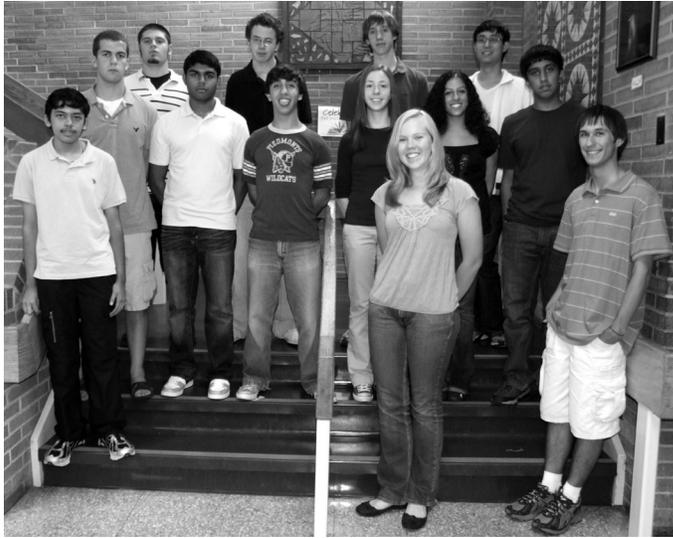


Commentary

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Westlake City School District

14 WHS National Merit Semifinalists

Fourteen Westlake High School students -- the highest number in WHS history -- are among the 16,000 top high scorers named National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists. These students scored in the top 1% of 50,000 high scorers to achieve Semifinalist status.



2011 WHS National Merit Semifinalists (l to r):

Gaurav Idnany, Joseph Craven, Raymond Heimann, Abhinay Ramachandran, Daniel Meehan, Matthew Canestraro, Elizabeth Greco, Colin Graber, Rachel Braun, Lynn Orfahli, Andrew Zheng, Arunaditya Kulshreshtha and Ryan McNeilly.

Not pictured: Katherine Beaton

In February, about 15,000 Finalists will be named. More than 1.5 million juniors in more than 21,000 high schools

across the country participated in the National Merit Program.

Accountability key to facilities plan

The Board of Education is committed to seeing the community is informed throughout the facilities construction process and ensuring effective measures are in place so the district is accountable, keeps proper records and is transparent on the Phase I construction project. The district is following, and surpassing in some cases, standard processes.

The district benchmarked processes with several school districts involved in their own building construction projects in an effort to seek best practices. Those districts included:

- Avon Lake City Schools – @ \$20 million construction project
- Avon Local Schools – @ \$12.9 million construction project

- Beachwood City Schools – @ \$30 million improvement project
- Cleveland Municipal School District's Bond Accountably Commission – @ \$335 million construction project
- Kenston Local Schools – @ \$44 million project
- Lakewood City Schools – @ \$195 million three-phase project
- Princeton City Schools (Cincinnati) – @ \$120 million construction project
- Rocky River City Schools – @ \$43 million construction project
- Wadsworth City Schools – \$130 million construction project

The district has also consulted with the Ohio School Boards Association at-

torneys on best practices for addressing conflict of interest, accountability, and transparency recognized state-wide and nationally.

Measures in place to help provide for accountability, responsibility, transparency and record keeping include:

- The contract documents provided to bidders will include a requirement that each successful bidder awarded a contract must sign an affidavit of non-collusion and compliance with ethics and conflicts of interest requirements. This affidavit is included in the Project Manual provided to all bidders.
- Each contractor awarded a contract must complete the personal

Continued on Page 3

Shared vision for community arts center

Four years ago, the Westlake City School District and the Red Brick Center for the Arts began a partnership to see if an arts center could be developed as part of each of our missions for the community. The initial idea was for the Red Brick Center for the Arts to develop an arts center at the Red Brick school building. This was based on its availability and its historic value to the Westlake community.

Unfortunately, raising the \$3 million necessary to complete the rehabilitation of this notable building proved to be unattainable. The current economic climate has made it difficult to secure funds for a project of this size, and the likelihood of being able to do so in the near future is unlikely. At this point the school district anticipates taking the building down during the fall semester.

While the dream of saving the building will not be realized, the long-term potential for having a community arts center might still be possible. To that end, the

Westlake Schools and The Red Brick Center for the Arts remain committed to exploring the possibilities of an arts center in Westlake.

Both groups want to leave open a potential partnership under the umbrella of the school district's Master Facilities Plan by looking



at the possibility of making the high school's arts programming spaces contiguous with the Performing Arts Center. The goal would be to explore designing the school in such a way that it would allow the community access to the creative arts space outside of school hours if desired. No additional space beyond that required for the school would be

constructed, but if it is feasible, it would provide for additional utilization. This is a concept we are exploring with other aspects of our building spaces.

Additionally, to honor the history of education in Westlake as exemplified by the Red Brick building, both groups will consult with the project architects to determine if portions of the design can incorporate elements of the historic qualities of the Red Brick building and potentially utilize a few key items of the old building in the new construction. These elements may include bricks from the building used in a walkway on the new campus, along with some for community distribution, as well as the incorporation of the "Public Schools" stone finding a home at the new high school.

The Westlake City School District understands the desire to maintain community history. The renovation of the old middle school into a 5-6 building will take on the name Dover Intermediate School, for example, to retain that connection to our past.

WHS musicians selected for state performance

Both the Westlake High School Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the String Orchestra have been accepted to perform at the 2011 Ohio Music Education Association/MENC North Central Division Professional Development Conference in Cincinnati in late January 2011. Director Raymond Walczuk sent professional recordings of the two groups in the spring. More than 150 CDs were submitted representing groups from around the state. The OMEA selection committee made its decision on performing groups over the summer. It is rare for a school to have more than one ensemble selected for such a prestigious event.

Facilities plan processes *continued from Page 1*

property tax affidavit required by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) to identify delinquent personal property taxes in the county.

- Each bidder must include a bid guaranty with its bid, as required by the ORC.
- Each contractor awarded a contract must provide a contract bond that guarantees payment and performance of the work.
- Contracts will be awarded following the statutory competitive bidding process to the lowest responsible bidders for the work. Specific criteria for evaluating a bidder's responsibility to perform the work will be included in the bid documents.
- Bid submittals will be reviewed by the construction manager and the district's legal counsel to be sure that they are completed correctly and that the required supporting documentation is included.
- Each contractor awarded a bid must provide specific information listed in the instructions to bidders before a contract will be signed with the contractor.
- All contractors will be required to be a part of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation Drug Free Workplace program or an equivalent program.
- Squire Sanders & Dempsey law firm negotiated contracts with architect/construction management firms.
- Bricker & Eckler oversees all construction matters and specifically reviews the district's processes.
- Turner Construction is the district's construction management firm to oversee RFPs (requests for proposals), the competitive bidding process, set and assist in managing the budget, enforce contracts, provide value engineering, and coordinate contractors and the schedule. Turner has worked with more than 63 school districts on more than 80 projects totaling nearly \$2 billion. Resource International was added as a layer due to the size of the project to provide additional oversight specific to design reviews. These two groups will work with buildings and grounds staff, teachers, the architect and engineering teams to ensure the school district adheres to the construction schedule and budget.
- A change order resolution was passed by the Board of Education outlining specific steps for change orders with a limited threshold.
- The district, through the construction manager's efforts, will attempt to secure as many bids as possible with a minimum of three bids as a target for each contract. In the event there are less than three bids, the district will notify publicly (at BOE Meetings) and discuss the bid process RFP as well as the decision on the contract.
- The district has committed to posting all change orders on Board agendas that occurred under the pre-approved category, as well as all change orders for Board approval.
- Director of Business Affairs will continue to publicly provide updates twice a month to the Board and community.
- The construction processes are reviewed monthly with a Core Team, which includes two Board members chosen by the Board, a community partner from Energizer, an expert in finance, Turner Construction, MKC Architects Inc. and district administration representatives. This will allow additional input and perspective to add value to decision-making processes.
- A representative from Turner Construction will minimally provide monthly updates on the project to the Board and community.
- The 20/20 Vision Committee will continue to meet quarterly to review processes and provide feedback for the project. This committee is open to the entire community. All are encouraged and welcomed to participate.
- Meetings will continue to be held throughout the process with those community members whose property borders either the LBMS/Dover site or the WHS site to specifically review how work can be done to meet project goals while also considering challenges to neighbors. We will continue to schedule meetings and post information in the local media. All who are interested can attend whether their property borders a site or not.
- Our district website – www.wlake.org – will continue to be maintained and host a facilities blog, to provide updated information and another mechanism for the community to submit questions and have answers provided publicly.
- General construction project information will be delivered at planned community presentations.
- Presentations at the Westlake Community Center will continue to offer updates on the schools.
- Presentations will continue to be made to community groups throughout the project.
- WHBS-TV will be utilized to provide information in the form of studio interviews and scrolling informational updates.
- District newsletters and communications will provide updates on the project.

**Check out our Master Facilities Plan Phase I blog for construction updates:
www.westlakefacilities.blogspot.com**

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. 21 -- WHS band concert, 7:30pm
- Oct. 25 -- WHS choir concert, 7pm
- Oct. 28 -- LBMS fall play, 7pm
- Oct. 30 -- LBMS fall play, 3pm

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 1 -- Company D Showchoir Festival, 7pm

- Nov. 12-13 -- WHS drama, "The Crucible," 7pm
- Nov. 14 -- WHS drama, "The Crucible," 2pm
- Nov. 30 -- Parkside 6th grade band concert, 7pm

DECEMBER

- Dec. 1 -- LBMS 8th grade concert, 7:30pm
- Dec. 7 -- Parkside 6th grade concert, 7pm
- Dec. 8 -- LBMS 7th grade concert, 7:30pm
- Dec. 9 -- WHS instrumental concert, 7:30pm
- Dec. 13 -- WHS choir concert, 7pm
- Dec. 14 -- Parkside 5th grade concert, 7:30pm
- Dec. 17 & 18 -- Cleveland Civic Youth Ballet, "Nutcracker," 7pm



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27200 Hilliard Blvd.
Westlake, OH 44145

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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Cleveland, Ohio
Permit No. 3411

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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