

# 2018-19 Preschool Handbook



Resources for all WDMCS Early  
Childhood Preschool program  
families.



**WEST DES MOINES**  
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

# **West Des Moines Community Schools**

## **Mission** *(QPPS 1.7, 2.1, 10.1)*

Working in partnership with each family and the community, it is the mission of the district to educate responsible lifelong learners so that each student possesses the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth, and values necessary to thrive in and contribute to a diverse and changing world.

## **Shared Vision**

WDMCS will be a caring community of learners that knows and lifts every child. We will inspire joy in learning. Our schools will excel at preparing each student for his or her life journey.

## **Portrait of a Graduate**

A West Des Moines Community Schools graduate will possess the essential skills and integrity to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems as a confident citizen, embracing our diverse and changing world.

## **District Philosophy** *(QPPS 10.1)*

We believe that early childhood is an important time of learning and growth in a child's life. We will nurture and support each child in an environment that inspires a love of learning and readiness for school. We recognize the uniqueness of each child and the diversity of their needs. Our staff will plan and implement developmentally and individually appropriate learning experiences.

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## **Tiger Cubs Preschool in the Elementary Schools—West Des Moines Community Schools**

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Tiger Cubs Preschool is available at the following West Des Moines Community Schools elementary school sites:

**Clive Learning Academy** (grades PK-6)

1600 73rd St.  
Windsor Heights, IA 50324  
515-633-5800  
Director: Janelle Green

**Crestview School of Inquiry** (grades PK-6)

8355 Franklin Ave.  
Clive, IA 50325  
515-633-5700  
Director: John Villotti

**Fairmeadows Elementary** (grades PK-6)

807 23rd St.  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-6500  
Principal: Brandon Pierce

**Jordan Creek Elementary** (grades PK-6)

4105 Fuller Rd.  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-5200  
Principal: Paul Wenger  
Assistant Principal: Tamara Tjeerdsma

**Western Hills Elementary** (grades PK-6)

600 39th St.  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-5900  
Principal: George Panosh

**Westridge Elementary** (grades PK-6)

5500 E.P. True Pkwy.  
West Des Moines, IA 50266  
515-633-5400  
Principal: Nathan Ballagh  
Assistant Principal: Tamara Tjeerdsma

## **Welcome to the WDMCS Early Childhood Preschool Program (QPPS 6.2, 10.1)**

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Our program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including typically developing children and 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 Creative Curriculum. Our preschool programs have adopted the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS), administered by the Iowa Department of Education, and use the Iowa Early Learning Standards which provides developmental expectations for preschool-aged children. Before working with children, staff members are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of program operation.

Because Iowa QPPS have been adopted by the West Des Moines Community Schools Early Childhood Program, specific criteria are referenced throughout this handbook.

### **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 Equity Coordinator Carol Seid, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265; Phone: 515-633-5037; E-mail [seidc@wdmcs.org](mailto:seidc@wdmcs.org) (Adherence to bona fide occupational/ educational qualifications will not be interpreted as discriminatory.)

If provisions of this handbook conflict with those of board policy, the terms of the board policy shall govern.

## General Program Information

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### Eligibility:

#### **Tiger Cubs Preschools**

Tiger Cubs preschool programs are in six WDMCS district buildings: Clive, Crestview, Fairmeadows, Jordan Creek, Western Hills, and Westridge Elementary schools. All schools serve 4-year-olds. The Tiger Cubs model is to serve both general education and special education students in a combined classroom. Special Education students are ages three through five.

#### **Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SVPP)**

Students are eligible for our SVPP classrooms at Crestview, Clive, Creekside, Fairmeadows, Jordan Creek, Sacred Heart, Western Hills, Westridge, and West Des Moines United Methodist preschools. 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 four years old on or before Sept. 15 of the school year for which they are enrolled. Students who are low income and/or West Des Moines Community School, families may be given priority. SVPP is funded through the Iowa Department of Education.

#### **Inclusion (QPPS 9.10):**

Our preschool programs provide for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs, through a variety of center options. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff members are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief 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.

#### **(QPPS 9.9)**

Each preschool classroom must provide at least 35 square feet of useable indoor space per child.

### Program Options and Fees:

#### **Tiger Cubs—West Des Moines Community Schools**

Tiger Cubs at Clive Learning Academy  
1600 73rd St, Windsor Heights, IA 50324  
515-633-5800

Janelle Green, Director

4-Year-Old Program

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).

Tiger Cubs at Crestview School of Inquiry  
8355 Franklin Ave., Clive, IA 50325  
515-633-5700

John Villotti, Director

4-Year-Old Program

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).

Tiger Cubs at Fairmeadows Elementary  
807 23rd St., West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-6500

Brandon Pierce, Principal

4-Year-Old Program

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).

Tiger Cubs at Jordan Creek Elementary  
4105 Fuller Road, West Des Moines, IA 50265  
515-633-5200

Paul Wenger, Principal

Tamara Tjeerdsma, Vice Principal

4-Year-Old Program

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).

Tiger Cubs at Western Hills Elementary  
600 39th Street, West Des Moines, 50265  
515-633-5900

George Panosh, Principal

4-Year-Old Program

Children must be 4 years old 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).

Tiger Cubs at Westridge Elementary  
5550 E.P. True Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266  
515-633-5400

Nathan Ballagh, Principal

Tamara Tjeerdsma, Vice Principal

4-Year-Old Program

Children must be 4 by September 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).

### **Preschool Students with IEPs**

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

### **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 the West Des Moines Community Schools 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.

### **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 pay costs of wrap-around childcare. Cadence Academy Preschools hold preschool Monday through Friday, with morning or afternoon sessions.

- Grand Location - 1809 Grand Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50265; Anya Torres, Director 515-225-1837
- Ashworth Location - 5859 Ashworth Drive, West Des Moines, IA 50266; Jennifer Ryker, 515-226-9791

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

- Creekside Christian Preschool - 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale, IA 50322; Connie Keller, Director, 515-277-8454
- Sacred Heart Preschools - 1653 Grand Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50265; Jane Kinney, Director, 515-223-1284
- West Des Moines United Methodist Early Learning Preschool - 720 Grand Ave., West Des Moines, IA 50265; Nancy Setchell, Director, 515-279-8897

### **Who Works In the Preschool? (QPPS 10.15):**

#### **Principal/Director**

The elementary principal or the director (in Community Preschools) is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program

#### **Teachers (QPPS 6.3)**

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 (QPPS 6.4)**

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

#### **School Nurse/Child Care Nurse Consultant (QPPS 10.10)**

Preschools that are in District Elementary buildings have access to an on-site school nurse. The community 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 (QPPS 8.2)**

Heartland AEA11 support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help the children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others. AEA is also involved in the development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

#### **Preschool Program Coordinator (QPPS 8.1, 8.5, 8.6)**

The Preschool Program Coordinator helps preschools with registration, funding options, and coordinates continuity between the classrooms to meet quality standards. The coordinator also assists low-income families to find placements and funding. Resources and information are available on the district website at [www.wdmcs.org](http://www.wdmcs.org) and or by calling Holly Burns at 515-633-5010.

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.

**Daily Activities (QPPS 2.10):**

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, self-initiated learning, creative expression, early literacy experiences, and fine and gross motor activities. Play is planned for each day.

Monthly newsletters will be sent home by the teacher. Each teacher maintains his/her own communication log system for individual students' families.

**Curriculum (QPPS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.13):**

Our preschool programs use The Creative Curriculum as its framework. The Creative Curriculum is a research-based preschool curriculum that focuses on four main developmental areas: Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development, and Language Development. 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 a center and choice time. They will have an opportunity to self-select where they might like to play and work. Here are a list of some of our centers and some typical activities:

- Library: Students have an opportunity to enjoy a variety of books independently or with peers.
- Technology: Students will have learning opportunities using various media and technology.
- Writing: Students have access to a variety of writing utensils and materials.
- Art: Students may choose a variety of art materials to create works of art.
- 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.
- 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
- 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.
- Science: Children will explore their world with a variety of science materials.

**Assessment (QPPS 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.14, 7.1, 7.3):**

Children may be assessed in any of the following ways:

- Learning Strategies (Creative Curriculum Assessment/GOLD)
- Ongoing observations help to ensure child's progress during daily activities.
- Early Literacy Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) are given at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to monitor the growth of early literacy skills.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and may include assessments, child work samples, and other artifacts that are collected on an ongoing basis.
- Information shared by parents/families

(QPPS 2.5, 2.6) The assessment information from the above is used to help guide instruction based on the children's needs, interests and abilities in order to plan individualized and effective instruction.

(QPPS 4.14, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5)

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Family/Teacher 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. The preschool team, along with the parents/families, and Heartland AEA11 staff will come together to discuss concerns and create an action plan. Likewise, if a parent or family member has a concern about the progress of their child they are encouraged to share those concerns with the teacher. Parents and teachers can then work together toward making an action plan.

**Supervision Policy (QPPS 3.9, 9.2, 9.12):**

Our preschool staff will be responsible for making sure all indoor/outdoor environments are safe for children. 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). Staff will make every reasonable effort to protect the children in their care from hazards.

There is a daily safety checklist available in each classroom.

**Child Guidance and Discipline (QPPS 1.8, 1.11):**

Teaching staff will use positive guidance, redirection, and pre-planning with all children in the classroom. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent, clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Using appropriate language for the child, discipline will be explained before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

**Challenging Behavior (QPPS 1.9, 1.10, 8.2, 8.3):**

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. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff and parents with support from AEA consultants will work as a team to create a plan that provides extra help, so that the child can successfully participate in the program. If a child engages in extremely aggressive or disruptive behavior despite ongoing interventions, the team may seek to work with parents to determine whether the child needs special services. 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. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) 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 make threats or derogatory remarks.  
Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.  
Any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.  
Withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

**Snacks/Foods and Nutrition:**

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy and request a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed and social atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form. Snack is also an excellent time for language modeling.

**(QPPS 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14)**

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. Snacks need to be commercially packaged. With the exception of wrap-around care, all of our preschool programs are three hours or less and tooth brushing is not required.

**(QPPS 5.13, 5.14, 5.17, 5.18)**

Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. 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. All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

**(QPPS 5.15, 5.16)**

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. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. When any child with a disability has special feeding needs, the program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and will provide parents with that information.

**(QPPS 5.19)**

High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served.

Our preschool staff will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. An appropriate snack is offered to all children.

**Outside Play and Learning (QPPS 5.5, 5.6, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8):**

We have daily opportunities for 15-30 minutes of outdoor play as the weather permits. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active together. Parents are informed of appropriate outerwear and encouraged to provide those items. Staff will ensure that children are appropriately dressed for outdoor play. Sunscreen and/or insect repellent may be applied at school with written parent permission. The outdoor play equipment is age and developmentally appropriate, is fenced to avoid hazards, and arranged so staff can easily supervise children. A playground safety checklist is completed and on file.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather or other conditions), children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

**Water Activity (QPPS 5.9):**

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 with others in the water play. Children are not allowed to drink the water in the water table. When the activity is complete, the water table is drained, sanitized and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children come to participate. 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. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound during such water activities.

**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 his/her 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.

**Weapons Policy:**

Please reference WDMCS district discipline policy 503.1, located in the legal notifications section of this handbook.

## Communication and Parent Involvement

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### **Communication with Families (QPPS 1.1, 4.14, 7.5, 7.6):**

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations or email. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families on a regular basis. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs — email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will check in at the elementary school or director's office. The preschool staff wants parents to feel confident that their child is being well cared for and is receiving a quality experience at school. Parents are always encouraged to address concerns with the child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the Building Administrator.

### **Arrival and Departure of Children (QPPS 10.11)**

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

If your child is eligible for and uses district transportation, 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 system.

Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary.

Preschool students are expected to arrive and depart from their preschool site at the designated beginning and ending times for their classroom. Children should be secured in appropriate safety car seats when arriving and departing from the preschool.

Preschools have the option to charge a fee for late pick up.

### **Field Trips**

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. West Des Moines Community Schools buses with five-point harnesses may be used for these field trips in preschool that are in District buildings. Parents will be informed of each field trip, and must sign a consent form before each trip. Adult family members are invited to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. Parents may be asked to provide transportation for field trips.

During the field trip, all children will wear identifying information that gives the program name and phone number. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

### **Attendance**

Students who are enrolled for classes in the WDMCS preschool programs are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat necessary information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call your child's attendance center when your child will be absent, with the reason for an

absence. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

The preschool director/principal and preschool coordinator reserve the right to review attendance of students. In some cases, a student may be asked to release their spot so as to make the best use of limited enrollment and funding.

### **Preschool Advisory Committee (QPPS 7.2)**

The WDMCS has a preschool advisory committee. This group meets quarterly to provide feedback on services that meet children's and families' needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services.

### **Ethics, Confidentiality, and Children's Records (QPPS 7.4, 10.10)**

Staff members follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. The preschool staff members will refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent.

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

### **Family Involvement (QPPS 4.14, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.6):**

We encourage families to be involved 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, as well as any information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds that they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year for all Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program students. Family/Teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters for all students. At least one Family Night is held during the year. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences, or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

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

- Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing 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.
- Return all forms and questionnaires promptly.
- Attend Family/Teacher 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 artifacts 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!

### **(QPPS 4.3)**

It is the policy of the West Des Moines Schools, not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its education programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency and to families with children with disabilities. This will include providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent possible, in a language the family understands.

**(QPPS 7.6, 7.7, 7.8)**

In our preschools, we believe that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their child may need. Each district and community preschool program supports families so that they may best advocate for their child. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

**Transitions (QPPS 7.9, 7.10)**

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child, whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Preschool staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will also provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

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## Health and Safety

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**Health:**

Our preschool programs are committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

**Health and Immunization Certificates (QPPS 5.1)**

Within six weeks of a child beginning in the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted 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.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

**Health and Safety Records (QPPS 5.1, 10.10, 10.14)**

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. The school nurse or center director maintains student 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.

Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records, the child's parent or legal guardian, and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.
- Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results.
- Current emergency contact information for each child that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year.
- Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.

- Instructions for any of the child’s special health needs, such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
- Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems and other chronic conditions); conditions that require regular medication or technology support.
- Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family’s beliefs. Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

**General Health and Safety Guidelines (QPPS 4.2, 5.2)**

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions. Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff members are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff members are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff completes “Occupational Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens” annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

**Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children (QPPS 5.3)**

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the previous 24 hours, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

- fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eye with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- unexplained rash

The center’s established policy for an ill child’s return:

- fever free for 24 hours
- chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- vomiting/diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child’s ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably, if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group, or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that the preschool has current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person, and your child’s pediatrician. A staff member (who is familiar with the student) will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian, or designated person arrives. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then he/she will be kept in an appropriate area where new individuals will not be exposed.

### **Reporting Communicable Diseases (QPPS 5.4)**

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of a communicable disease occur.

### **Medication Policies and Procedures (QPPS 5.10)**

**Policy:** The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

**Procedure:** The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian and health provider has given written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional, on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medication, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name; the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medication, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medication will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

### **Cleaning and Sanitization (QPPS 5.22, 5.23, 5.24, 9.11, 10.6)**

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. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using an acceptable and safe disinfectant. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers, such as gloves, and proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials.

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.

### **Hand Washing Practices (QPPS 5.8)**

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. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- after handling body fluids e.g., blowing or wiping a nose; coughing on a hand; or any touching of mucus, blood, or vomit
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- before and after playing in water that is shared by two or more people
- after handling pets or visiting animals

### **Safety:**

#### **First Aid Kit (QPPS 9.13)**

A First Aid Kit is located in every preschool classroom. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. The First Aid Kit is appropriately and fully equipped according to the nurse's guidance. Following each use of the First Aid Kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid Kit will be inspected monthly. The Kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

#### **Fire Safety (QPPS 9.14)**

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

#### **Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents (QPPS 10.13)**

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

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, the teacher will assess the situation and apply the first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water, and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. The school nurse or parent/caregiver is immediately consulted for more significant events or illness. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an "Injury and Illness" form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

#### **(QPPS 10.14)**

All staff will have immediate access to a telephone that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers, and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport, will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

#### **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

Up-to-the-minute information about cancellations, dismissals, and closings is available on the district website ([www.wdmcs.org](http://www.wdmcs.org)), Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/wdmcs](https://www.facebook.com/wdmcs)), and Twitter account (@WDMCS). In addition, information is provided at the district weather hotline at 515-633-5555.

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. This information is also shared with local television and radio stations. This information is provided as a service for students, families, staff, and community members when school must be cancelled or dismissed early due to weather conditions or other emergencies.

Snow/Weather Delays and Cancellations

For students attending Tiger Cubs programs in district buildings: Early dismissal and delayed starts will not be made up. However, if the WDMCS makes up days at the end of the school year due to full-day cancellations, Tiger Cubs preschool programs will add that same number of days. These days will be added immediately following the identified last day of preschool and will be scheduled on regularly attended preschool days. Parents will be notified of these make-up days.

If your child attends a Community Partner Preschool

Please contact the director of that preschool for their policy regarding delays and cancellations.

#### **Pets (QPPS 5.26)**

Any pet located in or visiting the classroom must be in good health and have appropriately documented immunizations and be suitable and safe for contact with young children.

#### **Smoke Free Facility (QPPS 9.19)**

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, WDMCS buildings and grounds are smoke-free. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children. At Community Preschools, the facility and outdoor play areas are smoke-free and no smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

#### **Child Protection Policies (QPPS 10.8, 10.16, 10.19)**

The health, well-being, and protection of every child is of the utmost importance. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program (who has direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children) must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

## **Mandatory Reporting**

The West Des Moines Community Schools 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.

The Code of Iowa requires mandatory reporters to report to the Department of Human Services all instances of suspected child abuse involving students. The law further states that any person required to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly fails to do so, or who knowingly interferes with the making of such a report in violation of section 232.70, is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure or interference.

The Code 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.

## **Volunteers (QPPS 10.15, 10.17)**

As mentioned earlier, there are many ways family members can volunteer in the preschool programs. Please contact your child's teacher or the main office or your center director to pick up the WDMCS Volunteer Application and Volunteer Driver Liability Form or comparable form.

## **Staff (QPPS 10.9, 10.15, 10.16, 10.17, 10.18, 10.19, 10.20):**

Our preschool programs are in compliance 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 completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

The preschool staff will be provided space and time away from children during the day. When staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided with 15 minutes or more of break time. In addition, preschool staff may request temporary relief if they are unable to perform their duties.

All teaching staff continuously develops and strengthens their skills by participating in a wide range of staff development opportunities. In addition, teaching assistants receive training specific to early childhood on an on-going basis throughout the school year.

## Special Section —

# West Des Moines Community Schools Districtwide Handbook for Preschool

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## **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 usually holds regular meetings 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. During each meeting, an open forum time is conducted when citizens may speak to the Board.

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 September. [View current Board of Education information online.](#)

### **West Des Moines Community Schools Learning Resource Center**

3550 Mills Civic Parkway

West Des Moines, Iowa 50265-5556

Phone: 515-633-5000

Superintendent Lisa Remy, Ed.D.

Associate Superintendent of Human Resources Carol Seid, Ed.D.

Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Services Michelle Lettington

Chief Financial Officer Paul Bobek

## Board Policies/Legal Notifications for Preschool

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### **Academic Suspension Appeal**

The violation of certain school rules can result in the suspension of the student from participating in academic activities. Such an academic suspension will result in the removal of the student from the classroom setting for a defined period of time. Educational services due the student will be continued through provisions as designated by the principal and/or designee.

In the event the student believes suspension is unfair, an appeal may be made to:

1. Other supervisory administrative staff in the line of authority.
2. The superintendent of schools.

Such appeals must be filed within three (3) school days and a decision confirming or denying the appeal presented within two (2) school days. Suspensions will be served while the appeal is being heard unless there is an allegation that due process (i.e., notice and opportunity to be heard) was not provided.

No appeal will be heard, investigated, or acted upon unless it is reduced to writing and signed by the party bringing the appeal.

### **Access to Student Records**

The West Des Moines Community Schools complies with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. Parents and eligible students will have a right to access the student's record upon request within a reasonable period of time. For further information, see [Board Policy 506.03](#).

### **Equal Access by Student Groups ([Board Policy 504.21](#))**

The West Des Moines Community School District believes that it is important for students to learn the meaning and practice of freedom of speech while in school, in order that as future citizens they will appreciate the proper exercise of this vital liberty. In adopting this policy, the school district does not forego its authority to maintain an orderly and disciplined school environment and to protect the well-being of students and staff.

### **Equal Educational Opportunities: Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Sexual Misconduct Towards Students ([Board Policy 502.02](#)) and Equity Statement ([Board Policy 101.02](#))**

#### **NONDISCRIMINATION:**

No student in the West Des Moines Community School District will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in District programs or activities on the basis of student's actual or perceived age, race, color, creed, national origin, sex, physical or mental ability or disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, physical attributes, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status in accordance with applicable law. The policy of the District will be to provide equal educational programs, activities, and opportunities for students as needed on the basis of individual needs, interests, abilities, and potential.

Discriminatory harassment of students in violation of federal or state nondiscrimination laws is prohibited, including that behavior which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive education environment; unreasonably interferes with a student's academic performance; or affects a student's educational opportunities. Discriminatory harassment based on sex includes sexual and gender-based harassment, as well as sexual assault/abuse and sexual exploitation (otherwise known as "sexual misconduct"). Claims of discriminatory harassment will be subject to the complaint procedures and disciplinary actions outlined below.

#### **HARASSMENT AND BULLYING PROHIBITED:**

The West Des Moines Community School District is committed to providing all students a safe and civil educational environment in which all are treated with dignity and respect. The District is also committed to promoting understanding and appreciation of the cultural diversity of our society. The District will educate students about our cultural diversity and will promote tolerance of individual differences.

Harassment and bullying of students is against the policy of the State of Iowa as well as of the District. The District will promote procedures and practices to reduce and eliminate harassment and bullying. The District prohibits harassment and bullying of students by other students, by employees, and by volunteers while in school, on school property, and at any school function or school-sponsored activity regardless of location. This includes harassment or bullying based on any student's actual or perceived traits or characteristics, including, but not limited to, the student's actual or perceived age, race, color, creed, national origin, sex, physical or mental ability or disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, physical attributes, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status or familial status.

Employees, volunteers or students will not engage in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness or individual who has reliable information about an act of harassment or bullying. If, in response to the filing of a harassment or bullying complaint, an individual who is the subject of such complaint then files a harassment or bullying complaint, the individual will not be considered to have engaged in an act of retaliation unless the complaint is based on a false accusation.

Acts of harassment or bullying may be treated as grounds for discipline. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion of a student, suspension or termination of an employee's employment, and/or exclusion of a volunteer from District activities or premises.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT and/or SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED

It is the policy of the District to maintain a learning environment that is free from discrimination or harassment of any kind based on a person's sex. Discrimination in the form of sexual harassment, sexual assault/abuse, and sexual exploitation (collectively "Sexual Misconduct") is prohibited by the District. All employees, visitors, and students must avoid any action or conduct which could reasonably be perceived as Sexual Misconduct. It will be a violation of this policy for any person to harass a student through conduct or communications of a sexual nature as defined in this policy, or otherwise engage in Sexual Misconduct directed at a student. This policy applies regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity of the parties involved.

#### HARASSMENT and/or BULLYING - DEFINITIONS

Harassment and/or bullying may include but not be limited to any electronic (such as emails, instant messages, cell phone calls or text messages), written, verbal or physical act or conduct toward a student that is based on any actual or perceived trait or characteristic of the student that creates an objectively hostile school environment that:

- places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property; or
- has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health; or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- has the effect of substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from District services, activities, or privileges.

Examples of prohibited behavior may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- unwelcome touching;
- inappropriate or demeaning remarks, jokes, stories, activities, symbols, signs or posters;
- implied or explicit threats concerning grades, awards, property or opportunities;
- requiring, explicitly or implicitly, that a student submit to harassment or bullying as a term or condition of the student's participation in any educational program or activity.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT and/or SEXUAL MISCONDUCT – DEFINITIONS

Sexual or Gender-Based Harassment (including Harassment Based on Sex, Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity) is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature or aimed at another because of sex when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the student's educational opportunities or benefits; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for educational decisions affecting that student; or

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's education or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Conduct is considered "unwelcome" if an individual did not request or invite it and considered the conduct to be undesirable or offensive. A hostile environment exists when the harassment is sufficiently severe or pervasive so that it alters the conditions of education, from both a subjective (the alleged victim's) and an objective (reasonable person's) viewpoint. The determination of whether an environment is "hostile" must be based on the circumstances.

"Aimed at another because of sex" includes both actual and perceived sex, including conduct based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and nonconformity with gender stereotypes. This may also be called "Gender-Based Harassment." This harassment based on these actual or perceived traits is prohibited by the District.

Sex or gender-based actions which are offensive or inappropriate, but do not rise to the level of creating a hostile environment, can still be reported and, where appropriate, the District will take remedial steps intended to end or prevent such actions in the future.

Examples of sexual or gender-based harassment may include, but is not limited to the following:

- requests or pressure for sexual activity;
- unwelcome touching;
- other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as inappropriate jokes, symbols, signs or posters of a sexual nature;
- repeated remarks to or about a person with sexual or demeaning implications.

Sexual Assault/Abuse: are the offenses as defined by Iowa Code chapter 709, and specifically:

- Sexual contact or attempted sexual contact by force or against the will of the other. If consent or acquiescence is obtained through threats of violence or while the other is under the influence of a drug or otherwise unconscious/incapacitated, the act is against that person's will.
- Sexual contact or attempted sexual contact against a person suffering from a mental defect or incapacity which precludes giving consent, or lacks the mental capacity to know the right and wrong of conduct in sexual matters.
- Any romantic relationship between a school employee and a student, regardless of the student's age.

Sexual Exploitation: "Sexual Exploitation" is defined under Iowa Code § 728.12(1), and occurs when a person causes or attempts to cause a minor to engage in or simulate a prohibited sexual act when the act may be photographed, filmed, or otherwise preserved.

#### COMPLAINT PROCEDURES: INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

Any person alleging a violation of this policy may file a complaint with an administrator in the student's school or by the using the Bullying/Harassment or Sexual Misconduct Complaint Form (included in this policy). For complaints of Sexual Misconduct against school employees, a complaint may be made to a building administrator, District Administrator, or District compliance officer/Level One Investigator.

Employees who are aware of harassment or bullying will file a written complaint or will report the conduct to a building administrator or to the compliance officer. However, any member of the District community, including students, teachers, staff, and third-parties, who become aware of bullying, harassment, or Sexual Misconduct which violates this policy should promptly notify an administrator or compliance officer of such violations.

Upon receipt of a complaint, an investigator will be assigned to promptly and equitably investigate and determine if the complaint states a possible violation of this policy. Investigators designated by the Superintendent, or Level One Investigators for Sexual Misconduct complaints against school employees, shall be responsible for conducting the investigation. If the investigator is the respondent, a witness, or otherwise has a conflict of interest in a particular case, an

alternate investigator will investigate. District employees, students and volunteers are expected to fully and fairly cooperate in the investigation.

#### COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION STEPS:

Step I (Informal Complaint): In an attempt to resolve an alleged complaint a student, teacher, parent, staff, and/or community member may first discuss the incident with a school administrator to determine if the case can be resolved informally. In cases of Sexual Misconduct, informal resolution will only be pursued when both parties voluntarily agree to informal resolution, and the parties are informed in writing of their right to request the complaint be handled under the formal complaint process at any time. In no event will informal resolution be used in cases of Sexual Assault/Abuse.

Step II (Formal Complaint): If the matter is unable to be resolved informally or it is a Sexual Misconduct case in which (1) the parties request formal resolution and/or (2) the case is inappropriate for informal resolution, the student, teacher, administrator, parent, staff, or community member will complete a Complaint Form. If the case involves reports or allegations of Sexual Misconduct, an investigation shall proceed even in the absence of a signed written complaint. With other cases, it shall be in the discretion of the building principal to initiate an investigation in the absence of a written complaint, and/or whether the complainant needs assistance in filling out the complaint form.

Notice of the complaint will be given to (i) the parties (or parties' parents/guardians if minors), (ii) the respondent's supervisor if the respondent is a school employee, (iii) the complainant if different than one of the parties involved in the alleged conduct, and (iv) the building administrator.

Step III (Safety Plan): A school administrator will hold a meeting to discuss the need to draft a Pre-Investigation Safety Plan to provide protective measures/accommodations during the investigation. The plan will be drafted with an administrator, appropriate staff members, parent/guardian, and/or student if age appropriate.

Step IV (Investigation Process): The investigator will begin by interviewing the parties and any witnesses. To the extent it is reasonably possible and safe to do so, the parties will be allowed to submit evidence and identify witnesses. Investigators shall have access to any educational records of student parties and access to the students for purposes of interviewing and investigating the allegations. Student parties' parents/guardians or other representatives for the parties will be involved in such interviews as appropriate.

Throughout the investigative process, school administrators will keep parents/guardians of students involved and informed regarding the progress of the investigation. Within 15 school/work days\* of starting the investigation, the school administrator will contact the parent/guardian of students involved to share investigation findings unless circumstances require additional time to complete the report. After considering the totality of the circumstances, the investigator will determine whether conduct occurred that violates this policy on a preponderance of the evidence standard; or whether it is more likely than not to have occurred.

Step V (Written Report): At the conclusion of the investigation, a written report (Disposition of Complaint Form) stating the findings, including a determination that the complaint is founded or unfounded, will be shared with (i) the parties (or parties' parents/guardians if minors), (ii) the respondent's supervisor if the respondent is a school employee, (iii) the complainant if different than one of the parties involved in the alleged conduct, and (iv) the building administrator.

Step VI (Follow Up): If a Post-Investigation Safety Plan is needed to provide protective measures/accommodations following the investigation, it will be created/revised and monitored to ensure the safety of complainant.

\*The district will make every effort to adhere to the timeline outlined within the complaint process steps.

Extenuating circumstances may alter the timeline.

If the complaint alleges Sexual Misconduct by a school employee towards a student, the investigation and complaint resolution process will be conducted consistent with Iowa Code chapter 102 requirements, instead of the procedures outlined above, to the extent they are different.

#### DISCIPLINE:

If, after an investigation and any relevant appeal, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will review the investigator's written report and any appeal decision, and determine the appropriate disciplinary sanction. The recommended discipline will be imposed under District Policy 503.01.

If after an investigation and any relevant appeal a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include termination. If after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures, which may include exclusion from school grounds.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** In addition to discipline, the District will take any other reasonable corrective action to address any discrimination, harassment, bullying, or Sexual Misconduct. Corrective actions designed to remedy violations of this policy including access to counseling services for a victim, training, or outreach efforts. The principal will maintain a log of information necessary to comply with Iowa Department of Education reporting procedures.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** The District is committed to creating an environment that encourages those who have experienced any conduct violating this policy to come forward. Confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the respondent, will be respected to the extent possible consistent with the District's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

Different people, depending on their positions, have different obligations with regard to confidentiality. Under Iowa law, communications with some individuals are confidential. Students who want to maintain confidentiality should always confirm whether confidentiality applies to the communication before they make the communication. Generally, confidentiality applies only when seeking services from the following persons:

- Licensed guidance counselors or health care providers (unless mandatory reporting or other professional/ethical legal obligations apply);
- Personal attorney representing the complainant; or
- Religious/spiritual counselors.

Any other District employees cannot guarantee confidentiality.

**NO RETALIATION:** No person will retaliate against a student or other person because the student or other person has filed a complaint under this policy, assisted or participated in an investigation, or has opposed language or conduct that violates this policy, as long as the participation or action was done in good faith. Persons who engage in retaliation or who knowingly file false complaints or give false statements in an investigation will be subject to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion from school, or termination of employment, or exclusion of a volunteer, as applicable.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** In instances where the complained of conduct implicates Iowa's mandatory reporting laws for cases of child abuse under Iowa Code chapters 232 or abuse of a student by a school employee, information from complaints will be shared with the appropriate authorities. The District encourages those who experience misconduct which is also a crime to report to local law enforcement. However, the decision to do so is that of the student complainants and/or their parent/guardian(s).

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES- STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** The District has established a policy addressing complaints of discrimination and bullying and harassment for students with disabilities, *Grievance Procedure – Students with Disabilities* (604.9). This policy also addresses procedures for handling concerns regarding accommodations for students with disabilities.

**BULLYING AND HARASSMENT COMPLIANCE OFFICER:** The District's Associate Superintendent of Human Resources is Carol Seid, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, Iowa 50265, (515-633-5037), will be designated as the District's compliance officer to ensure that all cases of alleged discrimination, harassment and bullying are treated in accordance with

District policy. In the event the compliance officer is the alleged perpetrator, a witness, or otherwise has a conflict of interest in a particular case, the Superintendent will be the alternate compliance officer.

**TITLE IX COORDINATOR:** The District's Title IX Coordinator is Josie Lewis, Director of Human Resources, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, Iowa 50265, (515-633-5036), or her designee. The Title IX Coordinator coordinates the District's response to reports of Sexual Misconduct under this policy. The Title IX Coordinator does not serve as an advocate for either the complainant or the respondent. The Title IX Coordinator will explain to both parties the informal and formal processes and the provisions of confidentiality. Where appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator will provide to both parties information on options for obtaining advocacy, medical and counseling services, and making criminal reports, and will assist with providing information on other resources. The Title IX Coordinator will coordinate with other District officials to implement any Safety Plans. The Title IX Coordinator is trained and knowledgeable about enforcement, compliance, communication, and implementation of the District's anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies.

**LEVEL ONE INVESTIGATORS:** The District's Level One investigators for purposes of complaints of physical or sexual abuse of a student are: Carol Seid, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources at (515-633-5037), and Josie Lewis, Director of Human Resources, at (515-633-5036).

**PUBLICATION OF POLICY:** The board will annually publish this policy. The policy may be publicized by the following means:

- Inclusion in the student handbook;
- Inclusion in the employee handbook;
- Inclusion in the registration materials; and
- Inclusion on the school or school district's website.

#### **TRAINING:**

The District will educate staff, parents, volunteers, and students about discrimination, harassment, bullying, and Sexual Misconduct as appropriate. Training and education will include effective methods of prevention, and what to do in the event of such actions. The District will assess the effectiveness of this policy and its education programs and will make reports to the Iowa Department of Education as required.

**OTHER AGENCIES:** Inquiries or complaints may also be filed with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E. 14th St. Des Moines, IA 50319 (515-281-4121) the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 East 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, (515) 281-5294; and/or the U.S. Dept. of Education Office for Civil Rights, Chicago Office, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison St., Ste. 1475, Chicago, IL 60661 (312-730-1560). Inquiry or complaint to the federal or state office may be done instead of, or in addition to, an inquiry or complaint at the local level.

Further information and copies of the procedures for filing a complaint are available in the school district's central administrative office and the administrative office in each attendance center.

#### **Open Enrollment**

The Open Enrollment law permits a wide range of educational choices for students enrolled in schools in Iowa. A parent/guardian may request open enrollment to a district other than the district of residence if application deadlines are met and/or a good cause (as defined by law) exists. Additional information is available at the [Iowa Department of Education](#).

The application is made to a school district, not a specific school in that district. However, the parent or guardian may request a school. Open enrollment to a specific school in the WDMCS will be based on available space in elementary classrooms and reviewed following registration each year. The maximum class size allowed is 26 in grades K-3 and 28 in grades 4-6. [Learn more about open enrollment online.](#)

#### **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords /guardian(s) and students who are 18 or emancipated minors ("eligible students") certain rights regarding the district's conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected

areas if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's family
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
- Sex behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations or beliefs of the student or family
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
  - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
  - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings or any physical exam or screening permitted under state law.
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:
  - Protected information surveys of students
  - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales or other distribution purpose
  - Instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum

West Des Moines Community Schools will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parent/guardian(s), regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution purposes. The district will directly notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The district will also directly notify parent/guardian(s) and eligible students, such as through U.S. mail or email, at least annually at the start of each school year of the specific or approximate dates of the following activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above

Parents and/or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

### **Release of Information and Photographs**

In the West Des Moines Community Schools, information and photographs or likenesses may be released without written consent unless qualified objectors comply with the procedure in the final paragraph below.

The Family Educational Right and Privacy Act requires the district designate certain personally identifiable information taken from students' educational records as "directory information." Any information not designated by the district as directory information will be considered an educational record under FERPA and may not be released to the public without parental or eligible student consent.

Directory information may include:

- student's name, address, telephone number and email address
- parent/guardian'(s) name, address, and telephone number
- date and place of student's birth
- photographs, audio, and video of the student
- grade level of student
- major field of study
- officially recognized activities and sports the student participates in
- height and weight of members of athletic teams
- dates of attendance
- degrees and awards received
- the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student

Limited student information may be posted on the district's websites, including social media, under guidelines developed by the district. That information may include photos, video and/or a student's name. Some of the directory information may be compiled in an annual directory, published and distributed by parent groups at some schools.

In addition, two federal laws require school districts receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parent/guardian(s) have advised the school district that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Objections to release of information or photographs may be submitted on forms available at the time of registration at all district schools. Alternately, objections may be sent within two weeks of the student's enrollment in school to your school principal. Appropriate district staff will be informed of the objection to release of information or photographs.

This objection to the release of directory information must be renewed annually.

### **Public Conduct On School Premises ([Board Policy 909](#))**

The Board of Education expects that students, employees, and visitors will treat each other with respect, engage in responsible behavior, exercise self-discipline, and model fairness, equity, and respect. Individuals violating this policy will be subject to discipline. Students will be disciplined consistent with the student conduct policies. Employees will be disciplined consistent with employee discipline policies and laws. Others will be subject to discipline according to this policy.

### **Search and Seizure ([Board Policy 502.09](#))**

School officials may, without a search warrant, search a student, student lockers, student desks, student backpacks (or any other container used by a student for holding or carrying personal belongings of any kind), student work areas, student electronic devices, or student automobiles to maintain order and discipline in the schools, promote the educational environment and protect the safety and welfare of students, school personnel and others on school premises or at school-sponsored activities. School authorities may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. The district will make a reasonable effort to notify parents/guardians prior to searching a student's electronic device.

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## **General Information for Preschool**

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### **Allergies**

WDMCS promotes a safe and inclusive allergy aware environment for all students. Students with allergies may be entitled to services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act. Accommodations and/or modifications will be considered and addressed on a case by case basis.

If your student needs diet modifications, a physician needs to complete the [Diet Modification Request form](#). When completed, return the form to the Nutrition Services department.

Please check with your school nurse for specific information on restrictions and procedures related to allergies.

### **Area Education Agency (AEA) Services**

Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) 11 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](#) for more information.

### **Counseling Services Available to Students and Families**

The West Des Moines Community Schools contracts the services of Employee and Family Resources for our Student Assistance Program. If you need assistance with family or school issues, call 515-244-6090 to speak to a counselor or schedule an appointment. The phone line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Counselor sessions to assess problems are provided at no cost to you. When additional services are needed, the student assistance counselor will refer you to an appropriate, beneficial and affordable resource.

School-based therapy services are available in each school building. Students have access to a licensed therapist in the

building for appointments while minimizing travel time off campus. Families enroll students for services and are responsible for the cost. Contact the school counselor or principal for information about school-based therapy.

### **Crisis Management**

The safety and well-being of your children is our priority at the West Des Moines Community Schools. We are committed to supporting safe and welcoming learning environments where your child can connect, explore, and learn.

The district has a comprehensive emergency management plan focused on planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. For more information, visit [wdmcs.org/district/schools/crisis-plan/](http://wdmcs.org/district/schools/crisis-plan/).

### **Fees**

Each student pays a book fee. Additional fees may occur based on transportation needs. [View current fees online](#). WDMCS offers one convenient webpage to access our online payment systems to pay all school-related fees, register for a Community Education class, and more — 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please visit [wdmcs.org/online-payments/](http://wdmcs.org/online-payments/) to learn more. There is NO convenience fee for this service.

### **Fee Waiver**

Students whose families meet the income guidelines for free and reduced price lunch, the Family Investment Program (FIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or transportation assistance under open enrollment and students who are in foster care are eligible to have their student fees waived or partially waived. Parents or students who believe they may qualify for a waiver should complete the fee waiver form on the back side of the Free and Reduced Price Meal application, or you may contact your principal for a form. This waiver does not carry over from year to year and must be completed annually.

### **Health Services**

#### **Administration of Medication to Students (Board Policy 507.02)**

The board is committed to the inclusion of all students in the education program and recognizes that some students may need prescription and nonprescription medication to participate in their educational program.

According to Board policy, medication shall be administered when the student's parent/guardian provides a signed and dated written statement requesting medication administration and the medication is in the original, labeled container, either as dispensed or in the manufacturer's container. If it is necessary to take medication at school, the Authorization for Medication Administration form must be completed.

#### **Immunizations and Health Screenings**

Iowa law requires a parent to verify proper immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, and varicella to enroll in school. At least one dose of each immunization must be given before starting school. If your child has not received all of the following immunizations, you will need to work with the school nurse and their health care provider to set up a "catch-up" schedule.

[Learn more about immunizations online.](#)

[Learn more online about health screenings, including dental, hearing, and vision screenings.](#)

#### **Services of the School Nurse**

If a student becomes ill during the day, the student is to ask the teacher for a pass from class and go immediately to the nurse's office. If it is necessary for the student to go home, the parent/guardian(s) will be contacted and arrangements made to take or send the student home. Under no circumstances are students to go home or leave the school grounds without contacting the office or the nurse. If a student is seriously injured or becomes ill, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian(s) immediately.

#### **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 by the building administrator or designee to Administrative Services on the WDMCS Student Incident Report.



**3550 Mills Civic Parkway | West Des Moines, IA 50265**  
**515-633-5000 | [www.wdmcs.org](http://www.wdmcs.org)**

*The West Des Moines Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, 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 Equity Coordinator Carol Seid, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, 3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50265; Phone: 515-633-5037; Email: [seidc@wdmcs.org](mailto:seidc@wdmcs.org).*