



Walsh, Jane <j.walsh@wissahickoncharter.org>

Weekly Wissahickon 3-12-2021

1 message

WCS-Fernhill <fh.frontoffice@wissahickoncharter.org>
Reply-To: WCS-Fernhill <fh.frontoffice@wissahickoncharter.org>
To: Jane Walsh <j.walsh@wissahickoncharter.org>

Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 10:09 AM

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Message from CEO

Dear Families,

Hope you all have been enjoying the warm weather this week and finding some opportunities to get outside with your families. Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday so remember to move your clocks ahead one hour.

Today I'm sharing an update on PSSA testing for this year. This applies to students in 3rd-8th grades. You may recall that last year all testing was cancelled. This was made possible because the Federal government presented states with a waiver to opt out of testing. This year, the same waiver has not been offered to date. Instead the Federal government has offered flexibility around the dates that tests can be administered, allowing schools to choose to offer the test anytime before September 30, 2021. At Wissahickon, we do not feel that this test should be the priority for students right now for a whole myriad of reasons. Unfortunately, we do not have the option as a school to choose not to participate. We are still hoping that this will change and testing will be canceled, but in the meantime I wanted to make you aware that we are currently thinking about how to show compliance with what is required around assessments. I will share more updates as I have them.

In the meantime, **if you feel that the Federal government should be presenting states with the choice to opt out, you can share your voice by writing to Representative Dwight Evans.** Both of our schools are in his district. A sample message is included below. Please consider this action. The message can be sent to Rep. Evans on his website: <https://evans.house.gov/contact>.

Many thanks,
Kristi

Dear Representative Evans,

I am a parent of a student at Wissahickon Charter School, a public K-8 charter school in Philadelphia. I am writing today to ask you to advocate on behalf of all our city's students to the Federal Department of Education to waive standardized testing requirements for the 2020-2021 school year. The past year

has presented an unprecedented challenge for students, families, and educators alike, and adding the burden of PSSAs to the process of reopening school buildings presents an unnecessary obstacle to the goal we all share of students returning to and thriving in our schools.

As you are well aware, most of our city's students are learning virtually, making testing in the normal Spring window a significant undertaking. The Federal Department of Education recognized this and offered states the flexibility to extend the testing window later into the year, which the Pennsylvania Department of Education has elected to do. However, this extension is an inadequate solution and gives schools until September 30 to complete administering PSSAs, meaning that valuable time reacclimating school communities to in-person learning in the Fall will instead be devoted to administering a standardized test at a time where many COVID-19 mitigation measures will still need to be in place and resources will be stretched thin.

The Federal and Pennsylvania Departments of Education have both noted the importance of administering standardized tests to understand learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. While understanding learning loss is certainly important, allowing schools to administer local assessments in lieu of state standardized testing can do much to answer that question while giving schools more flexibility in administering the assessments safely and getting actionable information into the hands of teachers more quickly than a standardized test that has to be scored and returned to schools months later. The Federal Department of Education legally can and should let states offer this option to schools. I hope you will encourage the Department to do so.

Sincerely

[Your Name]

Essential:

T2 Report Card Conferences

If you have not already done so, please be sure to schedule your student(s)' T2 report card conference with their homeroom teacher **today**. The link can be found [HERE](#). If you don't schedule a conference by the end of the day, a conference will be scheduled for your student. Reminder, we'll also have full days of Zoom report card conferences, **March 17-19**, like we did in December, with students doing asynchronous/independent work, and individual conferences for families and students.

Health Screenings for K, 1st and 6th Graders

Please remember to sign up [here](#) for your child's health screening any Friday (from January 11th - March 19th). As a reminder, even if you have submitted your child's physical, they still must be screened by the school nurse. For more information, please refer to the Classtag message forwarded on Tuesday, January 5, 2021.

Earned Celebration

In honor of completing trimester 2, we are taking a virtual field trip next Thursday, March 18th at 1:00pm! Come and join us as we explore the San Diego Zoo! This virtual field trip will be for K-2nd students who have been attending their classes, participating in class, and turning in their assignments on SeeSaw. 3rd-8th grade students who have received C's or better, 1's or 2's, and a 95% rate or better in attendance on their T2 report cards will also be welcomed. Please look out for the link soon, your teachers will be posting it for the students soon!

Blue Light Blocking Glasses

Blue light blocking glasses have specially crafted lenses that are said to block or filter out the blue light given off from digital screens. Utilizing a pair of blue light blocking glasses has several benefits such as: better sleep, reduced eye strain, fewer headaches, and it reduces symptoms following prolonged exposure to screens. As we wish to protect everyone's eyes from such exposure, please check out the links below where you can purchase blue light blocking glasses for your child as well as yourselves at reasonable prices.

[Blue Light Blocking Glasses for Kids](#) - \$4.99

[Tonykey Kids Blue Light Glasses](#) - \$4.99

[XVZ Blue Light Blocking Glasses for Women & Men](#) \$5.99

On Radar:

Report cards are coming, that means so is the Book Fair!!!!

Shop the Scholastic Book Fair... from Home!

Our Virtual Book Fair, hosted by Scholastic, will run online from Monday, March 15 through March 28, 2020. Your purchases support our library and your child's love of reading.

The book fair site will go live for shopping on March 15, 2021. You can go to the following link to shop:

<https://www.scholastic.com/bf/wcsfh>

Browse the Book Fair Flier here: <https://bookfairsfiles.scholastic.com/flippingbooks/F20-online-booklist/F20-online-booklist.html>

Breaking News! We have a limited number of gift cards available for the Book Fair! If you would like to win a gift card for the Scholastic Book Fair, families or your scholars can email Ms. Kourtney at kourtneyg@wissahickoncharter.org your student/s favorite book and I will alert you if you won!
Shipping is free for book orders(non-book orders will charge shipping) over \$25! Shipping this season is even more strained, shipment will likely take at least two weeks to arrive.

Thank you as always for supporting our school library and your student's love of books!

Ms. Kourtney

WCS Fernhill Librarian

Incredible Interview with a WCS Parent

Check out the one and only [Christina Holley in this interview](#) helping the world understand hers and many families' experiences!

Free books for all families living in 19133 zip code

A Dolly Parton initiative - mailed to homes each month!

<https://foundationsinc.org/imagination/>

SCH Basketball Summer Camp

Springside Chestnut Hill Academy is hosting a basketball camp. This camp is for beginners up to advanced players, Pre-K through 8th grade. Please see attached [flyer](#) for more details. Please note this discount code (MCFADDEN21).

Morris Arboretum Summer Camp

The Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania, located in nearby Chestnut Hill, works with Wissahickon each summer to offer some of our students the opportunity to attend their camp. The Morris Arboretum will select one student per week (for a total of six weeks) to receive a scholarship to their Summer Adventure Camp. If you are interested in applying, please use the link [here](#) to access the application and submit it to igrubin@upenn.edu

The Caribbean is Beautiful Initiative

This week's Caribbean is Beautiful fact:

Fact: The four main languages spoken in the Caribbean are English, French, Spanish and Dutch.

Reminders:

Front Office (Closed)

The Front Office and our buildings will be closed to the public (except for meals) until further notice. Please email the Front Office staff if you need anything.

FH- t.sumner@wissahickoncharter.org

Meals Distribution Mondays

Meals will continue to be distributed on **Mondays only from 8am-6pm**. Families will receive a meal kit for the week that includes hot entrees that can be reheated. Please continue to follow the Meal Pick up procedures as outlined outside the school.

Absences Due to Tech Issues

Families, if you are experiencing tech issues (i.e. trouble logging in, lost internet connection, etc.) please be sure to communicate that tech issue *in the moment* to helpis@wissahickoncharter.org to receive assistance and/or to have your child's attendance excused if needed. Copies of the emails sent to helpis@wissahickoncharter.org will serve as proof of your child's attempted attendance on that day.

Follow Wissahickon Charter on Social Media

Follow WCS on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for important school updates and to see student learning and fun in action! And don't be shy- we love it when you like, comment, and share our posts!

Important Dates

Sunday 3/14 Daylight Saving Time begins (Remember to move your clocks ahead 1 hour)

Wednesday 3/17- Friday 3/19 Morning Meeting Only Report Card Conferences (Students doing asynchronous/independent work)

Thursday 3/18 1-1:30pm Earned Celebration - Virtual Trip to San Diego Zoo



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