



Van Ness  
Family Handbook

2018-19

September 2018

Van Ness Family,

Welcome to a new school year!

The Van Ness Family Handbook will serve as a reference for you as we start the new year. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the information in the handbook.

Our vision is to cultivate compassionate, creative, critical thinkers who are committed to being constant learners and improving the world. We can only do that successfully with your support and cooperation.

I look forward to us all working together on behalf of our students!

Sincerely,

*Cynthia Robinson-Rivers*

Head of School

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### DCPS Mission

Our purpose is to ensure that every DCPS school provides a world-class education that prepares ALL of our students, regardless of background or circumstance, for success in college, career, and life.

### Van Ness Mission and Vision

Children, families, and educators come together to create an inclusive community that provides authentic experiences and engages the whole child.

Our aim is to cultivate critical thinkers and develop a generation of confident, curious, and compassionate members of society.

### Van Ness Family Engagement

Families from all backgrounds are valued and feel safe contributing to children's growth and development as equal partners in education.

## Family Engagement Dates

### September

September 12: Back to School Night at 6 pm

### October

October 8: Columbus Day (no school)

October 13: Fall Festival

October 25 & 26: Professional Development days (no school)

### November

November 6: Parent Teacher Conferences

November 7: All Parent PTO Meeting at 6 pm

November 12: Veterans Day (no school)

November 14: Open House at 9 am

November 21, 22, & 23: Thanksgiving break (no school)

### December

December 6: Family Listening Session

December 10 to 14: PK Winter Concerts at 9 am each morning

December 11: Kinder/1st Winter Concert at 6 pm

December 12: Open House at 9 am

December 13: 2nd/3rd Winter Concert at 6 pm

December 24 to 31: Winter Break (no school)

### January

January 1: New Year's Day (no school)

January 9: Open House at 9 am

January 21: MLK Day (no school)

January 22 & 23: Professional Development days (no school)

### February

February 13: Open House at 9 am

February 18 to 22: Mid-Winter Break (no school)

### March

March 7: Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) meetings at 6 pm

March 8: Parent Teacher Conferences (no school)

March 13: Open House at 9 am

March 16: Annual Silent Auction and Gala

### April

April 4 & 5: Professional Development days (no school)

April 15 to 19: Spring Break (no school)

### May

May 6 to 9: Teacher Appreciation Week

May 13 to 17: PK Spring Concerts

May 15: All Parent PTO Meeting at 6 pm

May 21: Kinder/1st Spring Concert at 6 pm

May 23: 2nd/3rd Spring Concert at 6 pm

May 27: Memorial Day (no school)

May 28: Parent Teacher Conferences (no school)

May 30: Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) meetings at 6 pm

### June

June 7: Field Day

## ACADEMICS

### PK3 and PK4: Creative Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, developed by Teaching Strategies Inc., uses exploration and discovery as a way of learning. The curriculum provides students the opportunity to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills as they engage with meaningful, authentic, and relevant study topics throughout the year. As the 6-week studies progress, students become content experts and learn to use content specific language and tools. Some study topics include Balls, Trees, Buildings, Clothes, and Boxes.

The Creative Curriculum is based on 38 objectives for development and learning. The system features knowledge-building volumes and daily practice resources that, in tandem, give every educator the “what,” “why” and “how” of early childhood education. The Creative Curriculum offers daily opportunities to individualize instruction, helping teachers meet the needs of every type of learner. The curriculum addresses all areas of learning to support the development of the whole child and contains guidance for working with all learners, including advanced learners and children with disabilities.

### Kindergarten and First Grade Curriculum

*Literacy Block:* The Kindergarten and First Grade classes practice the 120-minute literacy block endorsed by DCPS, incorporate high-impact instructional strategies, and use a variety of research-based, vetted curricular materials to support the block. The components of the literacy block include:

- *Phonics:* Phonics instruction is a time when students are able to focus on letter sounds, letter recognition, and letter formation. For phonics, we will use Foundations, a highly effective curriculum for phonics that includes hands-on materials and embedded assessments.
- *Close Reading:* During close reading, students are exposed to complex text above their independent reading level. Students answer text-dependent questions during discussions and respond to evidence-based writing prompts. Close reading is a time when students are encouraged to think critically and ask/answer higher order thinking questions.
- *Guided Reading:* Guided reading ensures that our students are exposed to new strategies to aid their fluency and comprehension. Teachers work with four to six students on text at their instructional level, assess students, and then make adjustments to their instruction and choice of text material for the next guided reading session.
- *Literacy Work Stations:* While some students engage in guided reading, others participate in online Lexia Core 5 instruction, independent reading, writing, word work, and fluency activities during literacy work stations.
- *Writing:* Writing instruction takes place during close reading, where teachers assign evidence-based responses to text. Teachers also use the Schoolwide

Fundamentals writing curriculum, which is based upon the Columbia Teachers' College Writers' Workshop model.

In addition to the fundamental close reading curriculum, which weaves in opportunities for science and social studies instruction contextualized within the units of study, the Kindergarten students will also participate in an exciting new initiative called Cornerstones- engaging, authentic experiences that all DCPS students will complete during the unit of study that will give them real-world understanding of academic concepts.

*Math Block:* Each day Kindergarten and First Grade students engage in 90 minutes of math instruction. Eureka Math materials are used for instruction, but teachers also incorporate project-based math problems that allow students to practice skills and apply their knowledge to real-life scenarios.

*Blended Learning:* During both reading and math, a blended learning approach is incorporated into parts of the block to allow learning to be individualized and to create smaller groups for teacher-student instruction. During reading, students will use Lexia Core 5, an online reading program that is proven to improve reading skills, including students who are English language learners or who have special needs. During math, students may use the i-Ready online math program. Both of these programs personalize instruction for students and provide detailed data that teachers can use to assess student growth and plan for additional instruction. Students may also use Zearn and Learnzillion online programs.

*Advanced Learning: Junior Great Books-* Similar to close reading, the Junior Great Books curriculum uses a method called "Shared Inquiry", in which the teacher starts with an open-ended question about the meaning of a selection and then asks follow-up questions to help participants develop their ideas. Students will gain experience communicating complex ideas and in supporting, testing, and expanding their own thoughts. *DARE Units-* Teachers take advantage of the DCPS Advanced Reader Extension modules. Through the DARE units, above-level readers are exposed to challenging text and have opportunities to engage in evidence-based, interpretive discussions.

### Experiential Learning at Van Ness

This year Van Ness will begin incorporating an experiential learning model similar to the Expeditionary Learning program. Expeditionary Learning believes that how children learn is just as important as what they learn and that hands-on, real world experiences support children's development into life-long problem solvers.

At Van Ness, each class will engage in project-based expeditions that support the in-depth study of a topic across all disciplines: reading, writing, math and enrichment areas such as art, music and physical education.

Learning expeditions align to the Common Core Standards, the Cornerstones, and the end-of-unit Creative Curriculum celebrations. They include challenging questions, case studies, projects, and experiences that encourage students to engage with the world around them and become stewards of their own learning. Expeditions will also have a culminating project that benefits the school or community.

#### STEM/Science

Kindergarten to Second Grade students will benefit from Project Lead the Way, a STEM curriculum that provides iPads and opportunities for students to explore and problem solve real-world challenges with hands-on materials.

#### Enrichment/Specials

Students will have PE/Health, Music, Spanish, Art, and Library.

### ASSESSMENTS

#### GOLD

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic, ongoing observational system for assessing children from birth through kindergarten. It supports teachers in observing children in the context of everyday experiences, which is an effective way to learn what they know and can do. Teaching Strategies GOLD is based on 38 objectives for development and learning that include predictors of school success and are based on school readiness standards. The objectives are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and DC early learning guidelines. These objectives are at the heart of the system; teachers use them to focus their observations as they gather information to make classroom decisions. Teaching Strategies GOLD is fully aligned to the Creative Curriculum for Preschool.

#### DIBELS

The DIBELS assessment (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a set of measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS are comprised of seven measures that function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. DIBELS was designed for use in identifying children experiencing difficulty in acquisition of basic early literacy skills in order to provide support early and prevent the occurrence of later reading difficulties and is one of the DCPS district-wide assessment used for elementary school students.

#### TRC

Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) is an individually administered assessment using leveled readers from a book set to determine a student's instructional reading level. During this measure, students are asked to read a benchmark book and complete a number of follow-up tasks, which may include Oral Comprehension,

Written Comprehension, Recalling, and Retelling. The teacher observes and records the student's oral reading behaviors through the administration of a reading record to determine reading accuracy. The comprehension components help the teacher determine whether the student understands the meaning of the text. By using a combination of a student's Accuracy, Oral Comprehension, and/or Written Comprehension scores on a particular book, this assessment provides a student's reading proficiency level. TRC is a DCPS measure that provides the book level teachers use during guided reading, a daily component of the 120-minute literacy block.

### i-Ready

i-Ready is a diagnostic math assessment that adapts to each student, providing easier or harder questions depending on students' answers to previous questions. By adapting across grades, i-Ready Diagnostic helps teachers understand the root causes behind student challenges. This is especially beneficial for providing differentiated instruction and for identifying gaps or for determining where students are ready for further challenge. Based on the diagnostic results, i-Ready automatically provides individualized online and teacher-led instruction targeted to each student's unique needs. In addition, easy-to-read reports provide teachers with a detailed action plan for individual and group instruction and the tools to deliver that instruction in any learning environment.

## LOGISTICS

### Arrival

Instruction begins each day at 8:45 am. To ensure that your child has enough time to make it to his or her classroom and get settled, please be sure to drop off by 8:40 am. Free breakfast will be available for all students. PK3 and PK4 families can drop off at the classroom; K to 3rd grade students will walk up to the classroom independently.

### Arrival Times

- Before care: 7 to 8:25 am
- Breakfast: 8:25 am in the classrooms
- School day: 8:40 am (instruction starts at 8:45 am)

### Dismissal

The school day ends at 3:15 pm and the pick up window is from 3:15 to 3:20 pm. Parents of PK3 and PK4 students may come to pick up children at classrooms at that time. Kindergarten students will be dismissed to the gymnasium.

### Early Dismissal

If parents need to pick up students before 3:15 pm, they should first go to the main office and sign the student out in the early dismissal book. The student will be escorted to the office for dismissal. While it is not always possible, we encourage parents to schedule appointments during non-school-day hours so that students do not

miss valuable learning time. Teachers use the end of the day to review lessons, distribute homework, and plan for the following day, so it is important that students be present for this portion of the day. Please keep this in mind when scheduling doctor and dentist appointments for your child. Please be sure to provide the school with a written note under the following circumstances:

- To give permission for a student to leave school early
- To excuse a child from an activity for medical reasons
- To give permission for a child's extended absence
- To give permission for a child to leave with another student, parent, or family friend

### Attendance

Attendance at school each day is critical to our students' success. When students are not in school, they miss out on important instructional time. Please make every effort to ensure that your child comes to school every day. Teachers will call home when students are absent and the Van Ness registrar or social worker will schedule meetings with families when students have more than 5 days of unexcused absences.

### Tardiness

In addition to attending school each day, it's important that students arrive at school *on time*. In order for our students to be successful, they have to consistently come to school on time. Moreover, late-arriving students cause a disruption to classroom instruction and create a challenge for teachers as they begin their day. If a student will be tardy, parents should present a note explaining the reason for the tardiness. If your child will be tardy, please be sure to call the school office to let a staff member know. The security officer will direct tardy parents to the main office to get a tardy slip to ensure that attendance information for the day is updated.

### Field Trips

Classes will take walking field trips often to nearby locations. Be sure to complete the walking field trip permission slip (just once at the start of the year) so that your child can participate during the school year. In addition, other trips will be organized throughout the year. Parents will receive notice and permission slips, along with important information about the trips. Please feel free to volunteer as chaperones. The school nurse can provide more information on administration of medication for students on field trips; a staff member trained in that administration will accompany classes on trips.

### Dress code

Please follow these uniform guidelines: Light blue Van Ness t-shirt, long-sleeve t-shirt, or polo on top. Students may also wear plain light blue or navy polo shirts. In cooler weather, students may wear a navy or black cardigan. Students can wear any bottoms, but should refrain from wearing bottoms that are see-through, that don't fit properly at the waist and lack a belt, short shorts, or clothing that has inappropriate writing on it.

Students should wear closed-toe shoes for safety on the playground. Avoid wearing flip-flops or other strappy sandals that could cause injury.

### Supplies

Students will be given a supply list with the necessary materials for school. Please be sure to purchase the needed supplies and let us know if you have financial difficulties that prevent this so that we can assist you. In addition to basic supplies, all students should also come to school with a change of clothes and nap blanket, both clearly labeled with their first and last names. Students will not need to supply their own nap mats – the school will provide cots for this.

### Office Hours

The school office is open from 8 am to 4:30 pm daily.

### Before and After School Program

Van Ness has partnered with Springboard Education to provide the before and after school program and during half days, parent teacher conference days, and teacher professional development days. For additional information about enrolling with springboard, you can go to the website [springboardafterschool.com](http://springboardafterschool.com), call 1-800-341-3177, or email Ashley Olt at [aolt@springboardkids.com](mailto:aolt@springboardkids.com).

### Emergency Response Preparation and Procedures

#### Security

At Van Ness we have two security guards to protect the building who follow protocols determined by the DCPS security team and the contractor who oversees our security officers, the SAM security company. Please be sure to sign in and out when entering and exiting the building and be prepared to provide identification.

#### Emergency Response

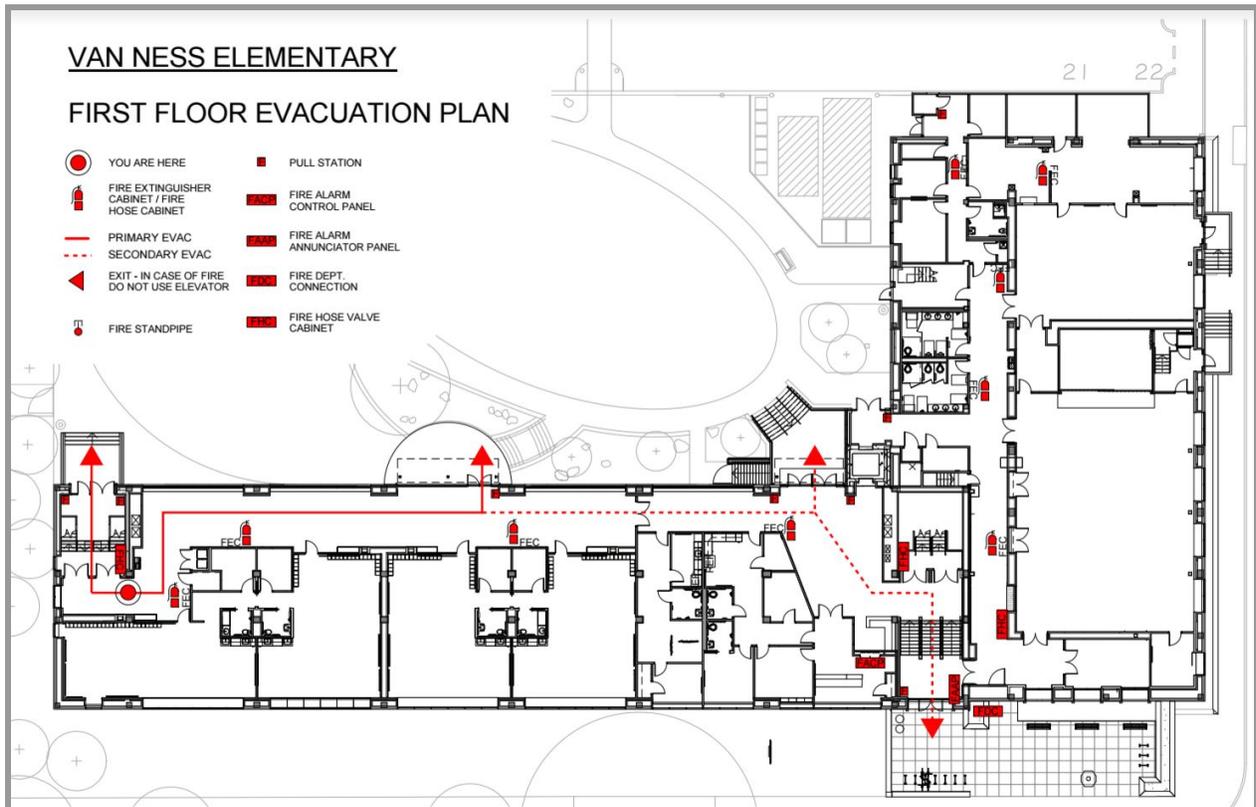
At Van Ness, we will be sure to prepare for emergency situations, including:

1. Evacuation (such as in the case of fire): Students will be evacuated quickly and quietly, according to evacuation routes.
2. Alert Status (such as in a community emergency): The building will be secured (all doors locked from the inside) and staff will be posted at entrances/exits.
3. Lockdown/Shelter-in-Place (to protect students from potential dangers outside): Students are cleared from the halls and report to all classrooms, where windows and doors are locked and covered.
4. Severe Weather/Drop, Cover, & Hold (for extreme weather or earthquake): Students move to designated safe areas. During earthquakes, students take cover under desks or tables, cover eyes, and hold onto desk legs.

## Inclement Weather

When weather conditions are poor and roads are hazardous, school may open late, close early, or close for the entire day, depending on the severity of the weather. During these situations, parents should monitor television and radio stations or check the DCPS website for updates. Parents can sign up to receive text message updates by texting "DCPS" to the number 91990. Information is usually available as early as 5:30 am or shortly after. In some cases, students will stay inside for recess when the weather is too hot. In those instances, students may play structured games or have indoor recess.

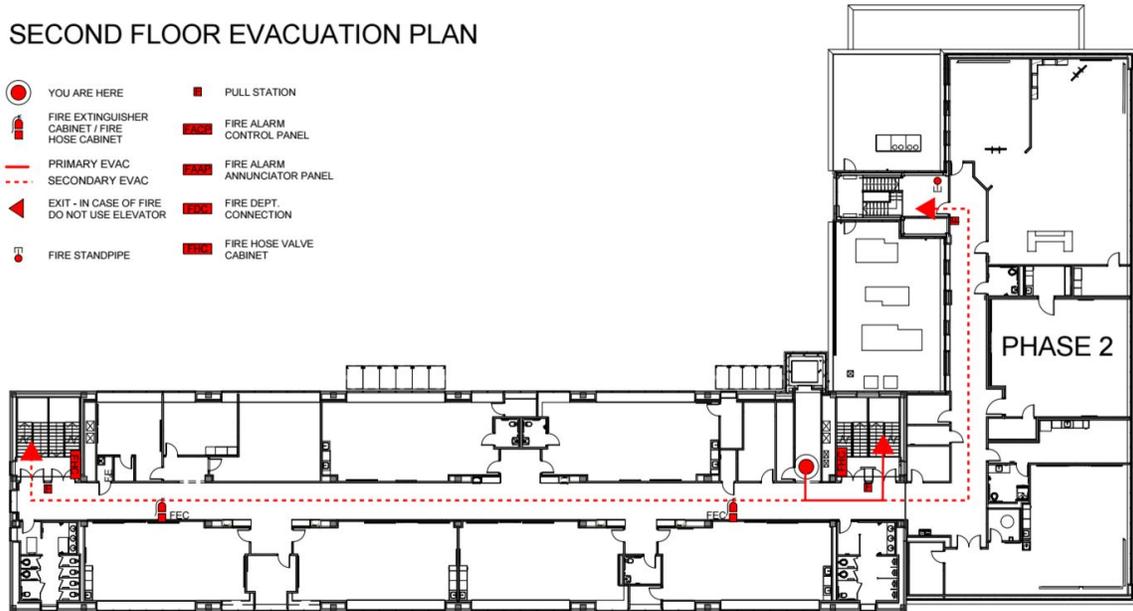
## Evacuation Routes



**VAN NESS ELEMENTARY**

**SECOND FLOOR EVACUATION PLAN**

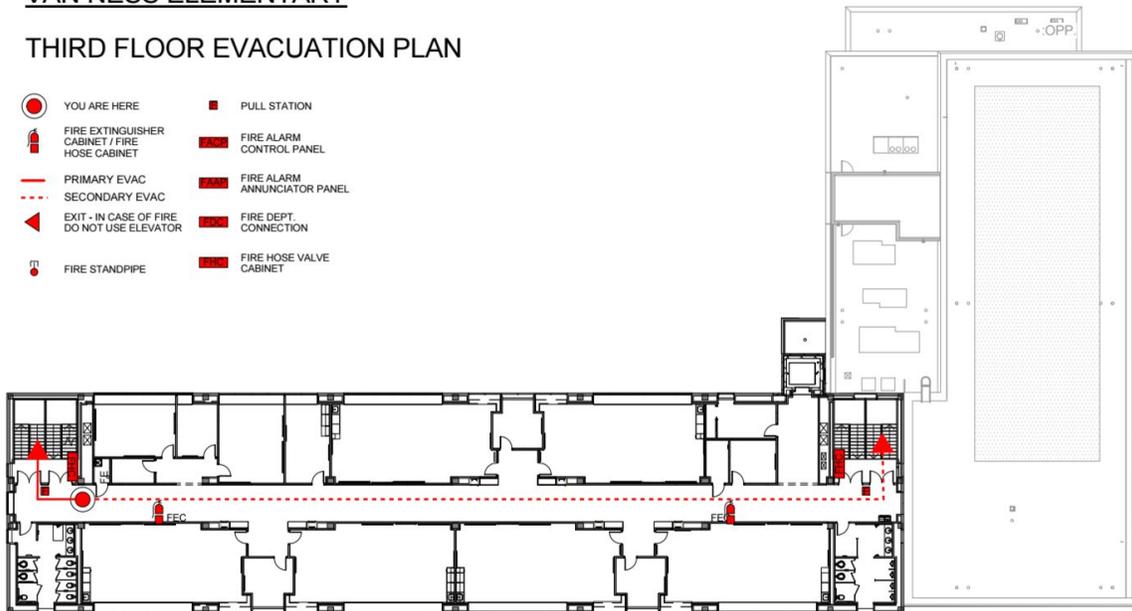
- |   |   |   |                                 |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
|  | YOU ARE HERE  |  | PULL STATION                    |
|  | FIRE EXTINGUISHER<br>CABINET / FIRE<br>HOSE CABINET |  | FIRE ALARM<br>CONTROL PANEL     |
|  | PRIMARY EVAC  |  | FIRE ALARM<br>ANNUNCIATOR PANEL |
|  | SECONDARY EVAC                                      |  | FIRE DEPT.<br>CONNECTION        |
|  | EXIT - IN CASE OF FIRE<br>DO NOT USE ELEVATOR       |  | FIRE HOSE VALVE<br>CABINET      |
|  | FIRE STANDPIPE                                      |   |                                 |



**VAN NESS ELEMENTARY**

**THIRD FLOOR EVACUATION PLAN**

- |   |   |   |                                 |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
|  | YOU ARE HERE  |  | PULL STATION                    |
|  | FIRE EXTINGUISHER<br>CABINET / FIRE<br>HOSE CABINET |  | FIRE ALARM<br>CONTROL PANEL     |
|  | PRIMARY EVAC  |  | FIRE ALARM<br>ANNUNCIATOR PANEL |
|  | SECONDARY EVAC                                      |  | FIRE DEPT.<br>CONNECTION        |
|  | EXIT - IN CASE OF FIRE<br>DO NOT USE ELEVATOR       |  | FIRE HOSE VALVE<br>CABINET      |
|  | FIRE STANDPIPE                                      |   |                                 |



## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

### School Meals

Sodexo will provide breakfast and lunch. *We are nut-free school; parents may send students with lunch and snacks, but please adhere to this guideline for the safety of our students with allergies.* Please note that you can always check to see what the monthly breakfast and lunch meals will be by going to [dcps.dc.gov](http://dcps.dc.gov) and searching for school menus.

### Breakfast

Starting the day with a nutritious, well-rounded meal helps our students to be more engaged learners, stay focused in class, and have the energy to participate in academic and social activities. The DCPS Food Service has guaranteed that all students, regardless of socio-economic status, have breakfast available each morning between 8:25 and 8:40 am free of cost. We encourage all of our parents to take advantage of this program and help set your children up for a positive and healthy day at school. If you'd like for your child to eat breakfast, arrive by 8:30 am to allow adequate time to eat before class.

### Lunch

Lunch is served daily between 11:30 and 1:35. The cost for lunch for students who are not eligible for free and reduced price meals is \$2.80. Parents may pay for lunch by registering students on [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com). Student ID numbers are needed in order to register and parents may load any amount of money they wish onto the student account to pay for meals. For additional information on how to purchase meals, visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/page/meal-prices-and-payment>. If you believe you should be eligible for free or reduced price meals, please be sure to reach out to our school admin aide to receive and complete a form.

### Nutritional standards

All meals are healthy, contain fresh fruits and vegetables, and *exceed* the healthy schools act. To learn more about nutritional standards at DCPS, you can visit <http://dcps.dc.gov/page/dcps-nutritional-standards>.

### Healthy Snacks

Please send only healthy, non-'junk food' snacks from home. This is very important. The food that students eat has a direct and important relationship to their ability to learn and thrive in school. Be sure to adhere to the following guidelines for snacks and meals that you give your children (for school and at home):

Preferred types of snacks		Snacks to avoid
Water	100% Juice	Soda or 'juice' with corn syrup, added sugar, or food coloring
Baby carrots	Pretzels	Potato chips
Cheese	Popcorn	Candy
Raisins	Rice cakes	Snacks high in sodium (Cheetos, Doritos, etc.)
Fruit slices	Tortilla chips	Snacks high in sugar (donuts, etc.)

If having a birthday celebration in the classroom and bringing in food, please observe our nut-free requirement. Cupcakes are okay to bring in, but please do not plan on candy giveaways in favor bags for students. Always check with the teacher to arrange timing of birthday celebrations and ensure snacks provided will be appropriate for all students, including those with allergies.

## Student Health

### School Nurse Schedule

Van Ness will have a nurse on site full time. Patricia Tolson, RN, will be present in our health suite to see sick students or those requiring administration of medication. The school nurse will call parents immediately in cases where an injury has occurred. Please be sure all of your phone numbers on file at the school are correct so that she is able to reach you.

### Medical Records

Current immunization, physical, and dental records should be presented at the time of registration. Please be sure to make a doctor's appointment early to provide enough time for the doctor to complete the form and for you to submit it to the school office. If you haven't submitted forms, please do so right away.

### Illness

Please notify us if your child has any symptoms of illness, especially contagious diseases and conditions like chicken pox, measles, tuberculosis, ringworm, lice, impetigo, or conjunctivitis (pink eye). The nurse will make an assessment and decide if the student is able to remain in school, go home for the day, or stay at home until a doctor's note is received, based on the nature of the illness.

### Medication

Medication can be issued to students with a current physician's authorization. If a student is required to take medication during school hours, only the nurse or designated certified employees can administer medicine in compliance with school health guidelines. Medicine should be delivered to the school nurse by parents. For their safety, students are not allowed to have medicine on their person or in their locker/cubby.

### Medical Emergencies

In case of injury, limited first aid will be provided. The parent or guardian listed on the emergency form will be contacted immediately. If emergency treatment is required, an ambulance will be called and a staff member will accompany the student and wait in the emergency room until the parent arrives. Please be sure to update your emergency contact information so that we are able to reach you if an accident occurs.

## SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

### Behavior Expectations

We have wonderful students at Van Ness and staff members who are dedicated to ensuring students not only excel academically, but also are able to thrive emotionally and physically. We create a nurturing environment for children and use developmentally appropriate classroom practices to minimize inappropriate behaviors. It is helpful to have guidelines to follow in the instance when a student displays inappropriate behaviors or actions that may harm or danger others.

### Prevention

The first step in any effective behavior plan is preventing negative behaviors before they arise. To achieve this, Van Ness teachers plan engaging and meaningful activities for students, ensure students are supervised at all times, and make classroom and school-wide expectations clear to all students.

- Guidelines around student/teacher ratios are closely monitored and Van Ness will meet or exceed the adequate number of adults supervising students. In many cases, specials teachers 'pushing in' to classrooms to provide instruction or student teachers working with classes facilitate this.
- Teachers or partner teachers escort students when transitioning from the classroom to their specials classes, lunch, or recess.
- Substitute teachers will receive detailed lesson plans and behavior expectations so that they can effectively manage classroom behavior.

### Intervention

When students display behaviors that are harmful or inappropriate, we will maintain a child-centered approach and provide the supports the student needs to be successful. These could include time working with our social worker or school psychologist, conference time with the teacher and coach or principal, and implementation of a behavior intervention plan. The intervention plan could include adjustments to the environment or setting, reduced stimuli, use of adaptive materials (special seats, personalized materials, visual communication device or schedule, etc.) In cases when a behavior intervention plan developed within the classroom is not effective, a cross-disciplinary team of teachers and mental health staff members may meet to implement a response to intervention (RTI) plan for a student.

### Consequences

As a school with all early childhood students, we are committed to the use of child-centered consequences that aim to teach children alternative and more positive behaviors, rather than punish them for their actions. We will avoid severe consequences such as suspension, in-school suspension, and expulsion for students and instead use a cross-team approach, with parent conferences to get support from families, to address difficult behaviors.

## DCPS Early Childhood Behavior Protocols

In order to comply with the intent of DCMR and also to support healthy child development, *early childhood students may not be suspended for any length of time. This includes in-school and out-of-school suspensions.* To help avoid removing a student from the classroom, these initial steps will be employed when negative behaviors are present.

- Verbal redirection
- Cognitive Modeling 
- Parental contact
- Behavior plan

## Response to Intervention (Academic and Behavior Interventions)

At Van Ness, our aim is to provide all students with the supports needed for them to be successful. We are constantly observing students, assessing their strengths and growth areas, and either adjusting our instruction or providing them with alternative instruction.

The Response to Intervention Model (RTI) is a three-tiered education model practiced in many of the most effective schools. All students are exposed to fundamental 'Tier 1' instruction that features a core academic curriculum, clear behavioral expectations and academic screeners to assess students' academic achievement. When students are having difficulty, 'Tier 2' and 'Tier 3' interventions are implemented to provide students with academic and behavior supports to help them reach their fullest potential. The RTI process at Van Ness is based on the district-wide model developed by DCPS and consists of four steps:

1. Data is collected on student progress and teachers meet to review data, set goals, and determine interventions for students not meeting goals or for students who need enrichment/acceleration.
2. Students who are not meeting goals after data meetings are referred to the RTI process.
3. The RTI team meets (including teachers, parents, enrichment teachers, and socio-emotional support staff members) to develop goals and relevant interventions that will be implemented over a four-week period.
4. The RTI team meets again after four weeks to review student progress. Based on the results, the RTI team can refer student for SPED assessment (with parental consent), modify the goals and recommend more intensive interventions for another four-week period, or, if the student is back on track, return the student back to Tier 1 (grade-level curricula) without additional interventions needed.

## Special Education Services

Both Federal (IDEA) and local laws and regulations (DCMR) require that public schools provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities. Van Ness Elementary School complies with these regulations by implementing special education services with the intent of providing an excellent and innovative education to students with disabilities through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

All records pertaining to students with special needs should be shared with the school in order to provide seamless student services if the child qualifies for special education services and the disability is impacting his/her education.

Special education services include (but are not limited to): instructional support/intervention, counseling, behavior therapy, speech/language therapy, and occupational therapy. Van Ness Elementary School operates using an inclusion model. In our model, students with disabilities participate in the general education classroom to the greatest extent appropriate.

### The Special Education Team

The following participants make decisions for students receiving special education services:

- *Parents*: They provide information about their child, help make decisions about education plans, and partner with teachers and staff to help their children succeed.
- *General Education and Special Education Teachers*: Teachers are responsible for delivering core instruction, delivering specialized instruction, implementing accommodations (including behavior plans), co-planning together, participating in IEP (and other special education related) meetings, and collaborating with students, parents and related service providers.
- *Local Education Agency Representative (LEA Rep)*: The LEA Representative is responsible for providing teachers with relevant student information (including IEP snapshots), scheduling/facilitating IEP meetings, monitoring student progress on IEP goals, supervising related service providers, and serving as a liaison to parents.
- *Related Service Providers*: Their role is to provide services outlined in the IEPs, participate in IEP meetings, collaborate with teachers (about IEPs), deliver training to teachers, complete their portions of IEP progress reports cards, and administer assessments when necessary and appropriate. Providers can observe students involved in the RTI process. The service providers include, but are not limited to:
  - School Psychologist
  - Social Worker
  - Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP)
  - Occupational Therapist (OT)

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

### Communication to Parents

Teachers and staff members will communicate with parents in the following ways:

- Weekly parent emails from the head of school
- Weekly teacher newsletters (class information about upcoming events)
- Teacher websites (including photos and other key information)
- Family Home Visits (teachers will visit with parents and families to learn more about student strengths and hear parents' hopes and dreams for their children)
- Robocalls (Periodically parents will receive robocall messages as reminders for upcoming events or in cases of school closure because of inclement weather)

In addition to the above listed forums for communication between home and school, parents can also:

- Attend monthly family engagement events
- Participate in parent-teacher conferences
- Feel free to contact teachers or administrators directly if a concern arises that cannot wait for a scheduled visit

### Van Ness Parent Teacher Organization:

The Van Ness Parent Teacher Organization is a parent-run volunteer organization. The VNPTO vision is to create a supportive and inclusive school community that promotes academic success for all Van Ness Elementary School students. VNPTO will utilize the expertise, energy, and creativity of the neighborhood to make Van Ness Elementary School an excellent, progressive, nurturing school for neighborhood children. You can sign up for the Van Ness Parent Teacher Organization by emailing [vannessparentgroup@gmail.com](mailto:vannessparentgroup@gmail.com)

### LSAT

A Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) is a group of elected and appointed members that exist in every DCPS school. The team consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and in some cases students, to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and high achievement for all students.

Local School Advisory Teams have primary responsibility for the following:

- Advising the principal on priorities and goals
- Working with the principal on developing the local Comprehensive School Plan (school goals)
- Reviewing data in order to be informed about school needs and trends
- Monitoring and assessing the implementation of the local Comprehensive School Plan
- Using assessment results to develop specific strategies for research-based school improvement

- Alignment of strategic and specific goals and objectives of DCPS

The Local School Advisory Team will have the following members representing their constituencies:

- 1 WTU Building Representative or designee
- 4 Teachers, elected by the ET-15 and EG-09 teachers
- 4 Parents who have children currently enrolled in the school, elected by the parents
- 1 Parent Group Leader (of PTA, PTO, PTSA, HSA, or other such group) or designee who has children currently enrolled in the school
- 1 Non-Instructional local School Staff Member, elected by non-instructional school staff
- 1 Student (in high schools, and optional at other levels)
- 1 Community Member who is a resident of the local school's boundary

### Volunteering at School

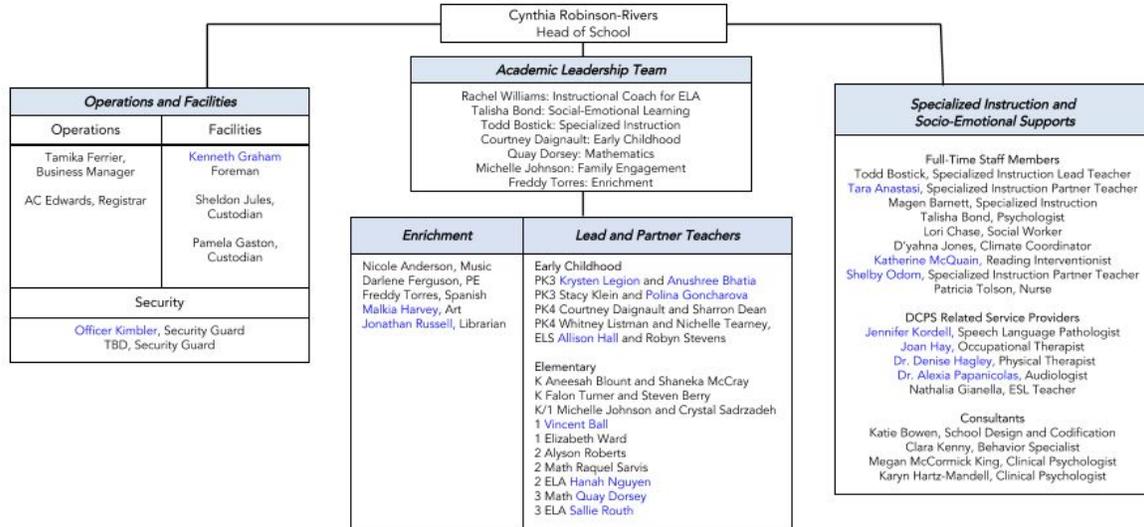
Van Ness welcomes parent volunteers. According to DCPS policies, field trip chaperones and volunteers who work directly with students more than one day/event are required to complete the DCPS volunteer clearance process. Volunteers are processed and fingerprinted on a walk-in basis on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am - 3:30 pm at the DCPS Central Office (1200 First Street NE, 10th floor). For more information and answers to frequently asked questions, go to <http://dcps.dc.gov/page/volunteer-our-schools>.

## Staff List and Room Locations

Position	Name	Room
<b>Administrative Team</b>		
Head of School	Cynthia Robinson-Rivers	122
Business Manager	Tamika Ferrier	301
Registrar	Ashley Edwards	120
<b>Teaching Team</b>		
PK3 Lead Teacher	Krysten Legion	134
PK3 Partner Teacher	Anushree Bhatia	134
PK3 Lead Teacher	Stacy Klein	136
PK3 Partner Teacher	Polina Goncharova	136
PK3 ELS Teacher	Allison Hall	219
PK3 ELS Partner Teacher	Robyn Stevens	219
PK4 Lead Teacher	Courtney Daignault	130
PK4 Partner Teacher	Sharron Dean	130
PK4 Lead Teacher	Whitney Listman	132
PK4 Partner Teacher	Nichelle Tearney	132
Kindergarten Lead Teacher	Aneesah Blount	214
Kindergarten Partner Teacher	Shaneka McCray	214
K/1 Split Lead Teacher	Michelle Johnson	217
K/1 Split Partner Teacher	Crystal Sadrzadeh	217
Kindergarten Lead Teacher	Falon Turner	210
Kindergarten Partner Teacher	Steven Berry	210
First Grade Teacher	Elizabeth Ward	216
First Grade Teacher	Vincent Ball	220
Second Grade Teacher	Aly Roberts	307
Specialized Instruction Teacher	Magen Barnett	307
Second Grade Lead Teacher	Raquel Sarvis	302
Second Grade Lead Teacher	Hanah Nguyen	306
Third Grade Teacher	Sallie Routh	308
Third Grade Teacher	Quay Dorsey	312
<b>Special Subject Team</b>		
Art	Malkia Harvey	207
PE	Darlene Ferguson	102
Music	Nicole Anderson	203
Spanish	Freddy Torres	311
Librarian	Jonathan Russell	201
<b>Resource Team</b>		
Reading Interventionist	Katherine McQuain	315
Instructional Coach for ELA	Rachel Williams	310
Librarian	Jonathan Russell	201
School Psychologist	Talisha Bond	304
Social Worker	Lori Chase	309

Climate Coordinator	D'yahna Jones	313
Specialized Instruction Teacher	Todd Bostick	319
Specialized Instruction Partner Teacher	Tara Anastasi	315
Specialized Instruction Partner Teacher	Shelby Odom	319
Speech Language Pathologist	Jennifer Kordell	225
Occupational Therapist	Joan Hay	225
Physical Therapist	Denise Hagley	225
English Language Support	Nathalia Gianella	225
Springboard Senior Coordinator	Sharon Wright	317
Springboard Coordinator	Tamiko Goss	
<b>Support Team</b>		
School Nurse	Patricia Tolson	126
Security Security (Tuesdays)	Emily Kibler TBD	Main Lobby
<b>SodexoMAGIC</b>		
Cafeteria Manager	Deborah Knight	Kitchen/113
Cafeteria Worker	Michael Anderson	Kitchen/113
Cafeteria Worker	Patrice Marshall	Kitchen/113
<b>Maintenance Team</b>		
Foreman	Kenneth Graham	111
Custodian	Sheldon Jules	111
Custodian	Pamela Gaston	111
<b>Shared Locations</b>		
	Conference Room	120A
	Staff Workroom, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor	223
	VNES PTO	305

## Van Ness Organizational Chart 2018-19



New staff members highlighted in blue



