

# WESTFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL



The middle school's 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington, D.C., is moving to spring break for the 2018-2019 school year. The dates are March 29-April 1, 2019. This is the first weekend of spring break. The cost will be \$795. Registration will open in the fall, and more information will be sent home in August.

### ***Why did the dates of the annual 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Washington, D.C., trip change?***

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class has traditionally been able to participate in a Washington, D.C., school-sponsored trip the week after spring break. This is an optional event and not a requirement. Starting in the 2018-19 school year, the optional Washington, D.C., trip will be moved to the Friday-Saturday-Sunday-Monday (students will arrive home early Monday morning) at the start of spring break.

We are changing the dates because we utilize over 20 WMS teachers (nearly one-third of our teaching staff) as chaperones for the D.C. trip. In doing so, we leave over 900 students at school without many of their teachers during that time. On a typical school day, we struggle to find enough substitutes to fill our planned and unexpected absences. Knowingly removing 20+ substitutes from the sub pool puts other schools in our district in a stressful situation – a situation that can be avoided by moving the dates of the trip. While we have explored parent chaperones in the past, we have found that they are largely unfamiliar with the majority of our students and their various needs. This can place a parent in sometimes difficult and awkward situations, which could include attending to various medical, social, and emotional needs and enforcing discipline on a child that is not their own.

We understand the importance of family vacations during spring break and recognize the inconvenience this may cause. Taking the first few days of spring break in 2019 for the D.C. trip still allows families the opportunity take a family trip once the students return.

Knowing that families make spring break plans up to a year in advance and that many students are interested in attending the D.C. trip, we want you to have this information in mind when planning for next year.

There will be a parent meeting and information sent home on paper and via email in the first month of school next year. Again, there is nothing you need to do now to express interest or register for the trip.