



TODAY

News today that shapes the future..
Students and employees in the
West Allegheny Schools..
Information for residents of Findlay
and North Fayette Townships and
Oakdale Borough

Students Continue High Performance On State Tests

Elementary students in all three West Allegheny school buildings surpassed their high scores of the previous year on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests in math and reading. The exams were administered in April 2005 to students in grades five, eight, and eleven. The projected targets for proficiency in math and reading under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) were increased from 35% to 45% and from 45% to 54%, respectively, compared to the previous year.

Despite the increase in these thresholds, West Allegheny is ahead of schedule in reaching the NCLB goal that all students perform at least at the proficient level by 2014 with all district schools achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP) status from the

-continued on page 2-

Artwork Awarded Finalist Status, Representing State in National Exhibit

What began as an extra credit project in her eighth grade English class resulted in national recognition for freshman **Megan Kaulius**. At the encouragement of her English teacher **Rita Wilson**, Kaulius entered the "Discover What Art is..." competition sponsored by VSA arts. In May she learned that she was a finalist, whose artwork was selected to represent her state in a 54-piece exhibit, which opened in Washington, D.C. last June.

Students in kindergarten through twelfth grade from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia submitted entries. The exhibit was designed to raise awareness of the importance of the arts in education for students of all abilities. To highlight this artwork from children throughout the United States and abroad, VSA arts, scheduled a nationwide tour of the exhibit following its debut in Washington. Information on the exhibit and the VSA arts organization is available



Megan Kaulius

"Art is anything you want it to be. Humans are amazing and can do anything they set their minds to."

online at www.vsarts.org.

A picture of Kaulius's entry was also featured in a catalog along with that of the other finalists. Her three-dimensional piece, made of paper pulp, plaster, paint, tissue paper, and cardboard, is entitled "Art Is Anything You Want It To Be."



Seniors Achieve Perfect Score

Congratulations to seniors **Lauren Monks** and **Chris Purtell** for their perfect score on the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition exam!

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West Allegheny State Test Scores Reflect Adequate Yearly Progress

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state. Preliminary reports indicate that the District, as a whole, achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP). To meet AYP, schools must meet three targets:

Participation rate on the PSSA in math and reading for all students and every measurable subgroup; performance on the PSSA in math and reading for all students and every measurable subgroup; and either attendance or graduation.

In math, 84% of Donaldson Elementary students performed at or above these proficiency levels compared to 77% the previous year. Similar increases were seen at McKee Elementary from 73% to 81% and at Wilson Elementary from 82% to 86%. Reading performance also improved at Donaldson from 72% to 74%, at McKee from 69% to 72%, and at Wilson from 80% to 87%.

While the graduation and participation rates surpassed state thresholds as well, the percentage of high school students (78%) meeting or exceeding proficiency in reading remained constant. In

math the same was true for the middle school, where 67% of students again scored at or above the proficient level.

While still exceeding the state standards, eleventh grade scores in math declined slightly from 67% to 64% proficiency, and eighth grade scores in reading went from 81% to 76%. Because of the requirement that all subgroups within a school's general population must also meet the 45% standard in math and the 54% standard in reading, the West Allegheny Middle School was given a warning due to one subgroup. Among the subgroups are special education, limited English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged.

With resource teachers available at all buildings to assist students who need extra help during the school day, after-school tutoring sessions, and ongoing modification in the curriculum as well as instructional delivery, the District continues to work toward the goal of 100% proficiency expected by 2014.

Middle States Process Groups Implement Plans

Improving academic performance and strengthening technological skills for all students are the priorities targeted as part of West Allegheny High School's application for Middle States Accreditation. To accomplish the objectives set during the 2004-05 school year, several process groups will develop and monitor the implementation of action plans during the current school year. The groups will consist of students, staff members and board members serving on the Middle States Accreditation Committee.

A validation team from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA) will visit the high school in February 2006 for an on-site review of the school's progress toward accomplishing the following two objectives by the year 2012: (1) "...students will demonstrate improved academic achievement and meet more rigorous academic standards [by scoring higher on PSSA and SAT tests and earning at least a "B" on certain designated courses and projects]." (2) "...every student will [demonstrate proficiency] in applying computer technologies...to integrate higher level thinking and critical reasoning across the curriculum [by earning at least a "B" on various computer technology courses]."

Dr. Earl Bradford Smith, high school assistant principal, and **Mr. Martin Lestander**, high school technology teacher, are the MSA internal coordinators.

Professional Development Day Set

West Allegheny School District teachers will attend workshops at the County-wide Professional Development Day facilitated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit on October 10. This program is the first event in the Building on Student Success initiative, a plan

developed by Allegheny County Superintendents. The experience is designed to prepare teachers to increase student achievement. Among the workshop presenters are West Allegheny faculty members **Bobbie Clapperton**, **Valerie Prevade**, and **Tawnya Weidinger**.

From the Superintendent: Dr. John S. DiSanti

State of the District Address - August 30, 2005

I recently had the privilege of delivering my State of the District Address to our professional and support staff. During that Address, I introduced 20 new employees and recognized our Board of School Directors for their ongoing commitment to excellence evidenced by the adoption of a \$42 million budget, one that will allow our staff to provide high quality programs and services to our students. I also spoke about West Allegheny's "Pyramid of Success" --

Academics, The Arts, and Athletics. It was easy to identify many of the district's accomplishments. I noted our high test scores, individual academic and performing arts awards, athletic championships, and over \$1.8 million in scholarship dollars garnered by last year's graduates.

In the area of Curriculum and Instruction, the District is extending and expanding various programs such as Junior Achievement, after school reading and tutorials, Character Education, and Videography, to name just a

few. You might be interested to know that our district is a home for twenty-four students whose primary language is not English, but rather German, Hindi, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, & Krahn. We have restructured our Instructional Support Team (IST) to better attain raised student achievement, defined specific guidelines for our writing program (Vantage), and are in the process of formulating a long-range Curriculum Enhancement Initiative which will encompass all content areas.

The district continues to invest significant dollars to upgrading and expanding technology opportunities for our students and staff as is delineated in this issue of *WA Today*.

With regard to our Ancillary Programs, our campus continues to grow with over 600,000 square feet of buildings and almost 200 acres of grounds. Students and parents should note several facility improvements which are also shared in this publication.

Our Food Service staff is now serving over 270,000 lunches annually and 76,000 breakfasts. For

the first time, revenues exceeded one million dollars. Our bus fleet of 66 buses safely transports students over 4,000 miles each day and logs another 15,000 miles for activity runs.

Certainly, it is easy to see that we are a business; a business of developing and nurturing young children until they leave us to pursue their lives' dreams.

As I shared with our staff, our "business" carries with it an awesome responsibility.

Everyone is valued for his or her contribution. Whether he or she is a teacher or administrator, counselor, coach, cook, bus driver, custodian, or secretary, each plays an important role in assuring that our "clients," the students, are successful.

Our future will bring more accomplishments and challenges. I am confident that together, the board, our staff, parents, and community will build on our many successes and transform each challenge into a positive opportunity for children.

Resources Available for Families In Need of Help

The West Allegheny Family Support Committee was formed to help district families with school-age children. If you are aware of any family with school-age children living in the district, who may be in need of

support services, please contact the following: Lynn Birnie, high school, 724-695-5252; Kristen Martin, middle school, 724-695-8979, Ext. 2233; Kristen Newell, Donaldson, 724-213-1014; JoAnn Biscan,

McKee, 724-695-5267; Karen Tracy, Wilson, 724-695-3300, Ext. 5304; and Meredith Gillo, District Office, 724-695-5219. Recommendations for help may be anonymous and will remain confidential.

High School STARS Group Strives to Increase Student Involvement



High school members of STARS (Students Taking Action Reaching Students) (front) Ashley Brandebura, (back) Samantha Gannon, Jamie Mackey, Carley Lang, Angela Valentino, and Katelyn Thomas develop a presentation during a Career Ambassadors Certification Training Session conducted by Vanessa Lund and Johanna Guarino of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Politics.

While reaching for the stars is always a good idea, West Allegheny High School students feel an even better idea is to reach other students. They hope to improve interpersonal relationships by increasing student involvement in various academic, leadership and service endeavors like the National Honor Society, Student Government, Students against Destructive Decisions (SADD), and JROTC.

Several students, who served on the high school Student Leadership Team and the district Character Education Curriculum Council last year, have developed plans to incorporate all the high school clubs

into one comprehensive group, STARS (Students Taking Action Reaching Students), and have invited all high school students to participate. The group's mission is to promote academics, leadership, and community service and to make school an exciting, educational, and memorable experience.

This initiative is a proactive approach to strengthen character education at the high school level. **Dr. Earl Bradford Smith**, high school assistant principal, chairs the Character Education Curriculum Council established last year to assess and improve character education district wide.

Facility Upgrades Enhance Learning Environment

To enhance the learning environment for students, the district prioritized a number of improvements at all facilities over the past year. In the elementary buildings, renovations included exterior improvements as well as new carpeting and tile inside at Wilson and McKee. In addition, ceilings were replaced and lighting upgraded at McKee. Wilson's face-lift also resulted in freshly painted hallways and plans for the restoration of the historic log house on the school grounds. With work on the new baseball field at Donaldson progressing, the district plans to have it ready for spring sports.

Middle school students returned this year to repainted rooms and hallways throughout the building. Minor construction projects there involved exterior repairs to the landings and curbs. The maintenance staff also worked on changing the parking areas and traffic patterns near the building.

At the high school, workers replaced the roof, restored the canopy at the main entrance, and made various other exterior improvements. Inside the building, the athletic offices and several classrooms were relocated.

The Buildings and Grounds Department and its Supervisor, **Glenn Franceschina**, take great pride in the appearance and condition of the district facilities.



Various Technology Initiatives Planned for 2005-06 School Year

The West Allegheny School District is upgrading technology with new software and hardware district-wide for the 2005-06 school year. Working with Questeq, its technology services provider, the district completed these improvements during the summer months.

Software enhancements (Edline and Gradequick) continue to facilitate online grades while Vision Software will allow teachers to monitor student computers. Applications, like Deep Freeze, which prohibits unapproved installation of programs, will protect and extend computer life. Others, like Turn IT In, will be used at the high school and middle school to prevent plagiarism. Students will also benefit from the latest in music notation and assessment software with the installation of Finale 2005. As an upgrade to the current e-mail system, Exchange 2003 will enhance the Web Outlook Interface for checking e-mail over the Internet. Installation of the latest version of Winebago, an upgrade to the present Library Circulation software, will expand the functionality of the library system.

Improvements in instructional support areas include updating the program that manages the cafeteria transactions in order to maintain software support and upgrading the personnel system to a Windows version. The district will also increase training and utilization of the testing and tracking programs introduced the last two years

(Scantron, Vantage, and QSP).

With computer replacement on a four-year cycle, 265 new computers replaced those that were four years old this year. While smaller than the current computers, the new models will have CD ROMs. CD Writers / DVD Readers will be added to new computers designated for teacher and presentation workstations. Flat panel 17-inch monitors will also save on space. The new computers are allocated for the elementary and middle school libraries and various computer labs at all five buildings. Other replacement equipment includes scanners for the McKee and Wilson libraries, printers for Wilson and the middle school, a CAD (Computer Assisted Design) plotter for the high school, and replacement of some servers in the district computer center.

Last year the district received approval from the state for an extension of the current E-Tech Plan until the beginning of the next strategic planning cycle. This year the district will be updating its long-range E-Tech Plan as a part of the five-year strategic plan. It also will be rewriting the technology curriculum and reviewing the integration of technology into the rest of the curriculum.

Staff computer facilitators have also been redesigning layouts and expanding resources on the district's website at www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us to provide updated and accurate school information to the West Allegheny community on an ongoing basis.

Patriotic Themes Commemorate 9/11 Anniversary



Wilson Elementary School first grade students Noah Wilson, Lexi Bray, and Jacob Eberhardt wore red, white, and blue and focused on patriotic symbols, like the Statue of Liberty and the American Flag, during art class in remembrance of the fourth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on America.

Is our
Newsletter
Mailing List
Up to Date?



If you know of anyone living in the West Allegheny School District who is not currently receiving a copy of this newsletter, please ask them to contact the Communications Office at 724-695-5274. We will be glad to add them to our mailing list.



Parking Restrictions Promote Student, Staff Safety

The West Allegheny School District is requesting the public's cooperation with regard to parking at all five school buildings. Near the main entrances, there are areas where the curbs are painted red to designate that space for emergency vehicle response, such as fire trucks, ambulances, and police vehicles. In emergency situations, time is critical. If unauthorized vehicles use these restricted parking areas, also known as fire lanes, valuable time may be lost by first

responders to the scene. Even when there is no emergency, unauthorized vehicles parked near the buildings undermine school campus security.

To remind visitors to refrain from parking in these spaces, the district has installed identical signs along the red curbs at each building. The signs display the capital letter P with a slash through it and the words "Fire Lane" along with the message "No Parking/No Stopping." Visitors are not permitted to park in these restricted areas before, during, or

after school hours.

Parents, staff members, and other visitors, who drop off people or materials or enter the buildings themselves for a brief period, should park in areas designated "Short-Term Visitor Parking." At the elementary buildings, short-term parking will be available across from the main entrance of each building. The roadway in front of the entrance to the middle school will be designated "No Parking." All visitors should park in the lot immediately below that road. Short-term visitors to the high school may take advantage of the parking places near the circle across from the main entrance.

Also, the North Fayette Police Department has requested that parents do not use the service road behind the middle school. Parents used to drive up the road near the flag pole, drop students off and then attempt to pull back into the flow of buses and other vehicles coming from the high school. This interrupted the flow of traffic on campus and contributed to congestion at the entrance on West Allegheny Road. To improve traffic flow and safety, the District has restricted access to the service road to employees only and blocked access to the road that runs along the east side of the building.

If visitors cooperate with these parking restrictions, the campus will become a safer place for our students and staff. In addition, motor vehicles will be in compliance with the Pennsylvania State Vehicle Code guidelines.

Program Focuses on National Anthem



West Allegheny Middle School eighth grade band members Liz Kelly, Jenna Placha, and David Ferguson play "The Star Spangled Banner" during the National Anthem Project program on September 14.

In celebration of the nationwide "National Anthem Project," students in the West Allegheny Middle School assembled for a full-school singing of the National Anthem on September 14, 2005. The ceremony began with the presentation of the colors by high school members of the Color Guard from the Marine Junior ROTC program. While the eighth grade band played "The Star Spangled Banner," the eighth grade

chorus led the school in song. Sixth graders then read short essays about the National Anthem.

All middle school students and staff were asked to wear red, white and blue. This date was set nationally as it is the anniversary of Francis Scott Key's writing of the National Anthem. The event was organized by middle school music teacher **Meagan Bruno** as the weekly advisor group activity.

Donaldson Third Graders Celebrate Grandparents' Day

Third grade students at West Allegheny's Donaldson Elementary School saluted their grandparents with a celebration on September 16, beginning with a program of songs and poetry in the cafeteria followed by refreshments. The children then invited their grandparents to join them in their classrooms for a variety of interactive activities.

While talking with their guests, the children recorded memories of the grandparents' childhoods, solved mystery word puzzles, made family trees, read stories, and played board games. Before the program the students spent class time writing about special times they had shared with their grandparents and what their grandparents meant to them.

In cases where a grandparent was unable to attend, students were free to invite another older adult relative, friend or neighbor. Special arrangements were made for staff members



Donaldson third grader Jenny Forse enjoyed a visit from her grandparents Richard and Joyce Spine and Sally Webber during a program honoring grandparents on September 16.

to be adopted as grandparents for students whose families were unavailable that day. The event was

coordinated by third grade teachers, **Kathy Van Winkle, Bob DeMario, and Tanya Sekelik.**

Recent Retirees Acknowledged for Loyalty to District

Former Director of Educational Services **Charles Fazekas** announced his retirement in June with an effective date of July 31, 2005. However, his plans to retire have been somewhat delayed. On August 17, 2005, the West Allegheny School Board approved a supplemental contract naming him Interim Director through November 11, 2005, during the search for his successor. This is the second interim position he has held in the district within the last year, having been appointed as Interim Superintendent in January for several weeks before the board hired Superintendent Dr. John S. DiSanti.

Since joining West Allegheny in 1972, Fazekas served as McKee Elementary Principal for 25 years. He was appointed Director of Educational Services in 1997, and served for the past eight years in that position as the assistant to the superintendent. During that time his responsibilities involved advising the board on instructional programs, including professional development, curriculum, textbook adoptions, personnel, and cafeteria and transportation operations. He also served as a consultant to the superintendent during school board meetings on all other aspects pertaining to the schools.

At a recent board meeting, Dr. DiSanti thanked Mr. Fazekas for his many years of dedicated service to the district. He said he particularly appreciated Fazekas's guidance when he, himself, was new to the district. Dr. DiSanti also acknowledged the contributions of 14 other staff members who retired this past summer. They are **Woodward Jarvis, David Silbor, Martha Venanzi, Dale Shirey, Don Lang, G. Paul DeBor, Madge McCartney, Connie Vay, Sharon Emling, Linda Nalesnick, Paul Beyerbach, Robin Gilden, Kate Silberberg, and Marge Simpson.**

★ Alumni Update ★

*Sharing the Achievements
of our Graduates*

★ **Robert A. Frank, Ph.D. '74** - is currently Interim University Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Psychology at the University of Cincinnati. Dr. Frank has served in the Graduate School for the past five years following a five-year tenure as associate vice president for research. He has garnered research funding in two distinct areas; the psychopharmacology of drug abuse and human taste and odor perception, and has written over 170 publications and presentations. His current research focuses on the development and testing of a new medical device, which may be useful for the early diagnosis of a number of disorders (such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease) that affect the central nervous system.

★ **Michelle Long '01** - graduated magna cum laude from Westminster College in May 2005 with a Bachelor of Music degree. In college, she served as president of the flute choir for three years and participated in marching band, wind ensemble, and symphonic band for four years. She was also a member of Kappa Delta Pi, an education honorary, and Omicron Delta Kappa, a leadership honorary. She began teaching music at Serra Catholic High School in McKeesport at the start of the 2005-2006 school year. Besides her teaching position, she is also a flute instructor at Southwater Center for the Arts in Sewickley.

Please e-mail information to cbonnar@westallegheny.k12.pa.us if you would like to include an alumni update in a future issue.

West Allegheny Breakfast Meetings Prepare Students, Parents for Graduation



West Allegheny seniors Brittany Chotta (center left) and Andrea Walker (center right) attended the senior parent breakfast on September 8 with their mothers Debbie Chotta (left) and Sharon Walker for a presentation on preparing for graduation sponsored by the high school Guidance Department.

West Allegheny twelfth grade students and their parents were invited for the first presentation in a series of four breakfast meetings coordinated by the West Allegheny High School Guidance Office on September 8 in the high school

cafeteria. The series is designed to alert both students and parents to the importance of preparation for graduation well in advance of the actual commencement date.

Leon Strimel, High School Guidance Counselor, reviewed a time line for seniors including Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) dates, financial aid workshops, college application deadlines, and other career-oriented programs and services. Tips on completing the senior profile and applying to colleges were also provided.

Similar presentations on planning for graduation were scheduled for parents and students in eleventh grade on September 13, tenth grade on September 20, and ninth grade on September 22. For information contact Leon Strimel, guidance counselor, at 724-695-5249.



**Visit
West Allegheny
online at: www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us**

School Board Hires Two Assistants to Superintendent

The West Allegheny School District Board of School Directors hired **Dr. Christine Assetta** as the Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and **Dr. William Englert** as the Assistant to the Superintendent for Personnel and Student Support Services at its

Donations Benefit Disaster Victims

West Allegheny students and staff members have launched a district-wide community service effort to raise money for those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Administrators met on September 2 to establish guidelines for the initiative. Each of the schools will plan and coordinate a collection between September 12 and November 15, 2005. At the end of this period, each school will send a check for the total donation to the district business office for submission to the Salvation Army.

At the high school the newly organized group, Students Taking Action Reaching Students (STARS), has named the high school component "STARS 'And Then Some' Collection for Victims of Hurricane Katrina." Various fundraisers, such as classroom donation jars, bake sales, and collections at home athletic events, are being considered. The staff advisor for the group is special education teacher **Anthony Castelluci**. Plans for fundraisers to support hurricane relief are also underway at the middle school and the elementary buildings. Information is available at the school offices.

regular meeting on September 21, 2005.

Dr. Christine Assetta has been employed with the West Allegheny School District since 1987. She has served as the Assistant Principal at Wilson Elementary School since 2000. In addition, she has been actively involved in the district's curriculum development. Prior to her administrative assignment, she was an elementary teacher at McKee Elementary School. Dr. Assetta received her Master of Education and Educational Doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh

Dr. William Englert has been employed with the Peters Township School District since 1994. He has been serving as the Principal of Peters Township High School since 2002. Prior to his current position, he served as Assistant Secondary Principal at Peters Township High School, Associate Secondary Principal at South Fayette Township School District, as well as teacher

and Assistant Principal at West Jefferson Hills School District. He received his Master of Education and Educational Doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh.

Superintendent Dr. John DiSanti stated, "Both Dr. Assetta and Dr. Englert bring exceptional skills to their respective positions. Both are effective communicators. I am delighted to have them as part of our educational leadership team and am confident that they will utilize a collaborative style to effect positive growth in our educational programs and services."

The reorganization of the administrative structure will allow principals to dedicate more of their time to instructional leadership in their respective buildings while curriculum and staff development can be more effectively addressed from a systemic district-wide approach. The district will also realize cost savings as a result of the reorganization.

McKee Helps Hurricane Victims

McKee Elementary School second graders Randy Doehre, Tommy Wagner, and Sara Hubauer were happy to participate in the hat day fundraiser to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Besides raising \$433 for people in need, the event allowed them to wear a favorite hat during class. Four other



Friday dress up fundraisers were scheduled at McKee to help the hurricane victims.

Athletic Excellence: *See Section Titles and U.S Army All-American (right)*



Varsity cheerleader Ali Mianzo prepares props to help boost school spirit from the sidelines at the start of the fall football season.

Constitution Day Inspires Reflection on Milestones in American History



Donaldson fourth graders celebrated Constitution Day by making patriotic wind socks, memorizing the Preamble to the Constitution, reading the book entitled *A More Perfect Union*, reading about the American Revolution on the Internet, and playing interactive games, such as *Saving the Bill of Rights*. They also discussed the Bill of Rights, the Articles of Confederation, and the changes in the American flag with their teacher Beth Koraido (back, second from right), dressed as Betsy Ross. Pictured with Koraido are (front) Victoria Britton, Jenelle Slodki, Cheyenne Morse, Ashley Czerpak, and Amelia Chamberlain; (back) Derek Wang, Katelyn Garland, Victoria Chiodo, and Andrew Becker.

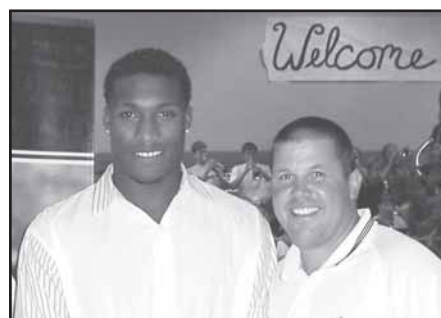
Eight Section Championships

With a record number of athletic teams capturing section championship titles last year, West Allegheny has reinforced its winning tradition and continues to build its reputation for athletic excellence. For the first time in the district's history, a total of eight teams won their sections during 2004-05. They are:

- ❖ Football
- ❖ Boys' Cross-Country
- ❖ Girls' Cross-Country
- ❖ Girls' Volleyball
- ❖ Boys' Bowling
- ❖ Baseball
- ❖ Boys' Track and Field
- ❖ Girls' Track and Field

Adding to the excitement is the fact that this was a first-time accomplishment for the girls' volleyball team and the boys' bowling team.

U. S. Army All-American Bowl Invitee



West Allegheny senior Dorin Dickerson was selected to represent the district in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio, Texas on January 7, 2006. Pictured with Dickerson is Bob Palko, head football coach.

Please Mark Your Calendar

Monday-Friday, October 10-14
Middle School Book Fair

Monday, October 10
In-Service - No School

Tuesday, October 11
Donaldson Buddy Reading, 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 12
Board Committee Mtg., 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 13
Math Mtg. for Parents, MS., 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 15
PSAT

Tuesday, October 18,
Donaldson Buddy Reading, 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 19
Wilson Pioneer Days Celebration
Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 22
WA Cavalcade of Bands, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 25
Donaldson Buddy Reading, 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 1
Donaldson Buddy Reading, 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 5
SAT at WA

Tuesday, November 8
Donaldson Buddy Reading, 3:00 p.m.

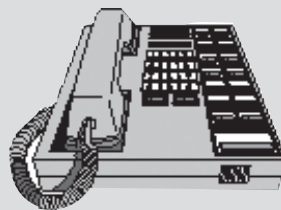
Wed., November 9
Board Committee Mtg., 7:30 p.m.

Thursday-Friday, November 10-11
Conference Days
No School K-8

Flyer Distribution Guidelines Improve Parent Communications

Effective with the start of the 2005-2006 school year, the district will adhere to specific guidelines for the distribution of information to students. The goal is to improve communication with parents by distributing information that, while not generated by the schools, may be beneficial to students.

- ◆ Only the following groups may request to have handouts/flyers approved for distribution: (1) school-related organizations, (2) nonprofit service organizations that provide a beneficial service to students (This does not include fundraisers for nonprofit organizations.), (3) local municipalities (for sports registrations, Easter egg hunts, etc.), and (4) other organizations that, in the judgment of the Assistant to the Superintendent for Personnel and Student Support Services, provide information beneficial to students.
- ◆ Requests for permission to distribute printed materials or products must be submitted to the Assistant to the Superintendent for Personnel and Student Support Services in writing. Flyers for programs/events/activities that are not school sponsored must include the following disclaimer, "The West Allegheny School District does not sponsor or sanction this program/event/activity."
- ◆ Requests must be submitted at least one week prior to the requested distribution date. "Backpack" flyer distribution will occur in grades K-5 on Wednesdays only. A school-wide announcement will alert students in grades 6-12 that the information is available for pickup in the office.
- ◆ Once approval has been granted or denied, each building principal, secretary and clerk will receive a copy of the flyer indicating its approval status. Submitting organizations will also be notified of the decision.
- ◆ Upon approval, organizations must reproduce the flyers, bundle them by homeroom classes, and deliver them to each building. The district will provide the organization with the classroom counts upon approval (or earlier, if requested).



**Call the School NEWSLINE:
724-695-5205
for calendar updates, school
delays and closings**

Wilson Elementary Students Plant Pinwheels For Peace

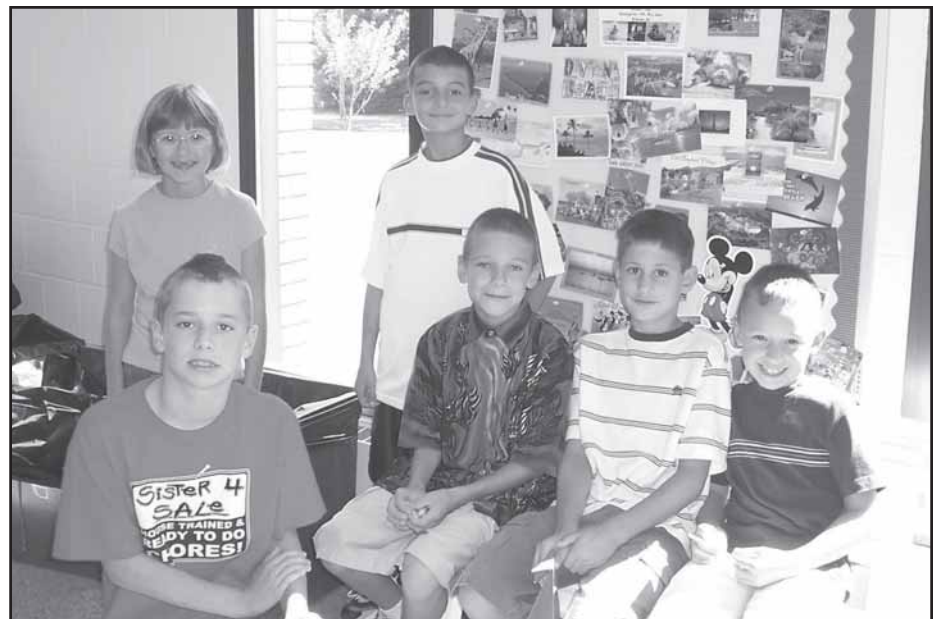
First through fifth graders at West Allegheny's Wilson Elementary School created Pinwheels for Peace in five different colors as part of the observance of the International Day of Peace on September 21, 2005. Before assembling the pinwheels, students decorated the paper petals with words and symbols reflecting the peace theme. When completed, the pinwheels were used to decorate the school lawn with an oversized peace sign. Each of the sections inside the circle were made using a different-colored pinwheel.

Through class discussions and writing projects, the students also reflected on what they could do to promote world peace. Wilson Elementary Principal **Kathleen Sites** said she learned of the activity through an educational website inspired by the 1995 United Nations' declaration of September 21 as an International Day of Peace.



Wilson second graders Brooke Caruso, Max Clements, Mason Bynum, Dustin Longstreth, and Marisa D'Amore participated in the Pinwheels for Peace Project to celebrate September 21 as an International Day of Peace.

McKee Fourth Graders Conduct Tours for New Family Orientation Program



McKee fourth graders (front) Clay Gregord, Zach Scott, Jed Buck, and Ryan Borgo; (back) Lara Jakiel and Paul Ferrara gave up their summer vacation time to serve as tour guides at the New Family Orientation program held in August. Missing from the picture are Kayla Wischmann and Alyssa Bush.



Upcoming School Board Meetings

Next Committee Meetings:

Wed., Oct 12, 2005

Wed., Nov. 9, 2005

Next Regular Meetings:

Wed., Oct. 19, 2005

Wed., Nov. 16, 2005

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.
at Donaldson Elementary School
and are open to the public.

*From the Office of
Elaine Fitzgerald
Coordinator of Pupil Services*

Parent Information Notice

Screening and Evaluation: The West Allegheny School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specified needs of school age students requiring special programs and services. These procedures, as required by law, are as follows:

The district, as prescribed by section 1402 of the School Code, routinely conducts screenings of a child's hearing acuity (kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 11th grade in the fall), visual acuity (all students every year in the fall), and speech and language skills (all 2nd grade students and teacher, parent, outside agency, and IST referrals). Gross motor and fine motor skills, academic skills, and social and emotional skills are assessed by teachers and support staff on an ongoing basis. Screening activities include review of group-based data such as cumulative enrollment and health records, report cards, ability and achievement test scores. Identified needs from these screening sources, as well as information obtained from parents and outside agencies, are assessed, noted within student records and discussed with parents. These school records are always open and available to parents and only to school officials who have a legitimate "need to know" about the child. Information from records is released to other persons or agencies only with appropriate authorization, which involves written permission by parents.

Screening information will be used by the Instructional Support Team within the student's school to meet his/her specific needs or to document the need for further evaluation. If it is determined that a child needs additional services, the Instructional Support Team will make adjustments relative to such things as the child's learning style, behavior, physical inabilities, and speech problems to be more in keeping with traditional classroom expectancies. Parents will be notified if a child is receiving Instructional Support. If a student does not make progress with IST involvement and it is determined that a student may be eligible for special education services, the student is referred for a multidisciplinary evaluation. After all of the evaluations are completed, a Comprehensive Evaluation Report is prepared with parent involvement and includes specific recommendations for the types of intervention necessary to deal with the child's specified needs. When the comprehensive evaluation report is completed and in accordance with state regulations, an IEP team meeting with parent involvement is scheduled to develop an appropriate individualized education program (IEP) for the student.

Parents of students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education services may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child

through a written request to the Building Principal or Coordinator of Pupil Services.

Services for School Age Exceptional Children: The school district provides a free, appropriate, public education to exceptional students according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school age, need specially designed instruction and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Pennsylvania State Standards: autism/pervasive development disorder, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, physical disability, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, and speech/language impairment.

Services designed to meet the needs of eligible students include annual development of an individualized education program (IEP), biennial multidisciplinary reevaluation, supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, and placement in a part-time or full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and staff at the IEP team meeting and are based on the
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Parent Information Notice

abilities, chronological age and the level of intensity of the specified intervention. The school district also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, and occupational therapy that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits.

Prior to the initiation of services, parents are presented a "Notice of Recommended Assignments" (NORA) with which they may agree or disagree. If parents disagree with the program being recommended, they have the right to request a pre-hearing conference, mediation and/or a due process hearing.

Services for Students in

Nonpublic Schools: Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time basis in a special education program operated in a public school.

Special education programs are accessible to nonpublic school students through dual enrollment following the multidisciplinary team evaluation and development of an individualized education program (IEP).

Parents of nonpublic school students, who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education, may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to the Coordinator of Pupil Services.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students: The school district will provide to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities to the extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in, or access to, an aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. Additional information about the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students is available by contacting the Coordinator of Pupil Services at (724) 695-5221.

Services for Preschool Age

Children: Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delay or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early intervention services.

The Pennsylvania Department of

Welfare is responsible for providing services to infants and toddlers, defined as children from birth through two years of age. Contact Early Learning Institute, 2500 Baldwick Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205, (412) 837-1502.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing services to preschool age children from age three through five. Contact Project DART, 4 Station Square, Floor 2, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, (412) 394-5736.

Confidentiality of Student

Records: The privacy rights of parents and students are mandated by federal legislation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Buckly Amendment), state regulations (Chapter 14 - Special Education Services and Programs, Chapter 12 - Student Rights and Responsibilities), and district policy.

The different categories of information maintained by the school district are as follows: educational and health records, personally identifiable information, and directory information. With the exception of the receiving school district, educational and health records, and personally identifiable information cannot be disclosed or released without parental consent or adult student (a student who is eighteen years of age or older, married, or attending an institution of post secondary education) consent. Consent information,

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Parent Information Notice







known as directory information, can be released without consent. Directory information means information which would be considered not harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. This information includes the following: student's name, address, date and place of birth, courses taken, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. Also, group or individual interviews, photographs, or videos of students are directory information, and these items may be used by the district in various publications or by the media.

Written parental or adult student request is required for the disclosure of educational and health records and personally identifiable information. The consent must specify the records that may be disclosed and purpose of the disclosure and identify the parent or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. A written record of the disclosure must be maintained by the school district. Parents or adult students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records within thirty (30) days of the date the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to

inspect. The principal will then make arrangements for access to inspect the records. Parents and adult students can seek an amendment to the student's educational records that the parent or adult student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. The parent or eligible student can do so by writing the school principal, clearly identifying the part of the record to be changed, and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the

decision and advise the individual of his/her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

Parents or adult students have the right to file complaints concerning alleged failures of the district to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Such complaints should be directed to the Health, Education, and Welfare Office, Washington, D.C.

	Aqua Club Joe Corbi's Pizza Sale, October 3-17
	Key Club Trick or Treat for UNICEF, October 25-31 Kiwanis Holiday Greens Sale, November 1-18 
	Banquets Boys' Soccer, November 6; Girls' Soccer, November 12 Cross-Country, November 13; Girls' Volleyball, November 20
	Band Sarris Candy Sale, October 17-November 7 
	German Honor Society Gummi Bear Sale, October 18-22
	Library Club Bake Sale during lunch periods, October 17-22 
	Junior Class Prom Committee Andy's Candy Bar Sale, October 24-November 23
	Cheerleading Boosters Cheerleaders will be selling spirit items during lunch periods for the football season. 

It is the policy of the District not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age or handicap in its educational programs, services, facilities, activities or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 Regulations of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 204 Regulations of the 1984 Carl D. Perkins Act or any applicable federal statute. For information regarding this policy, contact Compliance Officer, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, West Allegheny School District, P. O. Box 55, 600 Donaldson Road, Oakdale, PA 15071, 724-695-3422, or the Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, DC 20201. The school district shall not discriminate in the operations/functions of the district on the basis of sex, color, national origin, religion, marital status, or handicap.

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Newsletter Editor:
Carol Bonnar



TODAY



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SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Superintendent	(724) 695-5211
Interim Director of Educational Services	695-5216
Assistants to the Superintendent:	
for Curriculum and Instruction	695-5216
for Personnel and Student Support Services	695-5216
Business Manager	695-5212
Pupil Services Coordinator	695-5221
District Technology Coordinator	695-5222
Buildings and Grounds Supervisor	695-5223
Communications Coordinator	695-5274
West Allegheny High School	695-7368
West Allegheny Middle School	695-8979
Donaldson Elementary School	213-1010
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