



ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
835 OLD CLAIRTON ROAD  
JEFFERSON HILLS, PA 15025  
PHONE: 412-655-8450  
FAX: 412-655-9544  
[www.wjhsd.net](http://www.wjhsd.net)

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WEST ELIZABETH - JEFFERSON HILLS - PLEASANT HILLS

DR. MICHAEL P. GHILANI  
Superintendent  
SCOTT T. MILBURN  
Assistant Superintendent-Secondary Education  
MATTHEW J. PATTERSON  
Assistant Superintendent-Elementary Education

TRACY A. HARRIS  
Director of Finance/Board Secretary  
DR. LINDSAY L. PFISTER  
Director of Human Resources  
ELIZABETH H. WHEAT  
Supervisor of Special Education/Pupil Personnel

August 6, 2018

Dear Parents,

As summer begins to come to an end, the reality of back-to-school preparation is upon us. We have been extremely busy this summer with a number of projects that will prove to be major upgrades and enhancements in the district; however, we must first roll them out, and, as with anything new, there will be a learning curve. We are doing everything we can to improve and update outdated systems and processes while making changes to our K-12 educational programs that we believe will catapult the district into being one of the best districts in the state of Pennsylvania. With so many things going on concurrently, some of these transitions may not follow the timelines that we've had in the past and may take some time to fully implement. A few notable changes that I wanted to provide some clarity and information on as soon as possible are as follows:

- We are no longer using PowerSchool as our Student Information System (SIS) and parent portal. The district has decided to transition to a new product called Skyward. We have found it to be both user friendly and feature rich while seamlessly integrating with other products that we use. You will be getting a communication/ mailing from Mr. Gerry Dawson, our Director of Technology, on how to login and use your Skyward account within the next week. We will also be offering parent training sessions which we will be made available to parents who need them in the coming weeks.
- Our new Director of Transportation, Mrs. Gwen Murphy, has been working diligently with us to create the new bus routes for grades K-5. Because of the reconfiguration, every route had to be redone. We also wanted to make every childcare center available to our parents and make bus routes as efficient for our students as possible. Except for those students for which his or her bus schedule dictates otherwise, students should arrive or be dropped off at Gill Hall and McClellan between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m., and between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. at Jefferson Hills Intermediate School. We anticipate all students being on the bus and on their way home by 3:30. All parents will be receiving their child's bus information with the Skyward mailing from Mr. Dawson within the next week.
- We are extremely excited that, for the first time, we will have a 1:1 environment in grades 1-12. Kindergarten will be 1:2. Every student will be assigned a device, and students in grades 5-12 will be bringing their devices home. All of our teachers will be utilizing G Suite and Google Classroom as tools to help personalize the learning process for each and every child. We will also continue vetting apps and programs which support our goals of personalized learning and student growth. Students in grades K-2 will be using iPads, and students in grades 3-12 will be using Chromebooks as their device. Students and parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use Policy, and all devices will be filtered. Every student will also be taught the Common Sense Media Curriculum K-12 to promote responsible and safe use of digital tools. These devices will be a major tool in our learning environment moving forward. Students will be responsible for their devices just as they are their books. Parents will have the option of purchasing insurance for twenty-five dollars (\$25) which covers one accidental breakage or replacement. Each principal will be rolling the devices out at different times. Please keep an eye out for communication from your child's principal on when they will be getting their device and how you can purchase insurance. There will be a definitive deadline that insurance will have to be purchased by in order to participate.

In closing, we realize everyone's anxiety is up given the amount of change going on in the district. Rest assured that your children are in good hands, and with the changes you will see many positive outcomes and feel more connected with your child's learning than ever before. We ask for your patience and understanding as we move forward, but please don't ever hesitate to call one of our offices or buildings for help.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Ghilani  
Superintendent