

After school Busses Are a Vital Asset of the Westhill Community. Students say they're unsafe.



The West Side late bus on Tuesday, December 10. Photo by Scion Estrella ('25)

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GOOD MONTH/BAD MONTH

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Good Month For... Bad Month For...

The stock market saw a boost as Wall Street experienced widespread gains after the re-election of Donald Trump. The S&P 500 and Dow Jones climbed steadily, driven by optimism surrounding the Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts and strong economic stability. Stocks tied to domestic growth and policy benefits, such as Tesla, showed notable increases, while investors focused on more opportunities in various sectors.

John Krasinski was named PEOPLE's 2024 Sexiest Man Alive, and he credits his family for keeping him grounded. He describes his wife, Emily Blunt, and their two daughters as his source of inspiration and support. Krasinski often draws from their creativity and love in his work, including his recent film IF. He humorously notes that family life, especially with young children, helps him stay humble and balanced despite his fame.

Beyoncé leads the 2025 Grammy nominations with 11, making her the most nominated artist in Grammy history, with a career total of 99 nominations. Her album *Cowboy Carter* is up for Album of the Year, while hits like "Texas Hold 'Em" earned recognition in key categories. The ceremony, celebrating diverse genres and groundbreaking artists, will take place on February 2, 2025.

Mattel ahead of Wicked's release debuted dolls of Glinda (Ariana Grande) and Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo). Fans noticed a packaging error where a printed link redirected to an adult-entertainment site. Mattel issued an apology, saying, "We deeply regret this error and are taking immediate action." The dolls have since been pulled from retailers and online stores. Fans are awaiting the corrected dolls release.

Mike Tyson After a long break from professional matches, Mike Tyson was challenged by YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul. The fight, watched by over 70 million viewers on Netflix and attended by 70,000 fans in person, ended with the 58-year-old Tyson losing to the 27-year-old Paul. While many fans speculated that the fight was either scripted or unfair, Tyson remained optimistic, later extending a challenge to Jake Paul's older brother, Logan Paul.

Google Recently the Department of Justice (DOJ) accused Google of monopolizing the internet search market. The DOJ claims Google has gained dominance by securing its search engine as the default option on Android and Apple devices. To level the playing field, the DOJ proposes that Google should sell its Chrome browser and cease all future contracts that set its search engine as the default.

As the school year goes on, more students are starting to stay after school for a variety of reasons. Some spend most of their time on activities such as sports, clubs, or meetings for other programs.

All of these extracurriculars are great opportunities for them. But this poses a bigger logistical question: how do they all arrive home afterwards?

Many students often get picked up by their parents or have the ability to drive home afterwards, and those that live near campus may opt to walk home instead. Not everyone is able to do this, but luckily for students, Westhill offers school buses for all neighborhoods of the city.

Every afternoon after school, whether its hot and sunny or cold and frigid, students without rides are expected to wait outside for their buses to arrive. Yet, this is not as simple for many. Students we spoke to complained have said that these buses take a significant amount of time to arrive later than expected.

As a student who is unable to drive to school and relies on the bus to get

him home from his "multitude of afterschool activities," Kritik Singh ('26) said that the after school buses are "very poorly executed," referring to the variability of the buses that can come anywhere from five to thirty minutes late, according to students we spoke to.

"There needs to be some regulations to make this the perfect system that it can be," Singh said.

There are a number of reasons for why these buses might be coming late, either due to the traffic or simply a lack of drivers: despite the fact that ridership often exceeds the 75-passenger limit, the West Side neighborhood is serviced by only one bus.

This undercoverage has left students routinely clamoring to grab a seat upon the bus' arrival, and on occasion, students who cannot fit are simply left behind as the bus leaves with no seats available.

Students like Oscar Garcia ('25) said that it is not uncommon for students on the bus to sit on the floor, stand in the back, or even sit three to a seat, all of which are violations of safety policies outlined by the city's transportation

provider, First Student.

Overall, a lack of communication, combined with a lack of buses, has made the late buses a contentious topic for those who stay after school. "I'd say they're very useful but sometimes they get confusing, like beforehand they [didn't] have a South Side stop, but now they do," Annabelle Alvarez ('26) said.

However, no one interviewed denies their importance. Mr. Patrick White, a history teacher at Westhill, said that late buses have been a crucial fixture in getting students to participate in their community, whether the buses "help kids stay after school for extra help, [or help them] play sports."

He said he believes that transportation administrators, like those at First Student, should add more buses to accommodate those that stay after school for legitimate reasons, and not for those who "stay after school to hangout with friends which is not good since some students are trying to get home. If the bus is full and they do belong there, they should get more buses so students aren't left behind."