

# Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

## Thank you, Westlake!

Thank you for supporting Issue 14! With the community's approval, the Westlake Schools can now move forward on the first phase of the two-phase Master Facilities Plan that will include:

- Making essential repairs and upgrades to our declining building systems
- Renovating and adding space at Lee Burneson Middle School to turn it into an intermediate school for grades 5-6
- Building a new middle

school for grades 7-8 near the existing building

- Rebuilding an extensive portion of Westlake High School while preserving the 2005 additions

This first phase of improvements will save hundreds of thousands of dollars in operating costs annually and provides a fiscally responsible approach to fixing an urgent program with our facilities.

The efforts of our committees

and volunteers who spent countless hours working to spread the word about this important issue will ensure our schools remain excellent and will protect education in Westlake. More important was the community's support and trust in the Westlake City School District to bring this project to fruition. In the coming months the district will keep you informed as we move forward.

Again, thank you for your support of the Westlake City Schools!

## Seeking community input on district's strategic plan

Bring your ideas. Share your views. Join the discussion. Help shape the future of the Westlake Schools during a planning Summit, June 14-15, as we update the district's strategic plan. We are looking for viewpoints from our entire community and everyone is invited to participate. You must register in advance and commit to attending both days [**Monday, June 14, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Tuesday, June 15, 8 a.m. to Noon**]. The Summit will be held in the Westlake High School Cafeteria and use Appreciative Inquiry to engage in a dynamic dialogue and idea session to identify what works best in our school system and how to build on our success to better achieve our mission of Educating for Excellence. To register, email [TheSummit@wlake.org](mailto:TheSummit@wlake.org). For more information visit [www.wlake.org](http://www.wlake.org)

## Inside

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- 17th financial reporting award for district
- Check out the variety of local, regional, state and national awards our students received
- It's time to think about next year's transportation needs

# Excellence Exemplars

## SUPERIOR PERFORMANCES

The WHS Symphonic Band and Concert Band each received the top rating of “Superior” at the Ohio Music Education Association State Band Contest. The Symphonic Band received unanimous “Superior” ratings from every judge at the competition. The bands are led by Raymond Walczuk.



**WHS Symphonic Band (top) & WHS Concert Band**

LBMS instrumental music students received glowing ratings from the OMEA District 4 Middle School Solo & Ensemble Contest. The Band, String and Piano students earned 13 top ratings of Superior and four Excellent ratings as a result of their performances.



included Kartik Dhinakaran, Krish Shah, Aswin Bikkani, Chris Tsuei and Ameesh Shah. Kartik placed in the top 10 percent at 23rd place overall.



## 10TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT ART HONORS

WHS student Wan Kwok won the grand prize in the 2010 Ohio 10th Congressional District Art Contest. Kwok will be invited to Washington, D.C., to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony and join in other festivities on June 17.



## TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING STUDENTS TAKE TOP HONORS

Four WHS Engineering & Technology Education Department students won the title of state champion for their “Best of Show” awards at the Ohio Technology & Engineering

Educators Association state conference school exhibits competition. Winning state champion titles were sophomore Nick Halczuk; junior Nathaniel Renkel; the senior team of AJ Suever and Jeff Thaler; and freshmen Ted Poulous and Matt Hall

Suever also won a second state title in the Engineering category. For only the second time in school history, Suever captured the coveted Zupancic Award for the single outstanding project in the entire state of Ohio among all “Best of Show” winners.



## GOLD KEY NATIONAL WINNERS

WHS senior art student Kate Humphrey and WHS freshman Chris Dunlap earned national Gold Key awards in the 2010 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Kate, Chris, their families and art teachers Cris Filmer & Debra Gantz, will travel to Washington, D.C., to receive their awards at Carnegie Hall.



**Chris Dunlap’s Gold Key metal embossing piece, “Old Church” (top) and Kate Humphrey’s altered book sculpture, “The Birds.”**



**LBMS MATHCOUNTS team. Front row: Austin Moran, Krish Shah, Calvin Pozderac, Kartik Dhinakaran. Back row: Judy McMasters, Aswin Bikkani, Cal Craven, Chris Tsuei, Ameesh Shah**

## MATHCOUNTS CHAMPS

The LBMS MATHCOUNTS team took home top awards in the state and regional middle school competitive mathematics program. The team

## Moody's shifts bond rating up to Aa1

The Westlake City School's bond rating was upwardly shifted from Aa2 to Aa1 by Moody's Investor Service. The upward change places the district one notch away from the highest quality Aaa Moody's rating.

Westlake Schools is now one of only 23 Ohio local school districts rated in the Aa1 or Aaa rating categories, placing Westlake in the top 4% of all Ohio schools. The Aa1 rating highlights the district's credit quality versus other debt securities, which should mean lower interest costs on future district borrowing -- including the recent bond issue -- and savings of additional taxpayer dollars.

The new ratings are intended to indicate average levels of credit quality consistently across different sectors and geographies. According to a Moody's report on the change, "A key driver for the recalibration is the market's increasing desire for rating comparability between municipal and non-municipal sectors, given the growing number of cross-over investors active in both tax-exempt and taxable markets."

## 17th consecutive financial reporting award

Westlake City Schools CFO/Treasurer Mark C. Pepera accepted the district's 17th consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The award from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. The award for the district's comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

The CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

## Help locate children with disabilities

In accordance with rule 3301-51-03 of the Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools Serving Children with Disabilities, the Westlake City School District participates in an ongoing effort to identify, locate and evaluate all children aged 3 through 21 with disabilities residing within the district, including children with disabilities who are homeless, are wards of the state, or who are attending nonpublic schools located within Westlake, regardless of the severity of their disability. A child is considered to be a child with a disability under rule 3301-51-03 if they have a cognitive disability (mental retardation), hearing impairment (including deafness), visual impairment (including blindness), a speech or language impairment, an emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, developmental

delay or multiple disabilities. Some parents may not be aware of the programs and services that are available. If you suspect your child has a disability or if you know of a child who you suspect may have a disability, or if you have questions about special education for children with disabilities, please contact the Pupil Services Department by calling (440)835-6309 or emailing [pupilservices@westlake.org](mailto:pupilservices@westlake.org). Additional information about child find obligations and special education in general may be found in "Whose IDEA is This? A Parent's Guide to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)" available by contacting the Pupil Services Department or accessed online at <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1540&ContentID=11128&Content=74616>.

# Transportation notification

The Westlake Board of Education realizes it may be necessary to provide an alternate transportation location for students requiring childcare providers. The service must be practical, cost effective and meet the needs of both the parents and the school district. Based on Board policy, transportation to/from a childcare provider will be provided based on the following criteria:

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 31st (BOE code #EEA-R). Forms received after July 31st will not go into effect until Sept. 7. Forms received after Sept. 1 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 permanently changed in writing. This will reduce the possibility of your child being taken to the wrong destination.
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 provisions of transportation for such students must not cause the district to incur any additional costs or require the establishment of new bus routes. Such transportation shall 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 on a yearly basis. Custodial Care Forms can be obtained from the Westlake Board of Education, 27200 Hilliard, between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, after May 1, at the Transportation Department or via mail. Completed forms are to be returned to the Westlake City Schools Transportation Department, 1097 Bassett Road. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Transportation Department at (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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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](mailto:bonvissuto@wlake.org)

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