement weather (cold, raining), children will be permitted to wait inside the building when they arrive at school.

After-School Procedures

Without written parental permission stating otherwise, teachers will always send students home on their regular bus or as a routine walker. Bus passes will be provided for emergencies only.

Building Times

Great Lakes, Lakeshore, Lakewood, Pine Creek, Waukazoo, and Woodside

- Full Day 8:35 a.m. - 3:38 p.m.
- Half Day 8:35 a.m. - 11:52 a.m.

North Holland and Sheldon Woods

- Full Day 8:50 a.m. - 3:53 p.m.
- Half Day 8:50 a.m. - 12:07 p.m.

Scheduling and Assignment

The principal will assign each student to the appropriate classroom and program. Any questions or concerns about the assignment should be discussed with the principal.

School Meal Program

Children may purchase breakfast and/or lunch at school. Students who bring lunch from home may purchase half pints of milk. Meal prices are:

- Breakfast = \$2.35
- Lunch = \$2.80
- Single serving milk = \$0.75

School meal money is collected each day. Children's accounts must be prepaid to purchase meals. If a child's account goes in arrears for three (3) meals, the child will receive an alternate lunch until the meal account is again prepaid. A child's account is charged for a meal only when the child purchases a meal. **All checks should be made payable to West Ottawa Public Schools.** You may also pay online through the district website.

Each school has a bar code card reader to record meal or milk purchases. I.D. cards are provided to students free of charge and are kept by the child's teacher or nutrition services staff member. If a child loses, tears, or otherwise destroys the card, \$3.00 will be charged for a new card.

The West Ottawa Child Nutrition and Food Services Department believes the best way to meet a child's dietary needs is by offering a variety of meal choices. All school meals include protein, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and bread products. A variety of healthy choices are available daily.

Families who participate in the Free or Reduced-Price Meal Benefit Program must complete a new application each year. Applications may be filled out online at <https://wo-food.westottawa.net/>. The approval process for the online application is faster than the paper application. Only one application listing all household members is necessary per family.

If you have any questions concerning school meals, payments, or free and reduced-price meal program applications, please feel free to call 786-2101 or 786-2109.

Communication with Parents/Families

Please contact your child's teachers or principal when questions or concerns arise as we encourage you to work closely with our staff. All West Ottawa employees are accessible through phone, voice mail, or e-mail.

Situations regarding your child or your child's classroom activities should be directed to the teacher. Any time there are continued concerns or questions that have not been resolved, the principal should be contacted.

At West Ottawa, we believe together we share the responsibility for meeting student needs. We encourage ongoing parent-teacher communication. Our teachers are available and communicate with parents using one or more of the following methods:

- Classroom or grade level newsletters and Twitter
- Progress updates
- E-mail
- Websites
- Phone Calls
- Parent Portal

Parent/Teacher Conferences

We highly encourage all parents to participate in their child's conferences. Parents and teachers need a time to discuss each child's progress in school. Our partnership and ongoing communication are vital to your child's success. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and the spring each school year. Parents may request a conference at any time.

Infinite Campus Parent Portal

West Ottawa Schools is pleased to provide the Infinite Campus Parent Portal, which connects parents/guardians to their students' data online anytime from anywhere there is internet access. Once the Portal is accessed, information about only their child's progress can be viewed.

Making this information-rich connection with parents is a clear way to improve communication between teachers, parents and students. Access to the Parent Portal can be gained from home, work, a public library, or anywhere an internet connection can be established. The Parent Portal is a free service to our district families. Directions to obtain a Parent Portal account can be found online at www.westottawa.net.

Report Cards

Report Cards will be issued at the end of each nine-week period. Report cards will be issued through the parent portal.

Non-Custodial Parents

We often receive requests for student progress reports from non-custodial parents. When legally possible these requests will be honored. Upon request, weekly reports such as building or classroom newsletters may also be sent.

Should circumstances require that a parent not be allowed to pick up or be in contact with a particular child, **a court order to that effect must be on file in the school office before school officials may prevent parental contact.**

E-Mail

All certified staff and most support staff members may be contacted via e-mail. E-mail addresses, as well as phone numbers, are available online at www.westottawa.net.

The Education Station

The Education Station is an educational access cable television channel provided by the FCC, and Charter Communications (Channel 188) at no cost to the school district. Videos are produced, directed, written, taped, and performed by students as part of their educational experience. Other programs are created by educators. Programming includes a scrolling message board, daily announcements by students, news programs, event schedules, Performing Arts Center events, sporting events, and Board of Education meetings.

The Education Station is always looking for volunteers and ideas! Please call the television studio at 786-1100 ext. 6506.



Parent Involvement

Many exciting and important opportunities for parent involvement are available in West Ottawa Public Schools. Parents are encouraged to join their school's PTO/PTC/PTA and/or school improvement team. Booster groups are eager to welcome new members. Volunteers share their time, talents and experiences to enhance educational programs. School volunteers are from all walks of life, yet they share a common goal - supporting the need for quality education for all children.

Volunteer Profile Forms are available in the main office of your child's school. We strongly encourage you to complete this form and return it to school to become a vital part of our volunteer program. **Volunteers make a difference!**

Volunteer hours are recorded in the Volunteer Register located in the office of each school. Whether you volunteer for 30 minutes or 1,000 hours, it is important that you register each time you volunteer. Registration and sign-out are required as part of our school safety policy and help us reach volunteers if they need to be contacted.

Please call **786-2062** for more information.

Field Trips

Periodically, well-planned field trips are provided for our classes. A trip away from school by a classroom or a grade level will be part of the total curriculum that the teacher has planned with students. You will be notified in advance of any planned trip by way of a note including destination, date, and cost (if any).

We must have your signed permission for each trip in which your child participates. Forms are sent home with your child well before the trip.

To be a parent chaperone on a field trip, you must have a completed volunteer profile form on file at least two weeks in advance.

Fundraisers

All student sales and fundraising activities must have the approval of the building principal and the district's finance office. Students are not allowed to go door to door. Fundraising may not take place during school hours.

Your Child's Safety: Our Priority

Visitors

Visitors, particularly parents, are welcome at the school. In order to properly monitor the safety of students and staff, each visitor must report to the office upon entering the school to obtain a pass. Any visitor found in the building without a pass shall be reported to the principal. If a person wishes to confer with a member of the staff, s/he should call for an appointment prior to coming to the school, in order to schedule a mutually convenient time.

Students may not bring visitors to school without prior written permission from the Principal.

Fire, Lock Down, and Tornado Drills

The school complies with all fire safety laws and will conduct fire drills in accordance with State law. Specific instructions on how to proceed will be provided to students by their teachers who will be responsible for safe, prompt, and orderly evacuation of the building.

Tornado drills will be conducted during the tornado season using the procedures provided by the state. Lock down drills in which the students are restricted to the interior of the school building and the building secured will occur a minimum of two times each school year.

Closing School and/or Delayed Start

Inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances may cause us to close school or delay the start of school. We will make every effort to make an announcement **by 6:00 a.m.**, whenever possible.

Should a weather emergency occur during the school day, we will continue in session unless it is determined by the Superintendent that cancellation or early dismissal is advisable and can be carried out under conditions existing at that time.

If school is cancelled due to weather conditions, all kindergarten through eighth grade after-school activities are automatically cancelled.

Parents, students, and staff may find out about school closings, delays in starting times, and cancellations by:

Infinite Campus Messenger

Automated phone call sent by the district to the phone number(s) marked priority at enrollment

Checking the Internet

District Website: www.westottawa.net

Tuning in to a cable television access channel

Charter Communications (Ch. 188)

Watching the following television stations

WWMT (Ch. 3)

WOOD (Ch. 8)

WZZM (Ch. 13)

Tuning into Radio

WHTC 1450AM

Dismissal/Emergency Dismissal

Please be prepared for all emergencies, which might result in an unexpected school closing during the day. Give directions to your child such as where he/she is expected to go if you are not at home. Announcements will be made on local radio stations and on Channel 188 as soon as the decision is made. (Please refer to information under Closing of School section.) Because of the large number of students and the need for open telephone lines, the schools will not be making individual calls to parent(s) to notify them of unscheduled early dismissals.

Health

Accident and Illness

If it is necessary for a child to be sent home because of a **serious accident or illness**, the office will notify the parent to come and get the child. Please sign out and pick up your child in the school office. If a parent cannot be reached, the person designated as the emergency contact will be notified. If neither can be reached and the child needs emergency medical care, the child will be taken to a local emergency room. In all cases, every effort will be made to reach and notify the parent of the child. **The school needs to know of any residence or emergency phone number changes in order to provide quick and thorough service.**

In the early morning before school, it is often difficult to determine whether or not to send your child to school. Most illnesses children have are contagious, meaning other children can catch them. For that specific reason, we have guidelines for school attendance so children will not infect or endanger the health of other children. If your child has these symptoms, please keep him/her home from school:

Fever - A person's "normal" body temperature can vary from person to person. Generally speaking, any temperature over a person's "normal" temperature (usually 98.6°) can be considered a fever. Your child's temperature should be "normal" for twenty-four hours before sending him/her back to school.

Bad cough - (Defined as persistent and interfering with schoolwork) Children often do not remember to cover their mouths. Coughing can easily spread germs.

Diarrhea, vomiting, or severe stomach aches - These symptoms should be gone for 24 hours before sending your child back to school.

Red eyes (with yellow drainage) - Your child may wake up in the morning with his/her eyes "stuck shut." This may indicate conjunctivitis (pink eye) which is extremely contagious. Please check with your physician.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of a school environment that is safe, clean, and free of undue distractions such as pediculosis (head lice). Students discovered to have pediculosis will be sent home for treatment and not readmitted until the child is free of any nits.

A parent will be contacted to pick up the child. Literature will be sent home on detection and prevention of head lice.

Treatment may be by:

- Family doctor
- Over-the-counter remedy

A form will be sent home so parent(s) may confirm they have taken all required action. The student may attend school when the parent/caregiver brings the child back with the signed form so a check for nits may be made by authorized personnel in the presence of the adult.

Head lice checks are given to all students in kindergarten-5th grade.

WHEN: Three times per year as a prevention technique
Beginning of school
After Winter Break
After Spring Break
Any time a problem is perceived

Medications

For the safety of all students, **do not send medications (pain relievers, cold medicines, cough drops, nose sprays, etc.) to school with your child.** If you feel your child needs an over-the-counter medicine during the school day, you may want to try a long-acting (6-12 hour) product and administer it before your child comes to school.

If your child is on a prescription medication that they must receive at school, that medication may be administered at school by school personnel when necessary for school attendance. "Authorization for Medication/Parental Consent"

forms are available online (www.westottawa.net). A form must be completed, signed by the parent and physician, and returned to the school office before the medication can be administered. All medication must be presented to the school office in its original container.

Self-Administration of Medications

If a student has a health condition and if the necessary medication would not be harmful to other students if taken by accident, a physician, along with the parent, may request to have a student keep and administer his/her own medication, i.e. asthma inhaler. "Authorization for Self-Administered Medications/Parental Consent" forms are available online (www.westottawa.net). This form must be completed and will include the physician/care provider's instructions that the student may self-possess or self-administer a specific medication at school.

School Insurance

Accidents at school will be covered through the parent's health or homeowner's insurance. Please note: The district does carry limited accident insurance coverage for students.

Student Records

The School District maintains many student records including both directory information and confidential information.

- Directory information includes:
- Student's name
- Student's address
- Student's telephone number
- Date of birth
- Photographic, computer, and video images of the student
- Grade level
- Parent/guardian name, address and phone number
- Participation in officially-recognized activities and sports
- Height and weight, if a member of an athletic team
- Dates of attendance (date entered and date left the District)
- Date of graduation
- Awards received, honor rolls, scholarships
- Current West Ottawa school attending

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can be disclosed by law to outside organizations without a parent/guardian's prior written consent. Additionally, two federal laws require public school districts to provide military recruiters, upon request, with specific directory information (name, address, telephone number), unless parents/guardians or adult students have submitted a request in writing that they do not want their student's directory information disclosed without their prior written consent. The written request to not release directory information to third parties must be submitted by October 1 of each school year, and is in effect for only that school year. For new students enrolling in West Ottawa Public Schools after October 1, the written request for non-disclosure of directory information must be received within 30 days of enrollment. For further information about the items included within the category of directory information and instructions on how to prohibit its release, you may wish to consult the Board's annual Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) notice which has been included in your opening day packet.

Other than directory information, access to all other student records is protected by (FERPA) and Michigan law. Except in limited circumstances as specifically defined in State and Federal law, the school district is prohibited from releasing confidential education records to any outside individual or organization without the prior written consent of the parents, or the adult student.

Confidential records include, but are not limited to, test scores, psychological reports, behavioral data, disciplinary records, and communications with family and outside service providers.

A parent/guardian or adult student has the right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days after receipt of the written request for access. The school has a form which may be used to submit a written request. After receipt of the completed form/written request, the Custodian of Records will notify the parent/guardian or adult student of the time and place where the records can be inspected. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents/guardians or adult students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

It is a parent/guardian or adult student's right to request amendments to the student's education records if the parent/guardian or adult student believes the record is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents/guardians or adult students who wish to ask the school to amend a record must submit a written request identifying the part of the record they would like changed and why it should be changed.

Consistent with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), no student will be required, as a part of the school program or the District's curriculum, without prior written consent of the student (if an adult, or an emancipated minor) or, if an unemancipated minor, his/her parents, to submit to or participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- political affiliations or beliefs of the student or his/her parents
- mental or psychological problems of the student or his/her family
- sex behavior or attitudes
- illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
- legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers
- religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or his/her parents
- income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such a program)

Consistent with the PPRA and Board policy, the Superintendent will ensure that procedures are established whereby parents may inspect any materials used in conjunction with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation.

Further, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a surveyor evaluation created by a third party before the survey/evaluation is administered or distributed by the school to the student. The parent will have access to the survey/evaluation within a reasonable period of time after the request is received by the building principal.

The Superintendent will provide notice directly to parents of students enrolled in the District of the substantive content of this policy at least annually at the beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in this policy.

The Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education administers both FERPA and PPRA. Parents/guardians or adult students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605
www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpco

Academics

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments

The West Ottawa Public Schools curriculum, aligned with the Common Core State Standards, provides students with instruction focused on rigorous and relevant concepts. These concepts are taught using multiple research-based instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.

As students learn these concepts, they will develop an understanding of the relationships and connections of knowledge, facts and skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century. We focus on the development of thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and effective communication. We encourage our students to achieve high expectations.

We continually work to improve instructional practices and assessment strategies to provide the best education for your children. Improvements are made based on analysis of MSTEP data, progress report results, DIBELS Next, Delta Math and classroom assessments. Believing that all children can learn, we strive to provide learning options that will help all students find success.

English Language Arts

Scott Foresman's Reading Street is designed to help teachers build readers through motivating and engaging literature, scientifically research-based instruction, and a wealth of reliable teaching tools. The reading program takes the guesswork out of differentiating instruction with a strong emphasis on ongoing progress-monitoring and an explicit plan to help with managing small groups of students. In addition, Reading Street prioritizes skill instruction at each grade level, so teachers can be assured they will focus on the right reading skill, at the right time, and for every student. Scott Foresman Reading Street is a comprehensive reading program for Kindergarten through grade five that is built on solid research and prioritizes the five core areas of reading instruction for every grade:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Text Comprehension

Mathematics

The Math Expressions program published by Houghton Mifflin offers students, parents, and teachers the latest in research-based instructional techniques. Author Karen Fuson from Northwestern University has developed a balanced program based on the Common Core State Standards that:

- Combines focus on understanding with focus on skills
- Emphasizes in-depth, sustained learning of core grade level concepts
- Expands word problems to include types solved by students in other countries
- Uses math drawings and research based visual representations to support student understanding and class discussion of mathematical thinking
- Provides students with the understanding and tools to develop alternative problem solutions
- Provides visual and linguistic supports to aid concept development and understanding
- Will ensure development of math fluency

Delta Math is a web-based math intervention program that provides teachers with the data needed to identify individual learning gaps and tools for responding to targeted student needs. Teachers are able to use this data to reteach concepts that students have not yet mastered.

Science

Our science curriculum is designed to focus on students "constructing and reflecting on scientific ideas." To accomplish this focus, we use "scientific inquiry" or a hands-on approach to student learning. Teaching science is about students learning the process of inquiry; science facts are not the end goal.

Our students are expected to ask specific questions about their observations, form hypotheses that explain observations, test hypotheses through inquiry, analyze data, and draw conclusions. We expect students to discuss scientific ideas, observations, hypotheses, and conclusions. We allow young students to explain observations by guessing...it is the first step toward hypothesizing. We expect all students to reflect on their learning through written summaries and verbal communications.

Social Studies

Our social studies curriculum is designed to focus on a few core concepts at each grade level. It is integrated with English language arts whenever possible. Incorporated into these concepts are knowledge, facts and skills regarding the Core Democratic Values, economics vocabulary, and significant ideas in geography and history. We provide our students with many opportunities to take a stand on relevant social issues and challenge students to respond to extended response items, which is a type of question that requires a written response.

Other

Beyond the four core content areas, we provide all students in grades kindergarten through fifth with additional instruction in art, music, physical wellness, Spanish, technology, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering Mathematics).

Integration of Technology

Technology integration is a major focus for West Ottawa Public Schools. Students use technology as tools for learning. Extensive professional development is provided to expand our knowledge in integrating technology into instruction.

Review of Instructional Materials and Activities

Parents have the right to review any instructional materials being used in the school. They also may observe instruction in any class, particularly those dealing with instruction in health and sex education. Any parent who wishes to review materials or observe instruction must contact the principal prior to coming to the school. Parents' rights to review teaching materials and instructional activities are subject to reasonable restrictions and limits.

Assessments

The West Ottawa staff continually works to improve instruction, seeking ways to help all students succeed. Analysis of student achievement data is used to review and revise curriculum and instructional strategies. It is also used to guide staff development and develop and monitor student interventions and enrichments.

Recognizing no one measure can capture the full range of student learning, West Ottawa uses a variety of methods to assess student progress and academic achievement, to monitor mastery of skills, and to provide valuable data regarding the curriculum's effectiveness in providing students with the knowledge, facts, and skills deemed essential by the Board of Education and Michigan Department of Education.

West Ottawa Public Schools utilize the following methods for measuring student achievement:

M-STEP

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress is a summative assessments designed to measure student growth effectively for today's students. English language arts and mathematics will be assessed in grades 3–8, and science and social studies in grades 5 and 8. It also includes the Michigan Merit Examination in 11th grade, which consists of a college entrance exam, work skills assessment, and M-STEP summative assessments in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

WIDA ACCESS

The World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) is given statewide to students whose native and/or home language is a language other than English. The results of the assessment help schools/districts identify services and strategies to help these students become proficient in English, and also help schools/districts monitor student progress across the years in gaining English proficiency. The WIDA is given in grades K-12.

Local Assessments

West Ottawa Public Schools also uses local assessments to measure student proficiency and growth. Some of these assessments are as follows:

- DIBELS Next
- Running records
- Reading Street Assessments
- Delta Math Screeners
- Math Expressions Assessments

Multi-Tiered System of Support

Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) is as an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral health needs of ALL learners. Our teachers are committed to identifying those students who may not be meeting grade level expectations as early as possible. West Ottawa Elementary Schools have adopted a scientifically research-based approach that identifies students exhibiting specific challenges in their learning. This collaborative, problem-solving approach is called Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS).

Teachers, principals, and ancillary personnel in every building meet during the school day to discuss the needs of the students and specific interventions to meet those needs. The lessons are developed, implemented, and monitored for effectiveness. If students are improving as a result of targeted instruction, that is great! However, if students do not respond to specific strategies during a specified period of time, the MTSS team discusses other methods and strategies that may work. This constant and continued monitoring of student progress and reevaluation of instructional practices is an integral part of the MTSS process.

The research on MTSS states that through a collaborative, problem-solving general education process, 94-98% of all students can meet grade level expectations when provided with appropriate instruction. The Multi-tiered System of Support approach has made a positive difference in teaching and learning at West Ottawa.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

Our elementary schools strive to create a culture in which students are respectful, responsible and ready to learn within their communities. When safe and positive learning communities are established, students' academic and social progress soars!

Our West Ottawa Elementary Schools have adopted a system entitled *Positive Behavior Interventions and Support* that teaches children the importance of being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn each day. Classroom and ancillary staff provide instruction with the targeted interventions. Each school has developed an overall plan and protocol that will:

- Specify appropriate behavior for students and staff
- Teach appropriate behavior
- Monitor behavior
- Encourage appropriate behavior
- Correct inappropriate behavior
- Use data to problem solve

Special Education

The Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide that no individual will be discriminated against on the basis of a disability. This protection applies not just to the student, but to all individuals who have access to the District's programs and facilities. West Ottawa takes pride in being responsive to the needs of children with disabilities. Special education students receive direct instruction and indirect support in academic and/or social areas.

Students identified as eligible for special education programs/services under Michigan guidelines are provided with appropriate instruction and support in the regular classroom setting to the greatest extent possible. Teams of diagnostic, consultative, supportive, and direct instruction professionals work with general education teachers to help each student maximize their potential and participate in a school's educational program as fully as possible. A child may be placed in a specialized classroom outside the district in rare instances.

Public Act 198, the Mandatory Special Education Act, establishes the right of persons with disabilities, from birth through the age of 25, to equal opportunity within the public schools. This means children with disabilities do not need to wait until they are school age to benefit from public school special education services.

The nature and extent of services provided are dependent upon individual needs. Expectations, classroom environment, and curriculum may be adapted for special needs students. A student can access special education services through the proper evaluation procedures. Parent involvement in this procedure is important and required by Federal (IDEA) and State law. Child Assistance Intervention Teams operate in every building to help parents and teachers design appropriate interventions. Special education and 504 referrals begin with the Child Assistance Intervention Teams.

Section 504 plans and accommodations are also available to disabled students who do not require special education programs and services. If you have questions, please call your building principal.

English as a Second Language

West Ottawa's focus is to ensure that all students, regardless of their English language proficiency, have opportunities to participate fully in the educational and extracurricular programs offered by the district.

Students qualify for the program through:

- completion of a home language survey **and**
- a test of English Language Proficiency results on the WIDA ACCESS test

West Ottawa strongly believes that English Language Learners can achieve levels of academic performance comparable to those of the general English-speaking population. We are committed to providing the instructional services students need to obtain a high level of success. An ELL Handbook is available on our district website under parent resources.

Migrant Education

School age children of migratory workers are provided with instructional support services during the summer and regular school year.

During the summer months, certified staff provides intensive instruction for six weeks (180 hours) to pre-kindergarten through eighth grade children. During the regular school year, migrant teachers work collaboratively with the students' general education teachers to provide additional supports.

Gifted and Talented Opportunities

West Ottawa is committed to providing opportunities for academically advanced students to develop their talents and gifts. We provide challenging programs for these students based on multiple criteria of the student's performance in the specific academic content areas. We believe the talents and gifts of motivated and academically advanced students can develop more fully in an environment of challenging, meaningful, and specialized learning experiences. We provide the following opportunities:

- Differentiated instruction within classes – Teachers provide students with varied assignments designed to challenge the child's thinking.
- Enrichment opportunities – Periodic offerings that enable students to explore various interests.
- Science and math events – Projects, presentations, and/or competitions that challenge students to demonstrate the application of key concepts.
- Acceleration – Students are often very talented in one content area, so we may allow the students to progress through that content area curriculum more rapidly.
- Academically Advanced program at Lakewood Elementary – The SAIL program (Students Accelerating in Learning) is an accelerated language arts program for qualifying students in grades 3-5. This enhanced language arts experience allows students to learn and apply advanced reading and writing skills while participating in a comprehensive study of literature genres.
- Academically Advanced courses at the middle schools – Eligible sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students may enroll in academically advanced courses in English, science, social studies, math, and Spanish. Additionally, seventh grade students can earn high school credits in math and eighth grade students can earn high school credits in all four core areas.
- Advanced Placement courses at the high school – Students who want a higher challenge and/or the potential to earn college credit may enroll in any of seventeen Advanced Placement courses.
- The IB Diploma Program is available at the high school.

Student Dress

Grooming and Appearance

Proper dress, hygiene, and good work habits work together to promote good school behavior and consistent learning. Therefore, any attire that attracts attention and distracts from the educational process is not permitted in school.

Examples of distracting attire include midriff or back exposure, visible undergarments, mesh shirts, any head covering (including hats), coats/jackets, chains, visors, bandannas, gloves, sweatbands, sunglasses, or any clothing that displays or promotes inappropriate products, swastikas, confederate flags, sexually suggestive or vulgar language, gang emblems, or drugs. Shorts, skirts and dresses should be fingertip length or longer. All sleeveless shirts must have at least a 2-inch strap.

Shoes

For safety and hygienic reasons, students must wear shoes at all times while in school. To ensure safety these shoes should be firmly attached to the foot.

Separate gym shoes are required footwear for scheduled indoor physical wellness classes. These shoes may also be used for classroom shoes, but are for indoor use only. Gym shoes are to remain at school.

Student Responsibilities

Playground

Children need the daily physical activity and play opportunities that playground time provides. Providing the weather is reasonably dry and the wind chill is not below zero, all children will be expected to go out for recess. Children should wear appropriate clothing for outdoor activity. A reasonable, illness-related written request for the child to stay in for one day will be honored. If additional time is needed, please provide the principal with a written doctor's explanation of the circumstances.

Playground Discipline

At the beginning of the school year, all teachers will acquaint their students with playground rules. The rules will also be posted in each classroom. Educational assistants will be the immediate playground supervisors. Any serious problem will be reported to the teacher. Swearing, vulgar language, fighting, and disrupting other students will not be tolerated.

Selling and/or Trading Property

Students are not permitted to trade or sell any of their personal property at school. Group fundraising through sales of merchandise may be permitted with the approval of district or building administration.

Money and Other Valuables

We discourage students from bringing valuable items to school. It is preferable to send a check or money order rather than cash when a payment must be made. If money is being sent to school for any reason, it would be wise to:

- Place the money in an envelope.
- Include a note inside, stating the reason for the money.
- Place teacher's and child's names on outside of the envelope.

Animals and Pets

Students are asked not to bring personal pets to school at any time without the prior approval of the principal. No animals may be transported by school bus.

Bicycles at School

There is no age restriction of who may ride bicycles to school. This is a parental decision. Please discuss with your child the correct procedures for riding a bicycle on the road or bike path and demand that those procedures be followed. A helmet must be worn while riding the bicycle at school or as part of a school activity.

Parents of children who must cross busy streets where crossing guards are not on duty may be asked to submit written permission for their child to ride and/or walk to school.

Laser Pens/Pointers

Laser pens/pointers are not permitted in school. A student with a laser device will have it confiscated. Additional disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion may be taken.

Electronics

Electronic devices are permitted with parent and teacher permission, however, the school is not responsible for theft, damage or loss.

Lost and Found

Each school has a central lost and found area where found items are stored. Please mark coats, jackets, gym shoes, hats, boots, lunch boxes, and anything else that could get misplaced at school with your child's name. It is strongly advised that valuable items not be brought to school. The school is not responsible for losses; however, if reported immediately, every effort will be made to help locate the missing item.

Respect for School Property

Much of the spirit and reputation of a school is reflected in its appearance. Maintaining clean schools takes effort. Every student needs to do his/her part by making sure that wrappers and waste paper are deposited in the recycling and/or trash containers provided. Respect for school property is expected at all times. Accidents will happen, but vandalism or willful destruction of property will result in consequences and/or restitution for damages. Consequences could include a suspension or a recommendation for expulsion for severe cases of vandalism.

Student Fees, Fines, and Supplies

West Ottawa charges specific fees for some noncurricular activities and programs. Such fees or charges are determined by the cost of materials, freight/handling fees, and add-on fees for loss or damage to school property. The school and staff do not make a profit.

The District will provide all basic supplies needed to complete the required course curriculum. The student and/or his/her family may choose to purchase their own supplies if they desire to have a greater quantity or quality of supplies, or desire to help conserve the limited resources for use by others. The teacher or appropriate administrator may recommend useful supplies for these purposes.

Fees may be waived in situations where there is financial hardship.

Students using school property and equipment can be fined for excessive wear and abuse of the property and equipment. The fine will be used to pay for the damage, not to make a profit.

Late fines can be avoided when students return borrowed materials promptly. Their use may be needed by others.

Failure to pay fines, fees, or charges may result in the withholding of grades and credits.

Textbooks

Textbooks are loaned to students free of charge. However, students are responsible for lost or damaged books and will be expected to pay for them. Students are urged to take good care of books to avoid a fine at the end of the school year.

Overdue Library Materials Procedure

Parent(s) will be billed for library materials which are not returned.

Parties

Parties for birthdays and holidays are left up to the discretion of the teacher/principal. Prior permission for birthday treats is appreciated.

Areas of Authority

Assuring the authority granted to it by law, West Ottawa Public Schools maintains the following areas of authority over student conduct:

- While attending school
- While on a school vehicle
- While on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- While under the jurisdiction of the school
- Whenever directed toward a school employee

As a result, West Ottawa has rules and regulations necessary and proper to maximize the benefits of our educational programs for your child. Additional rules and regulations will be established as needed.

When, in the judgment of the administration, a student's behavior is of a nature that adversely influences others, interferes with the educational process, or infringes on the rights of others, disciplinary action will occur.

Suspension

Major violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in suspension. The length of the suspension will be determined by school authorities. The parent(s) will be notified in advance of the action to be taken and will have complete

custody of their child during the suspension. The student will be readmitted to school after a satisfactory solution to his/her conduct is agreed upon by student, parent, and administration. This will most often require a parent conference.

Board of Education Policies

The following is a list of Board Policies related to student conduct and discipline. The policies are summarized in this document and does not include all of the Board Policies. Should you desire to examine all policies or a policy in its entirety, please visit www.westottawa.net.

Board Policy 5600: Student Discipline (Code of Conduct)

The Student Code of Conduct applies to any student who is on school property, at school, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school vehicle. The Code also applies to student conduct at any time or place where the student's conduct interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of West Ottawa Public Schools, or the safety, welfare, or emotional well-being of students, visitors, or district staff.

Students are expected to be familiar with Board Policy 5600: Student Discipline, which has been adopted by the Board of Education. Students, who engage in activities, which may cause interruption or destruction of the school program, incite violence, or otherwise detract from the education mission of the district, are subject to disciplinary consequences, including but not limited to, short or long-term suspension, or a recommendation for expulsion.

Participation in all extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics, is a privilege, not a right. Students are bound by the Board of Education's policies, procedures, and rules governing participation in such activities. This may require of all students involved in extracurricular activities an even higher standard of conduct than is expected of all students under our Code of Conduct.

Students should show respect at all times to fellow students, staff members, school employees, and members of the community. Both students and staff members have an obligation to maintain conditions that will promote the proper atmosphere for learning and other school activities.

Board Policy 5517: Anti-Harassment

It is the policy of the Board of Education to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all School District operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on school property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The Board will vigorously enforce its prohibition against discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment), and encourages those within the School District community as well as third parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of unlawful harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Board Policy 5517.01: Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior toward Students

It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students.

This policy protects all students from bullying/aggressive behavior regardless of the subject matter or motivation for such impermissible behavior.

Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes written, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats, or actions to a student, which

cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

This policy applies to all "at school" activities in the District, including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

Any student who believes he or she has been or is the victim of bullying, hazing or other aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to the building principal, assistant principal, or the Superintendent. The student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged and every staff member is required to report any situation that they believe to be bullying or aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports shall be made to those identified above. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

All complaints about bullying or aggressive behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated and documented.

Board Policy 5610: Emergency Removal, Suspension, and Expulsion of Students

The Board of Education is continually concerned about the safety and welfare of District students and staff and, therefore, will not tolerate behavior that creates an unsafe environment, a threat to safety or undue disruption of the educational environment.

Factors to be Considered Before Suspending or Expelling a Student

The Board of Education also recognizes that exclusion from the educational program of the schools is a severe sanction that should only be imposed after careful and appropriate consideration. Except as otherwise noted below with respect to possession of a firearm in a weapon free school zone, if suspension or expulsion of a student is considered, the Board (Superintendent) shall consider the following factors prior to making a determination of whether to suspend or expel:

- A. the student's age
- B. the student's disciplinary history
- C. whether the student has a disability
- D. the seriousness of the violation or behavior
- E. whether the violation or behavior committed by the student threatened the safety of any student or staff member
- F. whether restorative practices will be used to address the violation or behavior
- G. whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior

The Board will exercise discretion over whether or not to suspend or expel a student. In exercising that discretion for a suspension of more than ten (10) days or expulsion, there is a rebuttable presumption that a suspension or expulsion is not justified unless the Board can demonstrate that it considered each of the factors listed above. For a suspension of ten (10) days or fewer, there is no rebuttable presumption, but the Board will still consider these factors in making the determination.

Emergency Removal or Short-Term Suspension

A student may be removed from a class, subject, or activity for one (1) day by his/her teacher for certain conduct as specified in the Code of Conduct, or he/she may be given a short-term suspension by the Superintendent. A student so removed may be allowed to attend other classes taught by other teachers during the term of the one (1) day removal. A student removed from the same class for ten (10) days will be entitled to the process for short-term suspensions outlined in AG 5610. A student removed from the same class for more than ten (10) days will be entitled to the process for long-term suspensions outlined in AG 5610. A The Board designates the Superintendent as its representative at any hearings regarding the appeal of a suspension.

Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

Due process set out in Policy 5611 and AG 5610 shall be followed in all circumstances in which a student may be expelled or suspended for a period of more than ten (10) days.

The Superintendent may suspend a student for a period longer than ten (10) days or expel a student. The Board shall act on any appeal to the decision.

In all cases resulting in short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion, appropriate due process rights must be observed.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement this policy that shall include the following:

- A. strategies for providing special assistance to students in danger of being expelled and not achieving the academic outcomes of the District's core curriculum;
- B. standards of behavior for all students in accordance with District Board policy on student discipline;
- C. procedures that ensure due process; and
- D. provision for make-up work at home, when appropriate.

Board Policy 5771: Lockers/Search and Seizure

Lockers are assigned to students for their convenience and temporary use. Students are to use lockers exclusively to store school-related materials and authorized personal items such as outer garments, footwear, grooming aides, or lunch. Students are prohibited from placing locks on any locker without the advance approval of the school principal or his/her designee.

School authorities may conduct periodic general inspections of lockers at any time without consent or search warrant.

To safeguard the safety and well-being of students, school authorities may search students and/or their personal effects (i.e. purse, backpack, etc.), as well as their lockers, whenever there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials.

Board Policy 8600: Student Transportation

The West Ottawa Transportation Department is eager to provide their critical service as safely and conveniently as possible. To help this process, the following procedures have been established:

- Students will be allowed to have ONE pick-up and ONE drop-off address, either at home or at a caregiver's location within the home school attendance area on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Students must be waiting at the bus stop five (5) minutes prior to scheduled pick-up time. The driver cannot and will not wait for late students. Once students are on the bus, they are not allowed to get off the bus. (A person must show proof of being that student's parent/legal guardian to get them off the bus.)
- If your student is the only student at a bus stop, please call Transportation at **786-2040** if he/she is not going to ride the bus on a given day.

Bus Rules

The West Ottawa Transportation Department has a tremendous responsibility for the care and safety of your child while he/she is riding the bus. For the safety and welfare of all children (pedestrians and motorists, too), please review the bus safety rules with your child and encourage your child to follow them. School rules apply when students are on the bus and at bus stops before and after school. Additional bus rules include:

- Eating or drinking on the bus is not allowed.
- Keep the bus clean.
- Remain seated at all times.
- Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus, out of the aisle, and to yourself.
- Cross in front of the bus. Obey the Paddy Signal.
- Fighting, pushing, spitting, shoving, and horseplay are not permitted.
- Students are not permitted in the driver area at any time.

- Students must be silent at all railroad crossings.
- Students must be at the assigned bus stop on time.
- The emergency door is for emergencies only.

****Other safety rules may apply at the discretion of the school district.**

Any violation of the above rules will result in discipline, which may include suspension of bus riding privileges up to and including expulsion from the bus.

It is our hope that we can work together to correct inappropriate behavior and continue to provide a safe environment for all students and staff. Drivers will handle routine student discipline concerns on school buses, including assigning seats and advising students of rules and regulations. Failure to follow a driver's instructions may result in a written reprimand with appropriate consequences.

In the event of multiple infractions, progressive disciplinary action steps may include verbal and/or written warnings. With each infraction, there may be a bus suspension and/or loss of riding privileges for the remainder of the school year. Please review this policy with your child(ren).

In the event of suspension from the bus, the student is suspended from riding privileges on all West Ottawa buses. The student is required to attend school; therefore, you would need to find an alternate means of transportation. If a parent wishes to appeal, he/she must contact the Transportation Office (786-2040) within 48 hours of the misconduct. **Please remember that school bus transportation is a privilege, not a right.**