

Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

Examples of Excellence

The Westlake Schools' mission statement -- We Educate for Excellence -- is most evident in the successes of our students:

Math Score Highest in Ohio



Liz Kobe was recognized for achieving a score in the American Mathematics Contest 8, an international math exam sponsored by the University of Nebraska,

that placed her in the top 1% of test takers. In fact, her score was the highest in Ohio.

Engineering State Champions

Four WHS students from the WHS Engineering & Technology Education Department won state champion titles for their "Best of Show" awards at the Ohio Technology Education Association state conference school exhibits competition. They are junior Matt Schmitz, junior Victor Klimchuk and the team of junior AJ Suever and sophomore Dane Rimko.

National Music Honors

Eight of Westlake High School's performing groups left Orlando, Fla., last month with seven first place awards in the All-American Music Festival sponsored by Univer-

sal Studios.

The Symphonic Band, String Orchestra and Jazz Ensemble #1 took first place and received Superior ratings in Class AAAA. Jazz Ensemble #2 earned a first place and Excellent rating in Class AA. The Majorettes, Demonettes and Debonaires all took first place and earned Superior ratings in their respective contests.



National 'Green' Accolades

The LBMS Environmental club won the top \$10,000 prize in the 2009 Sea World/Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Award for outstanding efforts to protect the Earth.

The prize money will be used to buy audio/visual equipment. There are more than 100 members in the club, whose mission is to reach as many people as possible with a positive message about caring for the environment, and to show that kids have a voice and they can make a difference.

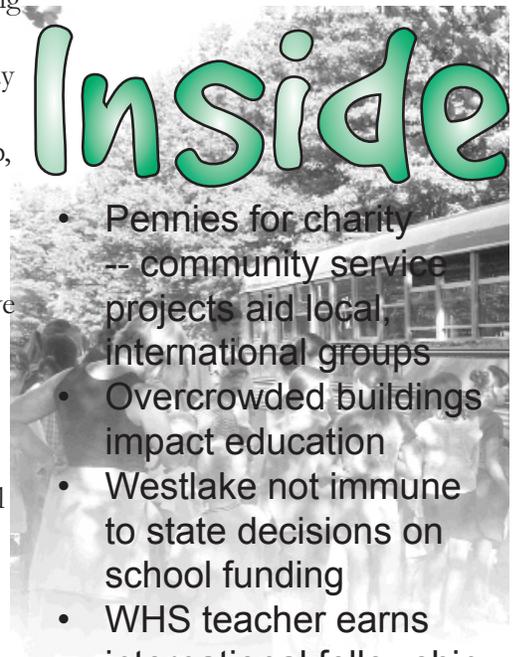
Statewide Art Displays

Five Holly Lane Elementary School students had their artwork selected for exhibition during Youth Art Month, sponsored by the Ohio Art Education Association. Kindergartner Isabella DiStefano had her work exhibited at the Young

People's Art Exhibition at the Rhodes State Office Tower in Columbus. First grader Brian Corrigan, second grader Anna Tsirimbidis and third grader Janie Wu had work on display at the Case Western Reserve University Art Exhibition. Fourth grader Sara Massa had her art displayed at the Youth Art Month Exhibition at the STRS building in Columbus.

Inside

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- Overcrowded buildings impact education
- Westlake not immune to state decisions on school funding
- WHS teacher earns international fellowship



Pennies help local, international groups

Dover Elementary School and Lee Burneson Middle School took on different projects that turned pennies into hope for local and international aid groups.

At Dover, students joined the Pennies for Peace campaign to raise money for children in villages of

Pakistan and Afghanistan. The goal of the campaign is to encourage children to learn the value of philanthropy by collecting pennies for global peace.

Students collected \$2,400 to buy school supplies, pay teacher salaries and hopefully support a school

building. Their campaign, which runs through May 22, caught the attention of Channel 3 News, which featured the campaign on Romona's Kids in April.

At Lee Burneson Middle School, Deb Schrembeck's 7th grade Language Arts classes collected 87,500 pennies -- or \$875 -- during a classroom project that brought the reality of the Holocaust to life while helping local families.

After reading "Devil's Arithmetic," students collected pennies, often viewed as worthless or an annoyance, with each penny representing a life lost during the Holocaust. Each penny was a concrete reminder of the people killed during the Holocaust. The pennies were donated to the Westlake Community Assistance Program.



Patriotic Band Spectacular

A Patriotic Band Spectacular concert will be held Wednesday, July 1, at 7 p.m. at the Westlake Schools Performing Arts Center.

Performing will be the WHS Band and Jazz Band, including alumni. Tickets are \$5 and available by visiting www.westlakemb.org or call Ray Walczuk at (440) 250-1014.

Top 10 Science Olympiads

The Lee Burneson Middle School Science Olympiad team places in the Top 10 teams in the state at the Ohio Science Olympiad State Tournament. The team finished 9th out of 40 teams.

MATHCOUNTS winners

An LBMS team won the first place team award on the local level for the MATHCOUNTS Competition Program. Students answered written and oral questions, competing against teams nationwide for top scores. The first-place team included Ishaan Bakhle, Kartik Dhinakaran, Elizabeth Kobe, Ashwen Ravichandran, Aakash Shah, Krish Shah, Chris Tsuei and Kevin Wang.

WHS teacher earns international fellowship

WHS English teacher Ann Peebles was selected from the English Speaking Union's Cleveland Branch Board as the British Universities Summer School scholar for the 2009 fellowship program.



Peebles will study at The Globe Theatre in London with other teachers chosen to spend three weeks at Shakespeare's Globe. The teachers will work on teaching Shakespeare through performance courses, including teaching strategies for the contemporary classroom, creating a production for The Globe Theatre and producing a scene for the Globe stage.

Peebles sponsors the annual Shakespeare monologue competition at Playhouse Square.

Overcrowding impacts education

The Westlake City School District is working to raise awareness and support for addressing our facilities in response to community concerns. In addition to structural problems like leaks, cracks and drafts, our buildings are seriously over capacity and this is affecting the district's ability to provide excellent educations.

Most residents have visited our schools but even fewer have seen our classrooms and hallways filled with students. Our students and teachers work in an overcrowded environment that impacts the way they learn and teach.

Overcrowding significantly impacts Westlake education. Here are a few examples:

- There are classes in storage areas, closets, hallways and other places that are noisy and not equipped for today's classroom needs;
- Teachers' ability to work hands on with students can be limited because there is no room in between desks and tables;
- Students must push through crowded hallways and struggle to open lockers during class changes due to overcrowded hallways;
- Group work is difficult because there is no space to move desks;

- Room for technology like computers, audio/visual and networking is limited due to a lack of available space.

Six of our seven school buildings are over capacity. Our school buildings were built to house 3,700 students. Current enrollment is 4,075 – 375 students over capacity. And enrollment is only going up: professional enrollment projections are placing Westlake's enrollment at 4,135 by the 2017-18 school year. The Westlake Schools must address this significant situation so the quality of our education is not compromised.

Visit www.wlake.org for more information on Westlake Schools

The Westlake City Schools educate for excellence, but failing, overcrowded facilities are putting our excellence at risk.

Our school buildings are expensive to maintain and impossible to upgrade:

- Major structural work and maintenance is necessary. It will cost between \$60 million and \$80 million just to bring our schools up to state standards.
- Outdated heating systems make it difficult to regulate classroom temperatures.
- Antiquated electrical systems make it impossible to integrate technology into education.
- Internal walls are pulling away from the structures, threatening safety.

You can see these and other examples of the challenges our students and staff face on a daily basis by visiting our web site at www.wlake.org/facilities. There you can review photos, architectural reports, news coverage and view an informational video.

Preserving our stake in state funding formulas

The discussion on school funding continues to make headlines and Westlake is not immune to the impact any state budget decision will bring. The district applied for federal stimulus money to address facility needs, but we were notified stimulus funds cannot be used for this purpose. Gov. Ted Strickland's initial school funding proposal resulted in a loss for Westlake, but we are hopeful to make an impact by becoming involved in the process. District administrators and Board of Education members have taken an active role in advocating for positive solutions. We are working through our state professional associations, our state representatives and a lobbying group representing affluent suburban school districts, and we are joining forces with other area school districts to provide a voice for our school district. We know it's critical to be involved in this process to ensure the new budget plan appropriately addresses the needs of our students and community. We'll continue to provide updates to the community.

Transportation notification

The Westlake Board of Education supports the district's provision of bus transportation to/from childcare facilities, provided such transportation is cost effective and meets the needs of the school districts and its families.

Based on Board of Education policies, the following rules govern the district's provision of bus transportation to/from a childcare facility:

1. For service to start at the beginning of the school year, the completed Custodial Care Form must be received by the Transportation Department prior to July 31. Forms received after July 31 will not go into effect until Sept. 8. Forms received after Sept. 8 will take a minimum of 5 working days to go into effect.

2. The service must be for 5 days

per week. Service is for the entire school year or until changed in writing.

3. The location of the childcare provider to/from which the student is to be transported must be located in an area designated by the Board as eligible for bus transportation to the school of attendance. Should the Superintendent place a student at a building other than their home school of attendance, transportation would be provided to childcare providers to/from either the school of attendance or home school area.

4. The provision of transportation for such students must be cost effective and must not require the establishment of new bus routes. Transportation will be provided only if there is sufficient space for pupils on the appropriate bus

after space has been made available for all other students qualified for transportation.

5. All students must have a Custodial Care Form on file prior to transportation service to begin.

Custodial Care Forms are effective for the current school year only and must be completed annually.

Custodial Care Forms can be obtained via mail or at the Westlake board of Education, 27200 Hilliard Blvd., between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, after May 1. Completed forms are to be returned to the Westlake City Schools Transportation Department, 1097 Bassett Road. If you have any transportation related questions, call (440) 835-6313.

The Westlake City School District is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action agency and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, political affiliation or disability.

Westlake City Schools

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Please forward comments to Kim Bonvissuto, communications coordinator, 27200 Hilliard Blvd., or call (440) 250-1258. Or email bonvissuto@wlake.org

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