



## Washington Elementary School District Editorial Style Guide

(updated July 2021)

In order to establish a cohesive language for all Washington Elementary School District (WESD) entities, an editorial style sheet has been compiled to serve as a guide for WESD schools and departments. Information that is distributed to parents, posted to Web sites, printed in school newsletters or distributed to the public should adhere to these guidelines.

For WESD purposes, style is defined as rules regarding the mechanics of written communication such as

capitalization, spelling and punctuation of words – not as rules of literary composition or forms of expression such as manner and tone.

The following information relates to words and terms commonly used in the WESD. If you have suggestions for additions to this style guide, please contact Pam Horton in Communications and Public Engagement at 602-347-2694 or email her at [pam.horton@wesdschools.org](mailto:pam.horton@wesdschools.org).

### Who we are

**Washington Elementary School District** or **Washington Elementary School District #6** (first reference):

- Alternate terms:
  - Washington District
  - WESD
  - the District (capitalized)
- If the District will be mentioned more than once, use the full name (with abbreviation in parentheses) on first reference, then abbreviated name on future references:  
*example: The Washington Elementary School District (WESD) is composed of 27 elementary and K-8 schools, and five WESD schools are junior high/middle schools.*

### Spelling and Terminology

#### **Education and WESD-specific terms**

After-school Academy (specific to a school's program)

Arizona College and Career Ready Standards

AZ LEARNS

AzMERIT – Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (former state test)

AzM2 – Arizona's Statewide Achievement Assessment as of 2021

Class subjects are lower case unless a proper noun (English, math, social studies)

Locations within a building are lower case

*examples: library, cafeteria, health office, gym, front office*

Common Core

Department names are capitalized

*examples: Business Services Department*

*Academic Services Department*

*Human Resources*

Early Release Wednesday

Governing Board Room, Navajo Room, etc. (capitalize names of District meeting rooms)

Grade designations – As, Bs, Cs (no apostrophe)

Help Desk

KidSpace

Move on When Reading

Parent/Student Handbook  
Parent/Teacher Conference (or lower case)  
Professional Learning Community Wednesday/PLC Wednesday  
Thinking Maps  
Z-Pass

### **General Spelling List**

After-school Academy  
after-school programs  
block watch (if a specific block watch  
is mentioned, capitalize – Acacia Block Watch)  
Boy Scouts (capitalize)  
boys basketball (no apostrophe)  
Character Counts  
child care (noun)  
child-care opportunity (adjective)  
cleanup (noun)  
Community of Caring  
cyberbully  
day care (noun)  
day-care opportunity (adjective)  
District-wide  
drop-off (adjective or noun)  
drop off (verb)  
extracurricular (no hyphen)  
field trip  
fingertip  
first-come, first-served  
flip-flops  
follow-up (adjective or noun)  
follow up (verb)  
fund-raiser (noun)  
fund-raising (adjective or noun)  
Girl Scouts (capitalize)  
girls soccer (no apostrophe)  
giveaway (noun)

### **Technology Spelling List**

Android  
app (application)  
blog  
CDs  
cloud  
DVDs  
e-book  
email  
Facebook  
Instagram

hands-on  
Head Start  
homeroom  
in-service  
kickoff (noun)  
kick off (verb)  
lifestyle  
lifelong  
lunchtime  
makeup (noun)  
make-up (adjective, as in make-up work)  
make up (verb)  
midterms or midterm reports  
Olweus Bullying Prevention  
one-on-one  
ongoing  
PE (no periods)  
pickup (adjective or noun)  
pick up (verb)  
Presidents Day (no apostrophe)  
rollerblades  
school-wide  
setup (noun)  
set up (verb)  
tryout  
two-week (adjective)  
two-year (adjective)  
twofold  
Veterans Day (no apostrophe)  
Internet  
iPad, iPhone, iPod  
MP3  
online  
SchoolMessenger  
Skype  
SMART Boards  
smartphone  
tablet  
Twitter  
website  
YouTube

## Job titles

- Titles without name are lower case: principal, office manager, facility manager.
- Titles preceding name are capitalized: Principal Tom Smith, Office Manager Mary Hughes.
- Titles after name are lower case: Tom Smith, principal; Mary Hughes, office manager.
- Exceptions – references to WESD Governing Board and Superintendent that include the name(s) of the individuals (Bill Adams, WESD Governing Board President, . . .)
- If the job title comes first with name separated by commas, the title is lower case (Our principal, Mary Murray, is holding a meeting.)

## Numbers

- 0-9 – spell out
- 10 and higher – use numeral, unless at the beginning of the sentence
- Grade levels follow the same format – first grade, second grade, etc. 10th grade, 12th grade
- Always spell out number when it begins a sentence
- Use a numeral to indicate age: 5-year-old boy or the boy is 5 years old.

## Punctuation

- Phone numbers are connected with hyphens 602-347-2669
- School years contain complete numbers and are connected with hyphen 2021-2022
- No comma before “and” in a simple series
- Use of hyphens: No hyphen between a prefix (non, post, pre, re, etc.) and a word, unless otherwise indicated in the dictionary or the second part of the word is a proper noun, e.g. preschool, preregistration, non-English, pretest, nonprofit; exception: pre-K
- Periods and commas always come before the quote mark, not after it (.”, ”)
- Times of day are lower case with periods, space between time and time of day: a.m. or p.m. (7 a.m. or 1 p.m.)
- Dates: Nov. 10, 2021 or Nov. 10 or November 10 (not Nov. 10th, Nov. 1st, Nov. 3rd)

## Grammar Reminders

### **Nouns/Pronouns**

If the subject/noun is singular, so is the object/pronoun:

examples: A student is responsible for his or her homework.

The students are going to their After-school Academy classes.

When using a pronoun to refer to an individual, use he or she (not he/she), him or her (not him/her).

### **Who/That**

- Use “who” when you are talking about a person or people and “that” when you are talking about an object or body of people.

## That/Which

Use “that” and “which” when referring to inanimate objects or animals without names.

- Use “that” with essential clauses important to the meaning of the sentence. Do not separate with commas.  
example: The class that won the pizza party will eat in the cafeteria.
- Use “which” with nonessential clauses where the pronoun is less necessary. Separate with commas.  
example: The team, which won first place last year, is in last place currently.

TIP: if you can drop the clause and not lose the meaning of the sentence, use “which.”

## Who/Whom

- “Who” is the pronoun used for references to human beings and animals with a name.
- “Who” is grammatically the subject, never the object of the sentence, clause or phrase.  
example: The student who collected the most pennies will win lunch with the principal.
- “Whom” is used when someone is the object of a verb or prepositional phrase.  
example: Whom do you wish to see?

## Resources:

You may want to bookmark these:

Online dictionary      <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

Writing resource      <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Grammar tips      <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>