

Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

Facing History, Ourselves Program builds on plan to create welcoming environment

Five Westlake High School students have been selected as Student Senators by the Cleveland chapter of Facing History and Ourselves for this year's conference at John Carroll University.

WHS juniors Michelle Canestraro, Rachel Evans, Andrew Spreng, Lindsay Weeast and Jaclyn Wulf were nominated by their Social Studies teacher, Elizabeth Noren, and will serve as conference facilitators and leaders with students from across Northeast Ohio.

This year's conference theme is Facing History/Facing Today and will examine how people choose to act in various situations. The goal of the program is to engage students in the group's themes and approach to his-

tory and literature while promoting civic agency and leadership skills.

Noren uses many of the organization's modules within her classroom. This spring she will take 10 American History sophomores to the Facing History conference, which will address intolerance and prejudice within the school community.



WHS Facing History and Ourselves Student Senators Michelle Canestraro, Rachel Evans, Jaclyn Wulf, Andrew Spreng, Lindsay Weeast

Facing History and Ourselves is a Boston-based international organization that promotes tolerance and acceptance through history. Students study history and examine the effects these events had on people, then come up with ways to address similar issues within their schools pertaining to prejudice, stereotyping and bullying.

The program directly ties into a Continuous Improvement Plan goal regarding "Learning in an All-Inclusive Environment," specifically the idea of building on a school environment that is welcoming and emotionally safe from bullying, harassment, prejudice and alienation.

Tops in technology & engineering

Two Westlake High School teachers won awards at the Northeast Ohio Engineering and Technology Education Association Day conference.

Adam Purdy won the Young Professional Award representing the Northeast Ohio District Association in Engineering and Technology Education. Scott Kutz, along with Purdy, won the Program Excellence award.

Sponsored by the Ohio Technology

and Engineering Educators Association, the awards are two of the highest honors given to technology and engineering education classroom

teachers and recognize outstanding contributions to the profession and students.

The Program Excellence Award program is designed to recognize superior technology and engineering education programs in each state/province that has an association affiliated

with the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association.



Adam Purdy (left) and Scott Kutz

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Office of Civil Rights public notice

In conjunction with the Westlake City School District's Continuous Improvement Plan, the district provides this public notice regarding its discrimination policy under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Board of Education of the Westlake City School District assures students, parents, applicants for employment, employees and citizens that it will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of disabilities. These guidelines comply with the Board's directive to establish a grievance procedure as a means of reaching, at the lowest possible administrative level, a fair and equitable settlement of differences and issues relating to alleged discrimination under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As directed by the Board, the Superintendent has established procedural safeguards for the identification, evaluation, and educational programming of students with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. The District's obligation, under Section 504, is to evaluate any student who, because of a disability, needs or is believed to need special education or related services. Disability is defined for purposes of eligibility for Section 504 placement and services as a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. A person with a disability is an otherwise qualified person who:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. Has a record of a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
3. Is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Individuals who are "regarded as" having a mental or physical impairment include individuals who have

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Facilities plan progress

Much behind-the-scenes activity has been going on with the Master Facilities Plan Phase I building project.

The middle school is in the value-engineering phase -- which the high school project will enter in December. After including input from all sectors, architects are now working with the school district to go back and whittle down the plan to fall within the building budget.

At its Nov. 22 meeting, the Board voted to go with STAN and Associates Inc., an engineering firm out of Dayton, for enhanced commissioning on the building project. The commissioning agent ensures that the building mechanical systems will function within the parameters established as the basis for their design. The Board also held a special meeting on Nov. 29 for community input into the exterior design of the high school building to finalize a design for the building.

The 101-year-old Red Brick school building came down in November. The Public School stone, star and stone arch were successfully removed from the building and will be incorporated into the new buildings. Additional bricks will be used to create a pedestrian walkway at the middle school campus.

Path to global education

In keeping with the Continuous Improvement Plan's goal to make Westlake's students "internationally competitive, capable, engaged and experienced," the school district's four elementary buildings -- Bassett, Dover, Hilliard & Holly Lane elementary schools -- are in the feasibility stage of becoming International Baccalaureate (IB) Schools.

IB is an internationally recognized educational program with a rigorous curriculum that features a global focus and emphasizes creative problem solving, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) learning, inquiry-based learning and community service. Part of this year's process is training staff and visiting authorized IB schools. The process of becoming an authorized IB with the Primary Years Programme can take 3 to 5 years.

The IB program supports the Westlake School District's mission statement and is a part of the Continuous Improvement Plan. IB does not replace anything in the current curriculum. Students continue to learn from traditional subjects, meeting all state academic content standards.

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District mindful of budget in pursuit of excellence

Creative thinking, frugality highlight approach to budget

The mission of the Westlake City School District and the Board of Education is to protect educational excellence. The school district understands it is critical the district provides educational excellence in a manner that represents a great value for everyone in the community. We are pleased to inform the community that the latest financial forecast from CFO/Treasurer Mark C. Pepera indicates the district will be solvent through 2013. The Westlake City School District last went to voters for an operating levy in 2006 with a commitment of extending those dollars at least four years.

Non-traditional practices help contribute to a number of savings that allow us to continue to stretch dollars. Some examples of ways we work to ensure we are continuing to maximize our resources while achieving exceptional results include:

- Participation in a Healthcare Consortium of 16 school districts to reduce health insurance costs
- Utilization of purchasing cooperatives, such as the Ohio Schools Council, to combine with other

districts for significant savings for bus purchases, natural gas, term life and AlertNow (notification system) discounts.

Westlake partners with 24 other school districts as part of a computer association for savings in the following areas:

- Fiber installation
- Internet connectivity
- Fiscal, library services
- Progress Book
- Web filter equipment
- Microsoft software purchasing cooperative

Other measures taken to achieve fiscal savings include:

- Cooperative purchasing with 54 districts through Ohio Association of School Business Officials for insurance premium savings (18-20%)
- Ohio School Plan participation nets discounts for insurance purchasing
- Four-district partnership for vocational programming and transportation consolidation for the program
- Purchased service contract for alternative school programming
- Partnerships with 13 businesses and

higher education netted the district a \$500,000 STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) grant. The district built on those partnerships to secure an additional \$30,000 STEM grant this school year.

- Advertising (such as the addition of the cell tower at the stadium) will generate revenue specifically earmarked for extra- and co-curricular capital needs.

Westlake Schools consistently deliver a quality education to its students by exceeding state and federal educational standards. The school district and Board of Education continually work to find ways to achieve the mission of excellence, while staying mindful of how the district obtains and uses resources.

The community stressed the importance of expanding partnerships, which is included in the latest version of the Continuous Improvement Plan. The district is committed to continuing the practice of providing excellence in achievement at an exception value.

International Baccalaureate: Path to global education

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IB enhances current offerings at every level and provides a consistent focus and approach to learning throughout a child's schooling. Students in the Primary Year Programme, for example will be encouraged to develop the 10 attributes of the IB Learner -- Inquirer, Knowledgeable, Thinker, Communicator, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-Taker, Balanced and Reflective. Subjects will become more interconnected and enriched -- and will be taught with a more global outlook -- resulting in a greater emphasis on cultural awareness and community service.

For more information about the IB Organization, visit www.ibo.org.

Public Notice

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an “actual or perceived mental or physical impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity.” Major life activities to be considered are not limited to learning, but include caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working, as well as the operation of major bodily functions such as the immune system, normal cell growth, and digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions, and this is not an exhaustive list. A student with food allergies may be eligible for evaluation and services under Section 504 if he/she meets the criteria stated above.

The Board of Education has specific responsibilities under Section 504, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and, if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services. The Board of Education through the Superintendent has designated the Director of Pupil Services as the District’s Compliance Officer to coordinate the District’s efforts to comply with Section 504, the ADA and this policy. A copy of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 504’s implementing regulations may be obtained from the District’s Compliance Officer. The procedure for requesting a disability evaluation may be obtained from the Pupil Services Director at Westlake City School District, 27200 Hilliard Blvd., Westlake, Ohio 44145.



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., call (440) 250-1258, email bonvissuto@wlake.org

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