

Sunday Screamer August 7, 2022

Dear Westover Students and Families:

Ms. Young and I are truly excited to welcome you back to the 2022-2023 school year! We would like to extend a special welcome to all of the new families joining Westover this year—we are thrilled that you have joined our Wallaby family!

As we welcomed our students back to in-person learning last fall, we all hoped for things to return to “normal”. Quickly realizing that “normal” is just a setting on the washing machine, students, staff, and families pivoted to support the ever-changing educational landscape! We addressed students out on quarantine, teacher shortages, the lack of available substitutes, and transportation delays. We tackled supply chain issues, student mental health needs, and safety and wellbeing. And, yet, through it all, our staff remained committed to providing a strong educational program to our students, and our students learned and made gains. What will this bring? No one really knows. Lifting this new year’s theme: ‘At Westover, We Rise Up’, we will continue to rise up, regardless of circumstance, to serve our students and community; keeping children’s needs in the forefront. With a strong focus on academics and our students’ well-being, we look forward to delivering engaging and rigorous lessons that inspire and motivate. We will continue to provide a learning space that is positive, safe, and caring. With these values strongly in place, we are confident that our Wallabies will rise up to excellence!

To ensure a great start for each child, we have spent time learning about our students, analyzing student performance and engagement data, developing schedules, updating policies, and identifying areas for improvement. As a result of our discussions and system-wide initiatives, we will focus our efforts in aligning with our superintendent’s, Dr. McKnight, vision. You can learn more about her areas of focus in the following summer community message:

[Montgomery County Public Schools \(MCPS\) \(montgomeryschoolsmd.org\)](https://montgomeryschoolsmd.org)

In addition, our Westover team will continue our focus on better understanding how race and ethnicity impact learning and will engage in our anti-racist dialogue and teaching. Finally, we will continue our implementation of Eureka math, as well as our implementation of the Benchmark Advance Literacy program.

It is always hard when we have to say goodbye to members of our Westover family. We said farewell to Mrs. Griffith, Ms. Kuzela, Mrs. Antonio and Ms. Glasser at the end of the school year. In addition, over the summer, two of our paraeducators in Autism, Mrs. Conrad and Ms. Myers, have also left for new adventures.

As we look ahead to the fall, we welcome new staff members to our Wallaby family and we will see some familiar faces in new positions:

Mrs. Burke, currently a 5th grade teacher, will move to 1st grade. Mrs. Burke is excited to work with our younger students and can't wait to get started!

Mrs. Albaugh, currently 2nd grade teacher, will move to the full time staff development position. Mrs. Albaugh is excited to support staff in their professional development goals!

Ms. Krakaur, currently a 4th grade teacher, will move to 2nd grade. She is looking forward to supporting and challenging our early learners.

We welcome Ms. Prather as our new 5th grade teacher. Ms. Prather is an experienced educator coming to us from Oakland Terrace Elementary. She is excited to bring her creative style and positive energy to our Wallabies.

Ms. Rubinson, a recent University of Maryland graduate, will join as our new 4th grade teacher. Ms. Rubinson is a strong collaborator who values the home-school partnership!

We welcome Ms. Wilson as our new teacher to kindergarten. Her previous experience in kindergarten as well as her strong background in supporting the social emotional needs of students make her a perfect match for our Wallabies!

We are thrilled to welcome Ms. Rucker as our full-time Home School Model resource teacher! Ms. Rucker comes to us as a HSM teacher from Rock Creek Valley Elementary School. She has a strong background in implementing research-based interventions and working closely with families to support students' needs.

Ms. Collins, currently a Learning Center team leader at Cresthaven Elementary School, joins as a part-time HSM Resource Teacher. Her years of experience working with students who have special needs will be a great addition to our team!

Mr. Lin joins our family as the new instrumental music teacher. He looks forward to supporting our 4th and 5th graders as they explore their musical interests!

We also have newly assigned staff members from the central office. We welcome:

Mr. Fisher, our Pupil Personnel Worker

Ms. Lambert, our Parent Community Coordinator

Ms. Parker, our school psychologist

A great deal of time, effort and thought has gone into the process of student placement for the 2022-2023 school year. Careful consideration was given to input from staff and families as well as student learning styles. Classrooms have been balanced demographically, academically and socially. In addition, we balance our classes for additional students who have joined us, special education services, and ESOL. Our class lists are structured to provide equitable class sizes at each grade level. Moving students is difficult without causing imbalances and inequities. Thank you so much for being positive with your child and helping him or her understand that it is impossible to place all students with a preferred best friend or teacher. ALL of our staff works hard to make school a positive experience for ALL students. Westover is eagerly looking forward to enriching your child's life. Thank you for understanding that it can take a few weeks for a child to acclimate to a new grade, peer group and teacher. Students and families will receive notification regarding their class assignment during the week of August 22nd. You will receive notification via US Mail in the form of a postcard.

Consistent communication will continue to occur weekly through my Sunday evening call and email to families. Our "Sunday Screamer" will highlight news of importance and interest for the upcoming week. In addition, I will host a Winter Principal's Coffee to provide updated programming information and to answer questions. Also, our Westover website continues to be regularly used to highlight important events and information. Finally, I will be utilizing our Private Facebook Group-Westover Wallabies to share exciting teaching and learning experiences as well as information and special events throughout the year—please consider joining our group. I also encourage you to visit the PTO's website at: www.westovercommunityalliance.org and to follow them on Facebook!

A reminder that our Kindergarten Orientation will be held for incoming kindergartners on Thursday, August 18th. If you have not registered your child or scheduled an orientation appointment, please call or email Mrs. Marinucci as soon as possible.

I hope you will join me and Ms. Young at the Robin Hood pool for Popsicles with the Principal and ASA on Wednesday, August 24th from 4:30-6:00 pm. ALL Wallabies are welcome, regardless of membership to the pool! See you there!

Parents and students are invited to attend our Open House on Friday, August 26th from 2:00-3:00 pm. This will be an advanced opportunity for your child to meet his/her teacher and to see our newly painted inside and outside! Our Open House is designed to reduce beginning of the year anxiety and to help your child prepare emotionally for the start of school! A reminder, students and families will receive notification regarding their class assignment during the week of August 22nd. You will receive notification via US Mail in the form of a postcard.

Our Back-to-School Night will be held on September 7, from 6:30-8:00 pm. More information to soon follow.

In addition to this letter, several important documents have been posted to our website and are linked below under "Resources". Be on the lookout for information regarding bus routes and other resources to support our community in starting the year off right!

The first day of school for students is Monday, August 29th, from 9:25-3:50 pm; please see the link below for information regarding arrival and dismissal.

On behalf of the Westover Elementary School staff, I want to welcome you and your child to a brand new school year. Please know that we are committed to the education and success of each child and to establishing a strong partnership between home and school.

Respectfully,

Audra M. Wilson

Audra M. Wilson, Principal

Resources:

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a4ja4X3Vdt4-C_UfIGOTcrK4lnRbi2FPefQ7jAnT4r8/edit?usp=sharing

Playground Procedures:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fExQzhQvINgAwUfFKABDOinOWuyuCEGNf_iWJy_uuN4/edit?usp=sharing

Homework Policies:

K-2:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gwYuquzKAHDwJeNgb5TpKwGoZ-rYO5LzCo3R4LiADNU/edit?usp=sharing>

3-5:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gwYuquzKAHDwJeNgb5TpKwGoZ-rYO5LzCo3R4LiADNU/edit?usp=sharing>

Grading and Reporting Policy:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NPI5-SQnonEDIVcwJGoWetNJdjYpzPo6_e-Gpbzkug/edit?usp=sharing

Discipline Policy:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/17QzvgsRBrC26rZykWd-4szRze3804p4o4ayzDC-1cm0/edit?usp=sharing>

Cafeteria News:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zWEnjwoKF7SlciRR907MHza5Bro3xMwCXOo3WPOvXIM/edit?usp=sharing>

School Cash Online:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Fx4r2G8sr5Wxg_79kxM1IZC3NA4b4tVH9t4Q2pxNUol/edit?usp=sharing

Personal Mobile Device/Cell Phone Policy: (PLEASE note that while students may have cell phones on property, they may NOT use them during school hours.)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eowlLog5Wly9828YtyFwRXF_wySghvAF/view