

Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

A decade of 'Excellence'

For the 10th consecutive year, the Westlake City School District has achieved the top rating on its annual report card from the Ohio Department of Education.

Westlake was one of 74 out of 611 Ohio school districts to achieve the highest rating of "Excellent with Distinction" on the state's 2008 State and Local Report Card for showing significant student academic achievement for two consecutive years. The ranking places Westlake within a select few districts throughout the state to achieve the highest rating for all 10 years.

The Ohio report cards use multiple measures in rating each district.

Based on the Westlake Schools' performance in the 2007-08 school year, this year's report card shows the district meeting 30 out of 30 performance indicators, which are based on achievement test results, attendance and graduation rates. The district also improved its Performance Index Score – which measures the achievement of all students – to 105.8 from 105.1 last year.

In addition to being "Excellent with Distinction," the district also met the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) target. AYP measures the achievement of students within 10 groups – all students, Native American, Hispanic, White,

Limited English Proficient, African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Racial, Economically Disadvantaged and Students with Disabilities.

A third measure the district achieved on the Local Report Card is value-added. Westlake exceeded a year's growth in student progress for two consecutive years, elevating the district's report card rating from "Excellent" to "Excellent with Distinction." Value-added data also impacts the district's AYP measure of student achievement.

More detailed report card information can be found on Page 2.

Focus on facilities

Over the summer, the Westlake City School District conducted in-depth interviews and online surveys to measure perceptions about the job the district has done with education, district communications and the possibility of a ballot issue related to improving facilities.

A total of 27 interviews and 393 survey responses revealed overall satisfaction with the school district and that the district is being responsible by acting in the best interest of its students.

Top areas of concern include overcrowding at our seven school buildings, a lack of technology, HVAC systems, and general landscaping and upkeep of the buildings. Respondents also indicated they see a connection between facilities and performance, agreeing that facilities affect a child's ability to learn.

Based on these results, the district hosted community forums to gain the perspective of a wider audience. A community committee also was formed to review data and community input, discuss options and help the district create a long-range facilities plan that meets the needs of the district and captures the values of the community.

Inside

- Check out Westlake's Ohio Report Card
- Gifted referrals now being accepted
- Alternative funding options sought
- Middle school environmental club raises awareness
- What's coming up at the Performing Arts Center

Homework Help Center

Westlake Porter Public Library's H2C Homework Help Center is up and running and available to all students free of charge.

The Help Center will operate Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., and Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. through April 30 when Westlake City Schools are in session.

Westlake High School volunteers are staffing the library's Help Center to help students in grades one through 12 with their homework. Just bring your child to the Youth Services Department at the library for help.

For more information call (440) 250-5471 or visit www.westlakelibrary.org



Gifted identification referrals

The Westlake City School District provides two opportunities annually -- October and February -- for teachers and parents of students in grades K-12 to make referrals for possible gifted identification, according to criteria set forth in HB 282.

Referral forms are available online at www.wlake.org as part of the gifted link under Pupil Services, or at each school building. Completed forms should be returned to the main office for processing. Students can be referred for screening and identification in the following areas: reading/language arts, math, science, social studies, creative thinking, cognitive ability and visual/performing arts.

The district is required to report the number of identified gifted students to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), but the state does not mandate educational service for these students. Westlake has offered a gifted program -- WINGS -- since 1980. To participate, a student must have a full-scale I.Q. score of 130 or greater and a composite score in the 96th percentile or higher on an achievement test. Testing instruments used must be approved by the ODE.

Students may be assessed by the school district once every 24 months. Testing for this referral period will take place during the month of November.

2008 Ohio Report Card

<i>District Rating</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Indicators Met</i>	<i>30 of 30</i>
<i>Performance Index Score</i>	<i>105.8</i>
<i>AYP</i>	<i>Met</i>

Achievement Test Indicators

Grade 3	Westlake %	Minimum%	Standard
Reading	93.4	75.0	Met
Mathematics	94.1	75.0	Met

Grade 4

Reading	97.0	75.0	Met
Writing	98.7	75.0	Met
Mathematics	95.0	75.0	Met

Grade 5

Reading	86.1	75.0	Met
Mathematics	82.4	75.0	Met
Social Studies	79.1	75.0	Met
Science	80.4	75.0	Met

Grade 6

Reading	97.2	75.0	Met
Mathematics	96.3	75.0	Met

Grade 7

Reading	90.3	75.0	Met
Writing	93.2	75.0	Met
Mathematics	87.3	75.0	Met

Grade 8

Reading	94.7	75.0	Met
Mathematics	92.1	75.0	Met
Social Studies	83.2	75.0	Met
Science	87.3	75.0	Met

Grade 10 Ohio Graduation Test

Reading	95.3	75.0	Met
Writing	96.2	75.0	Met
Mathematics	93.8	75.0	Met
Social Studies	94.4	75.0	Met
Science	91.3	75.0	Met

Grade 11 Ohio Graduation Test (Cumulative)

Reading	98.6	85.0	Met
Writing	98.6	85.0	Met
Mathematics	97.6	85.0	Met
Social Studies	97.0	85.0	Met
Science	98.0	85.0	Met

Alternative funding options sought

Rising costs at the gas pump and the grocery store are forcing families to find creative ways to stretch a dollar. The Westlake City School District is no different.

In its efforts to continue being good stewards of public dollars, the district is turning to alternative funding sources.

This fall you may have noticed banners for local companies posted at Westlake High Schools' Lou Ducheze field. The district recently began working with Home Team

Marketing to solicit paid advertisements in the football field end zones. Those dollars go into a special fund for repairs and items for the high school football field. The district is looking at about \$3,700 in revenue for the 2008 football season. A similar agreement may be used for this year's basketball season.

The district also has granted two easements to AT&T for switching devices containers. The easements brought the district a total one-time payment of \$6,500 that went into

the general fund as revenue.

Another easement for Ameritech is a 10-year lease for cell phone towers on the Administration and transportation buildings. The district earns \$690 per month on the leases, which come with annual increases. These dollars also go into the general fund as revenues.

The school district will continue to search for alternative funding methods to ease the burden on local taxpayers.

Raising environmental awareness

Rising oil prices have impacted gas and food prices. In Westlake, it's also made an impact on middle school students, who banded together under seventh-grade science teacher Daniel Grigson to form the LBMS Environmental Club (E-club).

More than 80 seventh graders last school year participated in a wide variety of activities designed to raise awareness of environmental issues. E-club members wrote and illustrated an original book -- "Saving Ohio in ABCs" -- filmed a documentary, composed and recorded a CD of original music -- "Voices" by the Tree Huggers -- choreographed dances, wrote a short play and produced short video clips.

The students also produced an hour-long show to showcase

the club and their message. More than 120 copies of the final items -- CD, DVD and book -- have been requested. Club members were invited to share their work at the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, Parma City Schools, Columbia Station Homecoming, North Olmsted Homecoming, Borders Books & Music, and the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Grigson, the E-club advisor, has been in touch with Riverbanks Zoo in South Carolina and Shedd Aquarium in Chicago about featuring the club's book and CD at those facilities.

"Last October, the group of concerned seventh graders met and agreed on a club mission -- 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," Grigson said. "What is really amazing is that all of these projects were student initiated and were ultimately completed by the students themselves."

The LBMS E-club's book, "Saving Ohio in ABC"; CD, "Voices" by the Tree Huggers; and DVD are all available for \$12 each.

To order copies, contact E-club Advisor Daniel Grigson at (440) 899-3075 x. 2321 or grigson@wlake.org.

Upcoming events at the PAC

Here is a sampling of upcoming events at the Westlake Schools Performing Arts Center. Please note dates and times are subject to change.

October

Oct. 15 & 16 -- League of women Voters Cuyahoga Area Mock Elections

Oct. 20 -- WHS fall choir concert, 7:30pm

Oct. 28 -- WHS band concert, 7:30pm

November

Nov. 3 -- WHS Showchoir Invitational, 7pm

Nov. 13-15 -- WHS Center Stage Players fall drama performance



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.
Westlake, OH 44145

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid
Cleveland, Ohio
Permit No. 3411

Large-type edition of the
Commentary (test only) is
available. Call (440) 250-1258

Westlake City Schools Commentary is published six times per year by the 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

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