



INSIDE WEST ALLEGHENY

A publication for West Allegheny School District employees

Winter 2008-2009

In-Service Highlights Student Assessment, Creative Thinking, Technology Training, Stress Management

The District Act 48 Committee, chaired by Dr. Christine Assetta, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, provided a wealth of professional development opportunities for the January 19, 2009, staff in-service program.

Workshops on Differentiated Instruction and Formative Assessment were facilitated by Joe Werlinich and Otto Graf of the

University of Pittsburgh. Superintendent Dr. John S. DiSanti introduced Joe and



Tamara Thornhill of Life Solutions discusses creative thinking strategies with Wilson teacher Amy Boesenberg.

Otto praising their ability to bring Best Practices and research into the classroom. "These gentlemen have visited schools throughout the country and have been instrumental in helping teachers and principals apply effective instruction and curriculum delivery strategies. West Allegheny is delighted to be able to build a professional partnership with the University of Pittsburgh and know that this relationship will positively impact student and teacher performance," he said.

Other sessions included creative thinking and stress management by Tamara Thornhill of Life



Joe Werlinich of the University of Pittsburgh (standing) observes Wilson teachers Dana Bacu, Rebecca Kropf, and Angie Morrison as they complete an activity on collecting data in the classroom.

Solutions, Assessment for Music and Art by Mariann Fox of the Mt. Lebanon School District and a tennis clinic by Bob Ruzanic of the U.S. Tennis Association.

Time was also allotted for staff members to use the Skills Assessment Manager software to increase their technology competency with respect to their job requirements.

This newsletter brings best wishes for a successful second semester for 2008-2009



to all employees of the West Allegheny School District

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

Teacher Selected for State Communications Award



Jennifer Jones

West Allegheny High School English teacher Jennifer Jones was selected to receive a Communications Award presented by the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) for outstanding communications materials at its fall House of Delegates meeting held from December 11 through 13, 2008.

She was recognized in the print category, mainly for a monthly newsletter she produces and distributes to all members of the West Allegheny Education Association. Jones was chosen for the award from among the seven finalists from across the state who were announced at the Gettysburg Summer Leadership Conference.

Family Support Committee Offers Needed Assistance

The West Allegheny School District Family Support Committee was formed to help district families with school-age children. If you are aware of any family with school-age children in the district, who may need assistance, please contact the following: Lynn Birnie, high school, 724-695-5252; Pearl Hellman, middle school, 724-695-8979, Ext. 5233; Kristen Tracy, Donaldson, 724-213-1014; JoAnn Biscan, McKee, 724-695-5267; Kathy Taylor, Wilson, 724-695-3300, Ext. 5276; and Meredith Gillo, District Office, 724-695-5219. Recommendations for help may be anonymous and will remain confidential.



Beth Voltz to Co-Direct Western Pennsylvania Writing Project



Beth Voltz

Beth Voltz, high school English teacher has been selected as one of two teacher co-directors of The Western Pennsylvania Writing

Project. In this position she, along with the other co-director, the managing director, and a university professor, will share in the responsibility of overseeing the four areas of this professional organization. These areas include: the Summer Institute for Teachers, the Young Writers Institute, Continuity, and School Based Professional Development. Voltz became a Fellow of the project in 1995 and has served in several capacities.

The Western Pennsylvania Writing Project is an affiliate of the National Writing Project and is housed within the Department of English at the University of Pittsburgh.

Call the NEWSLINE

724-695-5205



for schedule changes and weekly listings

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For Employees only: Click Staff Bulletin Board

Faculty Member Writes Second Children's Book



Beth Koraido

Donaldson fourth grade teacher Beth Koraido is the author of her second children's intermediate (grades 4-6) realistic fiction book entitled *Summers with Grandpa Gus*. The setting for the story is the Middle Atlantic region of the United States, which is included in the fourth grade social studies curriculum. Recently published, the book is available at Barnes & Noble Booksellers and online through PublishAmerica.

West Allegheny Nominates Keystone Technology Integrator



Donaldson Elementary School fourth grade teacher Leah Vestal is the district's nominee for the 2009 Keystone Technology Integrator award. Pictured with her are Patricia Nolan, Donaldson Principal, and Dr. William Englert, Jr., Chairman of the Technology Council.

Recently the district selected Donaldson Elementary School fourth grade teacher Leah Vestal to advance to the regional level of the Keystone Technology Integrator program. The program, now in its sixth year, is sponsored by the

Pennsylvania Department of Education to recognize teachers who integrate technology into the design of their classroom.

With the endorsement of Superintendent Dr. John S. DiSanti, Donaldson Principal Patricia Nolan nominated Vestal for the honor. Commending her for the routine use of technology in her instructional practice, Nolan said, "Mrs. Vestal uses technology to foster student curiosity, creativity and problem solving in her classroom." Vestal joins Bill Hovanec, high school math teacher, who was previously honored as the district's first Keystone Technology Integrator.

District Welcomes New Staff Members

New employees for the 2008-2009 school year not listed in the fall issue of this newsletter include the following individuals:

❖ **Carolyn Carlisle**
High School Aide

❖ **Christie Dorste**
Wilson Lunchroom Aide

❖ **Kristen Konieczny**
High School Aide

❖ **Cassandra Prevade**
McKee Lunchroom Aide

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, 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.



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WA Schools Recognized for AYP

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has selected West Allegheny Middle School and Wilson Elementary School to receive \$1,000 in Title I Academic Achievement funds for their success in making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) for two or more consecutive years. Both schools

will receive this Title I Academic Achievement Award during the 2008-09 school year for making AYP in both 2006-07 and 2007-08. PDE commended West Allegheny for implementing strategies so students can reach the high academic goals established by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Highmark Grants Fund New Bullying Prevention Program


West Allegheny Middle School Principal Richard Smith and Wilson Elementary School Principal Kathleen Sites were awarded PA CARES (Creating an Atmosphere of Respect and Environment for Success) Grants through the Highmark Foundation's Healthy High 5 initiative. With this grant funding the middle school and Wilson will have the opportunity to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) model.

As a component of the OBPP model, staff members from each school will be selected to serve as Coordinating Committee team members. Members of the Coordinating Committees will

participate in a two-day training session by Certified Olweus Trainers, Hillary A. Mangis, school psychologist, and Kathleen Sites. The Coordinating Committee will develop a training schedule for school staff, which will be completed prior to the end of the 2008-2009 school year.

The program, which underscores the district's commitment to assure a safe learning environment for all students, will be launched in the fall of the 2009-2010 school year. For more information on the OBPP, please see the brochure posted online at www.westallegheny.k12.pa.us on the middle school and Wilson web pages.

Arts Coordinator Presents at PMEA Event

 Tom Snyder, district arts coordinator and sixth grade band director, will deliver a presentation to the band directors in District 9 of the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association at

Lakeland High School on January 30, 2009. The session will focus on assessment in instrumental music through adjudication. Snyder is also the current State Adjudication Chair for PMEA.