

Battling the Winter Slump

Allison Hoch, WDHS Principal

Winter weather has finally hit Wisconsin, and cold/flu season is significantly underway. At WDHS, we are experiencing a dip in motivation and energy. This "winter slump" substantially impacts students' attendance and academic performance and affects current grades. Parents, we need you to recognize this seasonal challenge and work together to help our students stay on or get back on track.

The winter months bring challenges for students, including less sunlight and colder temperatures, which can lead to fatigue, apathy, and difficulty focusing on schoolwork. You've probably experienced some of the same feelings as an adult! The struggle to get out of bed in the morning is compounded by the increased sick germs flying around this time of year, making it tempting to stay home. This combination of decreased motivation and missed classes can result in grades that don't reflect your student's true potential. Scanning through grade books right now, there are too many "NE" grades- these mean "no evidence," which means your student didn't do the assessment.

Fortunately, WDHS offers a supportive environment. The building is filled with natural light, which helps boost students' moods and energy levels once they arrive. We also offer breakfast before school, a mid-morning snack break, lunch, and even snacks during the last period of the day to help sustain students' energy and engagement throughout the school day. We have seen the positive impact of light and food in so many students and staff members. We just need you to get your student here!

At home, you can further support your student by helping them maintain a regular sleep schedule, even on weekends. This consistency helps regulate their body clock and improve energy levels. Encourage healthy eating habits and plenty of water rather than relying on fast food and excessive caffeine.

Regularly checking Skyward is crucial. If your student's grades are below expectations, talk to them about utilizing Office Hours and WD Time. WDHS provides **260 minutes each week** for students to receive individualized support from their teachers. Students who take advantage of these opportunities are generally maintaining their learning and often excelling. Teachers strongly encourage students to attend Office Hours and WD Time, as the one-on-one or small group instruction is highly effective in addressing learning gaps.

We see this winter slump yearly, and your support at home is essential. Consistent attendance is key; missing multiple days can create significant learning gaps that are

difficult to overcome. Working together, we can help our students navigate this challenging season and achieve their academic goals.