

Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

Vision 20/20 committee implorers Board to address district facilities

The Westlake City School District has a problem that must be addressed responsibly and soon. That problem is aging facilities that no longer work to provide an updated education. The recommendation to address failing facilities comes directly from community members who volunteered on a 20/20 Vision Committee, along with other community and staff feedback.

20/20 Vision is a 25-member, volunteer group of local residents formed to address and review facility needs. They toured schools, compared Westlake with similar districts and reviewed the OSFC and Lesko studies.

According to the 20/20 Vision Committee, the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) and Lesko Architecture of Westlake, the school district faces serious challenges



Roof leaks, like the one pictured left, can be found in every building in the school district

in finding adequate space for educational needs within existing facilities that have major flaws. Their findings show that our schools have aging boilers that are expensive to maintain and operate, antiquated electrical systems that make it impossible to integrate technology into education, internal walls that are separating from the structures, and, most significantly, overcrowding to the point that children are learning in converted closets and other spaces never intended for instruction.

Since the schools are clean and generally well-maintained, it is extremely difficult for the average citizen to assess the current state of facilities. So the Westlake Board of Education decided to involve community members in the facilities study process.

“We have a serious facilities problem within our Westlake Schools, and since we have done a good job of delivering education, the problem has gone under the radar. But, the



Overcrowding issues at Dover Elementary School force some teachers' offices into hallways.

Inside

- 2009 Board of Education information
- Kindergarten transportation information inside
- Treasurer's office earns perfect audit
- Check out our expanded summer school opportunities

Continued on Page 2

2009 Board of Education information

During its Jan. 13 organizational meeting, the Westlake Board of Education re-elected Andrea Rocco as President and elected Carol Winter as Vice President.

Board members Joseph Marinucci and Timothy Sullivan were appointed to the Board's Policy Subcommittee, while Thomas Mays and Winter were appointed to serve on the Curriculum Subcommittee.

The Board also changed its 2009 meeting schedule. Meetings will be held on the last Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the Administration Building, 27200 Hilliard Blvd., unless otherwise announced.

2009 Westlake Board of Education Meeting Dates

Feb. 23
March 30
April 27
May 18 (3rd Monday)
June 29
July 27
Aug. 31
Sept. 28
Oct. 26
Nov. 30
Dec. 14 (2nd Monday)

Kindergarten transportation

If your child will be attending Westlake City Schools or St. Raphael School for kindergarten, we will consider your request for session placement.

Please submit the request form from your kindergarten registration packet to the Westlake City Schools Transportation Department, 1097 Bassett Road, Westlake, OH 44145, **no later than April 20.**

St. Raphael students should send a

letter to Transportation stating your preference, including the child's name, address and school.

Requests received after April 20 cannot be considered. Based on the criteria listed on the requests form, we may not be able to grant everyone their preference.

Parents will be notified of their child's assigned session by mail in June.

P2PN upcoming events

The Parent to Parent Network starts the new year with a visit from authors Chris and Toren Volkmann. In preparation for three days and evenings of programming with the Volkmanns, adults and teens are reading and discussing their book, "From Binge to Blackout: a Mother and Son Struggle with Teen Drinking." More than 100 Westlake High School students are reading the book and will attend a private reception hosted by Westlake Porter Public Library on April 2.

● **Meet the Authors, Chris and Toren Volkmann:** March 31, 3 to 5:30 p.m., panel discussion and community forum. John

Carroll University, 20700 North Park Blvd., University Heights.

● **March 31:** Panel discussion and community forum, John Carroll University, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

● **April 1:** Adult and Teen Program with Panel, Cuyahoga Valley Career Center, 801 Brecksville Road, Brecksville. 7 to 8:30 p.m.

● **April 2:** Adult and Teen Program, Learwood Middle School Auditorium, 340 Lear Road, Avon Lake. 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Visit www.parent2parentnetwork.org for a complete schedule of events, book club guidelines and discussion questions, and to blog on "From Binge to Blackout."

Facilities must be addressed

Continued from Page 1

problems will only get worse and more expensive to fix over time," said Superintendent Dr. Daniel J. Keenan Jr. "Construction costs escalate, and every year we wait we increase the cost. This is an urgent issue."

In January, after much study, thought and discussion, the 20/20 Vision Committee made its presentation to the Board, offering two educational options to pursue:

- Option 1: Five buildings in a grade-level configuration.
- Option 2: Six buildings in a regional elementary configuration.

The next step for the school district is to raise awareness and support for improving facilities and to respond to community concerns.

Treasurer's office earns perfect audit

Auditor of State Mary Taylor's office has given the Westlake City School District a clean audit report for the 2007-08 school year. The perfect audit, clean of findings or citations, paves the way for the district to receive the Auditor of State award. CFO/Treasurer Mark C. Pepera credited the achievement to a concerted effort by his staff to implement and maintain a high level of policies on internal control and financial reporting procedures. Under Pepera's fiscal watch, the Westlake City School District has been recognized for nine consecutive years of excellence in reporting.

Splash Into Summer with the Westlake Schools

The Westlake City School District is offering our students the chance to keep their skills fresh while having fun at the same time with our *Splash Into Summer* extended enrichment and intervention opportunities.

Programs are being offered with partners Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, Bay Village City Schools, Porter Public Library, Borders Books & Music and Barnes & Noble. The summer school program will provide intervention and enrichment opportunities for Westlake students.

The following intervention programs are available. Students registering for these programs must be recommended by school officials. Program recommendations will be based on a multi-criteria eligibility checklist that includes performance on the Ohio Achievement test and other measures of progress toward standards and achievement.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS is designed for incoming kindergarten students to prepare a set of foundational skills. Areas addressed include social classroom skills, listening skills, alphabet and number practice, and fine motor skills.

READING AND MATH DETECTIVES are intervention courses for students entering grades 1-5 to improve reading and math skills. Teachers will use hands on activities and materials to make learning fun and meaningful. Students will practice skills and concepts using puzzles, games and manipulatives. Throughout the class, they will search for clues to help them solve the mystery of reading and math!

WILD ABOUT READING is designed for students entering grades 1-4 who need reading remediation. This program will be hosted by the Lake Erie and Nature Center in Bay Village. It will be taught in partnership with the Bay Village City Schools.

The following enrichment programs, designed for students entering grades 1-5, are open to all students who

are looking for a little fun over their summer break:

THE PLACES YOU'LL GO allows students to travel around the world through stories and tales. Students will be involved in reading and writing activities that will take them to many interesting places.

THE TALES YOU TELL introduces students to storytelling by exploring the storytelling tradition through folktales and literature from around the world. They will participate in Reader's Theater classroom productions to practice group storytelling. While learning, the students will be practicing fluency and comprehension skills. Westlake Schools will share materials, books and facilities for this program with our partner Porter Public Library. The summer school experience will culminate with a Storytelling Celebration on July 25 at the library. All summer school participants, as well as our Westlake community, are invited.

MATH MAGICIANS uses math games and manipulatives to show students how math relates to the world around them. Students will explore the magic of math in new and exciting ways through number skills and concepts.

STEM-A-PALOOZA is an enrichment program for students entering grades 5-8. Students will participate in STEM activities involving real-world problems and gain an understanding of how science, technology, engineering and math work together in the world around them.

TECHNOLOGY CAMP is for incoming fifth graders, who will have opportunities to take courses in movie-making and podcasting, digital photography, and Microsoft Word and PowerPoint.

Registration will begin in March online at www.wlake.org. Forms also will be available in all schools and at Porter Public Library. For more information contact the Westlake Schools Academic Services Office at (440) 250-1259.

Transportation notification

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

Based on Board of Education policies, the following rules govern the district's provision of bus transportation to and 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 or from which the students 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
27200 Hilliard Blvd.
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Thomas Mays
Timothy Sullivan

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The Westlake City School District is a member of the Westlake Chamber of Commerce.

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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