

Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

WHS Seniors Among top 1% Nationally

Eight Westlake High School seniors were named 2014 National Merit Finalists in the National Merit Program. This places WHS in the top 5 of 150 public and private high schools in a five-county area in Northeast Ohio for the number of National Merit Finalists.

Finalists Deepak Kumar, Apshara Ravichandran, Krish Shah, Sameena Khan, Jacob Wise, Paavani Reddy, Ethan Fitz and Michelle Adamczyk are among the 15,000 students nationwide named National Merit Finalists, based on their PSAT scores taken in their junior year. These eight students join a tradition of National Merit scholars from Westlake High School:

- 7 National Merit Finalists from the Class of 2013
- 5 from the Class of 2012
- 14 from the Class of 2011
- 1 from the Class of 2010
- 12 from the Class of 2009
- 3 from the Class of 2008
- 6 from the Class of 2007



- 3 from the Class of 2006
- 6 from the Class of 2005
- 8 from the Class of 2004
- 5 from the Class of 2003

Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office Informs Schools of One-Time Windfall

On Feb. 14, the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office informed Westlake City Schools of delinquent property tax payments it collected that will have significant short-term impact on district revenue. On that day we received notice of property taxes from Cuyahoga County that surpassed what our treasurer and the county had projected.

The district immediately contacted the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office to investigate the variance and gather additional information. As a result, county representatives provided new information indicating the schools and the City of Westlake may experience a one-time spike in tax revenue due to delinquent property taxes collected by the county.

While the Auditor's office still

needs to confirm this information, it appears the additional one-time revenue will be \$1 million to \$2 million larger than previous estimates.

Because the district is no longer in an emergency fiscal situation that led to transportation cuts in February, the Board of Education approved restoring bus

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Westlake Schools 'Educate for Excellence'



The Westlake Schools are one of the top-performing schools in Ohio. **Our students performed in the top 7% in Ohio for more than a decade**, according to the Ohio Department of Education. But the excellence of the Westlake City Schools far transcends state testing. For example:

- The 2013 Westlake High School girls' soccer team (above, courtesy Woodard Photographic) has a combined 4.13 GPA - **the third highest in Ohio** - earning it a 1st Team Scholastic All-American Team national title for accomplishments in the classroom and on the field. This is the 10th time in 12 years the team has earned this national award.
- Similarly, the 2012-2013 girls' swimming and diving team earned the National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association Scholar Team Award, Gold Level, for having the **seventh highest GPA in the country - 3.889 - and the highest in Ohio.**

- At Lee Burneson Middle School, student scores on the national American Mathematics Competition exam earned the school a fifth place state ranking. Two students earned scores placing them in the **top 1% in the nation**, while another two students placed in the top 5% in the nation.



LBMS AMC-8

- Westlake High School also has a tradition of preparing students for college entrance exams. Eight students in five years earned perfect ACT scores - **a feat achieved by fewer than 1/10th of 1%** of the average 1.6 million students who take the ACT.



WHS senior Krish Shah earned a perfect ACT score

Your Questions Answered

The Westlake City Schools recently launched a new section on our website to help answer questions from community members and to correct misinformation about the district. We want to be transparent and we want to be certain that everyone has the facts about the district and the steps we are taking to reduce our budget. The new web page is intended to be a one-stop "go-to" place for residents to get the facts about school finance and academics. You can find this site at <http://www.westlake.k12.oh.us/schools/QA/Pages/default.aspx>. You can also access it from our homepage at www.wlake.org. The new web page is designed to explain not just the cuts but the broader context of how the district is using its resources. We will update the information regularly as new issues come up.

One-Time Windfall for Schools

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service for K-8 students who live more than 1 mile from their school through January 2015.

The district will continue to run routes that are no more than 50 minutes and will fill buses to at, or near, capacity. Information will be sent out by the Transportation Department by March 18 or 19 indicating any changes to routes or eligibility. Transportation services are expected to be restored by March 31.

The Westlake City Schools still face serious long-term budget issues because of two failed levy attempts. While this one-time windfall is good news for the short term, without new levy money and with the \$11 million cut in state funding over the past seven years, we still have to change our pro-

cesses and have some very difficult decisions ahead.

The Westlake Board of Education adopted a reduction plan that includes:

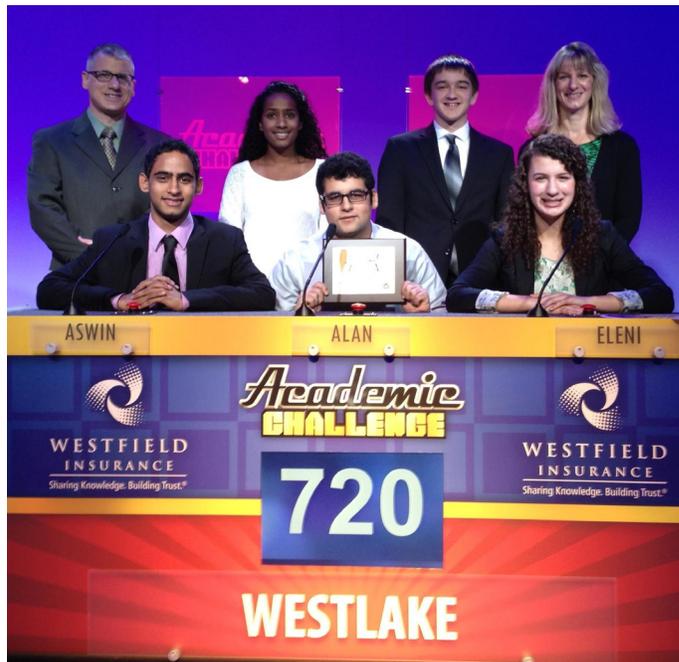
- **Staff reductions** - An undetermined number of teacher reductions will take place.
- **Pay-to-participate fees** - A three-tiered fee schedule for athletics and extracurriculars/clubs goes into effect this spring to offset district general fund expenses while keeping fees reasonable to maintain current participation. The full proposal can be viewed at www.wlake.org.

The district has stretched dollars from the 2006 levy as far as we can.

WHS Academic Challenge Team in 1st Place

The Westlake High School Academic Challenge Team finished in first place for the regular season with the highest point total out of 78 competing schools, and moves on to the Championship tournament.

Each week, students representing schools from all around Northern Ohio battled toward the season championship on Academic Challenge, now in its 46th year. Three teams compete for points by answering questions covering topics including math, science, history and current events. At the end of each program,



the points are totaled, and at season's end the three highest scoring teams return for the Championship match.

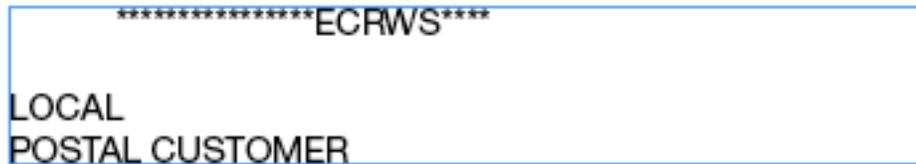
Rankings by points earned:

1. Westlake - 720
2. St. Ignatius - 690
3. Cloverleaf - 680
4. Olmsted Falls - 680
5. Avon - 665
6. Revere - 655
7. St. Edward - 650
8. Ashland - 610
9. Aurora - 565
10. Rocky River - 545

WHS team starters are Aswin Bikkani, Alan Garber and Eleni Packis. Alternates are Paa-vani Reddy and Alex Lathem. WHS advisors are John and Sandy Packis.

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String Orchestra Earns 'Superior'

The WHS String Orchestra received the top rating of "Superior" at the OMEA State Orchestra Contest held at Lakewood High School on Feb. 21. The orchestra of 50 students was entered in Class A, the top and most difficult class, and received the top Superior rating from every adjudicator at the competition. It is the highest achievement in the OMEA in the state.



This is the largest string orchestra in the history of WHS. The orchestra is conducted by Raymond Walczuk. More than 30 orchestras in the northeast part of the state attended the competition at Lakewood High School.

The Board of Education: President Carol Winter & Vice President Tony Falcone
John Finucane, Barbara Leszynski, Thomas Mays
Dr. Daniel J. Keenan Jr., Superintendent • Mark C. Pepera, CFO/Treasurer

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 email bonvissuto@wlake.org

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