



INSIDE WEST ALLEGHENY

A publication for West Allegheny School District employees

Winter 2007-2008

Staff In-Service Program Designed to Insure Technology Competency, Advance Skill Levels



Brittany Gradkowski asks Beth Schultz a question during the SAM training session.



Bob Palko and Dave Botizan take computer-administered tests to improve technology skills.

The District Act 48 Committee, chaired by Dr. Christine Assetta, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, targeted technology training for the January 21, 2008, staff in-service program. With staff technology training as one of the district-wide strategic plan goals, a half-day program was presented by the five building

technology facilitators--Pam Volakis at the high school, Carrie Morgan at the middle school, Beth Schultz at Donaldson, Kim Dawson at McKee, and Laurie Cole at Wilson--using Skills Assessment Manager (SAM) software.

This software is designed to insure all employees are competent in technology with respect to their job requirements and to advance

each individual's skill level.

The program for the remainder of the day focused on Edline training (online access to student grades) at the middle and high schools. The elementary faculty received training in SMART Board technology (interactive applications for involving students in technology). See photograph on page 3.

This newsletter brings best wishes for a successful second semester for 2007-2008



to all employees of the West Allegheny School District

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Faculty Members Present At National Conference

West Allegheny High School English teachers Lynn Ann DeBor and Elizabeth Shannon were among the presenters selected for the 2007 National Council of Teachers of English National Conference held in New York City in

November 2007. Their presentations focused on the social and cultural literacies used to increase high school students' awareness of the world around them through interactive projects. The following projects included in

the presentation were designed to build upon each other from ninth through twelfth grade and, year by year, increase the students' global awareness and use of varied technologies.

Ninth Grade: Survivor Guide (School Level)

The ninth grade students create a *High School Survivor Guide* for the eighth grade students to orient the incoming freshmen for their first year of high school.

Tenth Grade: Biography Project (Community Level)

Through the Biography Project the tenth grade students widen their focus to include a social and cultural awareness of the community in which they live. Students select and interview a community member at least one generation older as the subject of a biography. Students expand upon interview topics through research-based activities. The project culminates in the presentation of the finished biography to the subjects at a formal Biography Reception.

Eleventh and Twelfth Grade: Social Issues (National and Global Level)

The eleventh and twelfth grade students continue to broaden the scope of their social and cultural literacies to include both national and global perspectives. Writing a social action paper to elicit change addressed to an outside audience, students will begin to increase their understanding and awareness of the issues facing their fellow world citizens on a daily basis.



West Allegheny High School English teachers Lynn Ann DeBor and Elizabeth Shannon display the projects included in their presentation at the 2007 National Council of Teachers of English National Conference held in New York City in November 2007.

Teachers Chair State Event

In January 2007 West Allegheny High School English teachers Jennifer Fox and Elizabeth Shannon were named as cochairs for the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English and Language arts annual conference held in October in Southern Butler County. They were responsible for organizing a variety of professional programs with guest speakers, panels,

discussions, and exhibits of books and materials for several hundred Pennsylvania English and language arts educators.

After organizing the conference, both teachers were interviewed by a reporter from the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* and were featured with photographs in the paper's Newsmaker column in December 2007.

Touch-Sensitive Whiteboards Control Computer Functions



Donaldson Elementary Principal Patricia Nolan observes fourth grade teacher Lynanne Shaffer during a science lesson. Shaffer is using a SMART board (interactive whiteboard) to teach about animal adaptations. This technology allows students to see an enlarged version of what appears on a computer screen. For this lesson its interactive feature provides touch-screen options so students can separate the animals into categories.

Presenter Discusses Test Score Issues

Wilson/Donaldson art teacher Debra Turici was among the presenters at the Pennsylvania Middle School Association 2008 Western Region Professional Development Institute on January 21, 2008, at Highland Middle

School in Beaver Falls. Focusing on No Child Left Behind, the session was entitled "A Child is More than a Test Score." Turici related some of her own personal experiences and provided a variety of tools for teachers.

West Allegheny Welcomes New Employees

New employees for the 2007-2008 school year not listed in the fall issue of this newsletter include the following:

❖ **Robin Gardocki**

McKee Aide

❖ **Jennifer Jansen**

Wilson Cafeteria Aide

❖ **Douglas Murdoch**

High School Math Teacher

❖ **Lisa Steward**

McKee Aide

❖ **Tammy Weber**

Wilson Cafeteria Aide

School Closings and Delays

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weekly listings

Ronald Pasic Joins West Allegheny School Board

Ronald Pasic is the newest member of the West Allegheny School District Board of Directors. Representing Oakdale Region 1, he took his seat on December 5, 2007. His term expires in 2011. A ten-year resident of the district, he has a B.S. degree in finance and is a vice president within corpo-



rate banking for a local bank. He is a member of the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce and belongs to St. Columbkille Church. Active in the Parkway West Rotary, he is married and lives at 102 Butternut Drive in McDonald with his wife Andrea and daughter McKenna.

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, 105 Pine Street, Imperial, PA 15126, 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.



Published by the
West Allegheny School District
Communications Office

Pupil Services Office Sponsors Workshop on Autism Research

The West Allegheny School District Pupil Services Department will sponsor an informative workshop on autism research on February 12, 2008, at Donaldson Elementary School from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. presented by Christine Urich, an Educational Consultant for The Watson Institute.

Urich will discuss the results of various research projects and explain the approach researchers are taking and the areas they are targeting. Information from stories written by people with autism will reflect what is being learned about autism from that perspective. To supplement her presentation, she will provide a list of books and articles on the autism spectrum.

Working in special education for over 30 years, Urich began her career as a speech therapist, serving children with multiple disabilities. For the past nine years she has focused her work on children with autism. In this capacity she assists in developing programs for children with autism and other disabilities in public school districts.

Registration is required. Please provide the name/s and number of people attending to Meredith Gillo, school psychologist (phone: 724-695-5218 or 5220, e-mail: mgillo@westallegheny.k12.pa.us). The registration deadline is February 6, 2008.

Teacher Presents Writing Workshop

West Allegheny High School English teacher Rita Wilson presented a workshop on Creative Nonfiction at The University of Pittsburgh on November 3, 2007, as part of a panel presentation by four writers from the National

Writing Project. Designed to benefit teachers of all subject areas, the workshop was entitled *Creative Nonfiction: Writing a Memoir of Remembrance* and was presented in a series of best teaching practices in writing.

Bullying Prevention Programs Discussed

West Allegheny Middle School Teachers Valerie Prevade-Meehan and Megan Huchko presented a round-table discussion at the Pennsylvania Middle School Association (PMSA) Western Region Professional Development Institute being held at Highland

Middle School on January 21, 2008. Their topic was Bullying Prevention Programs. Prevade-Meehan and Huchko have been active on the PMSA Western Region Board for two years and have presented at various regional and state level conferences.