



OF
COWING
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM



About Us

COWING EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL
160 PARK STREET
WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA. 01089
PHONE: 413-263-3326
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Office Hours: Monday- Friday 8:15am -3:45pm

Principal for Cowing and John Ashley Schools
Kathleen Bailer
413-263-3326 or 413-263-3323 (John Ashley School)
bailer@wsps.org

Email Directory

School Secretary - Sara Almoula salmoula@wsps.org
Room 1 & 2 - Jennifer Berenson berenson@wsps.org
Room 3 - Pam Leonard pleonard@wsps.org
Room 4 - Maureen Christofori christofori@wsps.org
Room 5 - Gina Maloney maloney@wsps.org
Room 6 - Kim Kania kania@wsps.org
Room 7 - Kristin Trznadel ktrznadel@wsps.org
English Language Teacher - Michelle Longey mlongey@wsps.org
Speech and Language Pathologist - Erin Thomas thomas@wsps.org
Occupational Therapist - Loreen Devine devine@wsps.org
School Psychologist/Team Chair - Janis Ruggieria ruggieria@wsps.org
School Adjustment Counselor - Jennifer Brennan brennan@wsps.org
Nurse - Cheryl Sitler - sitler@wsps.org

Vision

A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.

West Springfield Public Schools fosters a school environment where family and community partnerships support students as they learn to be compassionate, empathetic, and healthy citizens. Our work is based upon 5 core competencies:

- Self Awareness
- Self Management
- Social Awareness

- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision Making

Mission

The mission at Cowing School follows the mission of the district which is to provide all students with the best possible education to enable them to experience the joy of reaching their full potential. A collaborative approach to educating the whole child is at the forefront of this undertaking. We strive to ensure that each student:

- Comes to school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle;
- Learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe;
- Is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community;
- Is challenged academically and prepared for success.

By providing our students with the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise, we commit to preparing them to thrive in this global 21st century economy. Among the essential skills for success are critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, and communication and collaboration.

Our Program

An integrated early childhood program serving children with and without disabilities. The program currently has the capacity to serve 135 children. Sixty-three of these placements are designated for those children with identified disabilities. In addition, we offer a specialized preschool program for children with an autism diagnosis.

Our Philosophy

The Early Childhood program offers a language-based multisensory approach to learning. We provide developmentally appropriate curriculum and practices. The curriculum features a balance of child-centered and content-oriented activities derived from the child, the classroom teacher and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The day is composed of a variety of activities allowing for a balance of active and quiet time, small and large group instruction and teacher-directed and child-initiated experiences. The classes are a rich mixture of children between the ages of three and five years of age with a wide variation in experience upon entering school. We respect individuality and age of the learner.

Age Range & Eligibility

Our classrooms are integrated with peer partners and children with special needs. Peer partners must be **3 years old** by **September 1**, and toilet trained, to be considered. We have a limited number of peer partner spaces available and selection for the program will be based on set criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Priority is given to children age 4+ and eligible to attend kindergarten the following year. Once all available slots are full, remaining applicants will be placed on a waitlist and contacted as space becomes

available. All enrolled peer partners must attend a developmental screening. Children with identified disabilities are eligible for placement at 3 years of age if recommended by the Special Education Evaluation TEAM.

Full Day Program*

Limited full-day sessions for peer partners are chosen by lottery and only available to students 4+ years of age that are currently enrolled in the program. Selection into the full day program for students with identified disabilities is through the recommendation of the IEP team.

Attendance

The West Springfield School District encourages good school attendance, since only through regular attendance can a student take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered. We believe in a direct and positive correlation between good school attendance and academic success. Therefore students are expected to be in attendance every day of the school year. If your child will be absent, please remember to call the office at 263-3326 before 9:30 am. Please see the Kindergarten/Early Childhood Handbook for more information about attendance.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special here at Cowing School. Teachers recognize birthdays in the classroom. If you wish to recognize your child's birthday or a holiday in his/her classroom, non-food items such as stickers, pencils or small tokens are always a fun option. Due to the district's wellness policy, we cannot accept food or drink for birthday celebrations.

Class Assignments

You will receive a letter from the principal during the summer, which states your child's teacher, staff, meet and greet information and the first day of school.

Class Size

We strive to provide an optimal learning environment for our youngest learners by keeping class sizes small and providing a head teacher and assistant for each classroom. Our teacher to child ratio is 1 to 8 or less with a maximum of 15 students in each class.

Clothing

Children should be dressed comfortably for school and wear sneakers for gross motor play in the gym or on the playground. Please provide a change of clothes for your child including multiple pairs of underwear and pants. Children go outdoors and should be dressed with appropriate outdoor gear including hats, snow boots, gloves, snow pants and a jacket.

Contacting School

A strong home-school connection is important for school success. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact your child's teacher by calling the office at 413-263-3326 or by emailing the teacher directly. Teachers all check their email twice a day.

Curriculum

For many children, preschool is their first opportunity in a structured, group setting with teachers and groups of children. We teach children how to be part of a group, how to take turns, how to share, how to follow instructions and how to be part of the classroom community. We focus on early literacy, math, science, and social studies through active play opportunities. These skills provide the building blocks for being a successful learner. All areas of our curriculum are closely aligned with the Massachusetts State Frameworks. Students are assessed in English Language Arts and Math two times a year to measure progress.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Parent parking at Cowing is in the back lot near the playground or in open spaces in the middle of the lot. The Senior Center reserves the parking spaces alongside their building. Please do not park in these spaces. There are handicap parking spaces next to the Cowing building if needed.

If you are dropping your child off in the mornings, please arrive between 8:45-9:00 am for the Full Day and Morning programs or between 12:30-12:45 for the Afternoon program and walk your child to the side ramp where a staff member will be waiting to escort your child into the building. If you would like to visit the office or speak with a teacher before or after school, please come to the front door. If your child arrives after the busses have unloaded, please walk your child in through the front door and sign in at the office.

To pick up your child, please arrive at 11:20 for the morning session or 3:05 for the day and afternoon sessions and wait outside the door where your child will be walked out of the building. You will need to sign your child out with a staff member and provide a picture ID to do so.

NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANYONE WHO IS NOT LISTED ON YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY CARD. IF YOU HAVE LAST MINUTE PLAN CHANGES requiring a new member, PLEASE NOTIFY THE COWING OFFICE BY PHONE OR IN WRITING. A picture ID will be required.

Entrance

Parents are welcome at school. Please use the front entrance and buzz in.

Food Safety and Lunch

Children need healthy meals to learn. The West Springfield Public Schools offers healthy meals every school day. Lunch is offered daily for children in our Full Day and Extended programs. Lunch costs **\$2.50**. Reduced price lunch is **.40¢**.

The cost for student milk is **.40¢**

Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals. We encourage all households to fill out a meal benefit application. To do so, you can fill out a paper application which can be found on our website or in the school office. Please remember to list **ALL** children in the household

when completing the application. School Nutrition Information can be found on the district web page at <http://www.wsps.org/index.php/about-wsps/2013-02-19-01-58-59/food-service>

Online payments for school meals can be made at [PayPAMS](#) or money can be sent at the beginning of each week in your child's backpack in an envelope with your child's name on it.

Under school safety guidelines, staff cannot offer children younger than four years of age the following foods: hot dogs - whole sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas and hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Due to the fact that we have a few children under the age of 4, we will provide a substitute for items on the school menu. When the school menu states hot dogs, chicken or turkey chunks with gravy are being served, the meal for our Full Day programs will be substituted with chicken nuggets.

Open House

We invite you to attend our Open House on Tuesday, September 26th from 5:30-6:30. This is an opportunity for your preschooler to show you his/her classroom! Siblings and extended family members are welcome to attend.

Outdoor Play

We utilize the playground equipment at Coburn School for outdoor play.

Parent Play Dates

The Cowing teachers offer parent child play dates a few times of the year on Friday mornings. These playdates are opportunities for parents to participate with their children in the early childhood curriculum. These look out for a flyer about upcoming playdates in your children's backpack.

School Year

The West Springfield Preschools follow the regular school year calendar, beginning at or near Labor Day and ending in June. The West Springfield School District calendar can be found on www.wsps.org.

Schedule

Classes for our half day program are held Monday through Thursday – 2 ½ hours each day (AM & PM)

Morning Session – 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM (Doors open at 8:45 AM)

Afternoon Session – 12:45 PM – 3:15 PM (Doors open at 12:30 PM)

Our full day program runs from 9:00-3:15. (Doors open at 8:45 AM)

Selection into the full day program is through the recommendation of the IEP team. Peer partners are selected in the spring from eligible enrolled students via lottery. Peer partners for the full day program must be age 4 and heading to Kindergarten the following year.

Screening

If your child is not on an individualized education plan, they will be screened prior to enrollment or soon after they are enrolled. A screening is a brief check of how a child is developing in several areas: language development, cognitive and perceptual skills, and motor development. Also included is a parent/nurse conference regarding your child's medical history and a social-emotional screening.

Snack

Preschoolers enjoy snack time each day. Please send in a snack and drink with your child. We encourage healthy snacks and non allergy provoking snacks such as those containing peanuts or tree nuts. If you would like to purchase a snack milk for your child, the cost is \$.40 per day for paying students or \$1.60 a week. Free milk is available for those who complete an application and are found to qualify. There is no reduced price for milk. Please place snack milk money in an envelope with your child's name and pay at the beginning of the week.

Social Emotional Learning

This is a busy time for young children. They are learning many new skills. Children might be learning how to write, what books are for, letters in their name, counting and they are wanting to help out at home and do things by themselves. Children are also learning how to understand and manage their feelings. They are learning how to make a friend and be a friend. And they are learning how to solve problems with other children. They are learning these things throughout the day in the classroom, on the playground, on the bus and at home. Children are learning by watching and listening to how teachers, family members, and friends interact with each other. But just like reading and writing, these areas of learning also have specific skills that need to be taught. At Cowing School, we use a program called **Second Step** to help us learn and practice these social-emotional skills. Children who learn and use these skills are more likely to get along with other people and to do better in school.

Families are an important part of the **Second Step** program. You will receive letters with information about the social-emotional skills your child is learning in school and ideas you can use at home to help your child learn and practice these skills.

Staff

Each classroom has a Massachusetts certified teacher and a teacher's assistant. All classroom teachers are required to be dually certified in early childhood and special education. Speech/Language, Occupational & Physical Therapists are available to serve the needs of children with disabilities. Our English Language Learner Teacher supports the acquisition of

English for those students who are not currently proficient as English speakers and are in the process of developing their English language skills.

Snow Days and School Cancellations

During the winter, school may be closed due to inclement weather. If there is a snow delay, there will be no morning preschool. In the event that a decision is made not to open school or to delay school starting time, the phone number listed in your child's school record will receive an automated message. Please be sure to report any changes in your phone number to the school office. Also, an announcement will be made over the following television and radio stations as close to 6:30 A.M. as possible: Radio: WHYN (560), WPKX (97.9), WMAS (94.7); MIX (93.1), TV: Channel 40, WGGB; Channel 22, WWLP; Channel 3, WSHM, Automatic Phone System, Internet: wsps.org

Toileting

All peer partners in our program must be toilet trained.

Transportation

Busing is provided by the West Springfield Public School System depending on location. Please call the office if you have any questions about bussing. If your child rides the bus, please keep the bus tag attached to their backpack. If your child changes backpacks, please remember to move the bus tag to the new backpack!

Tuition

If accepted, tuition for peer partners will be charged according to family size and income, set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts EEC Financial Assistance Scale. Children with identified disabilities and who have an IEP are exempt from tuition according to state and federal law. Please pay tuition with a check or money order. No cash is accepted.

Wellness Policy

Due to our district's Wellness Policy, along with the increase in food allergies, we cannot accept food or drink donations to be shared in the classroom. Please send in a healthy snack and drink each day for your child.

Wipes

We are always in need of wipes from each family at the beginning of the month as we do a lot of hand wiping throughout the day.