



West Allegheny School District
IN THE SPOTLIGHT
A Salute to Honored Students and Staff



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For the May 20, 2009, Board of Directors Meeting

❖ The West Allegheny High School Choruses under the direction of Earl Wiechelt, Jr. returned home from the Williamsburg Music Festival Choral Competition, held April 30-May 3, 2009, in Williamsburg, Virginia, with multiple trophies. Top honors went to the Senior Chorus with a first place in class AAA mixed choir and to the Show Choir with a first place in show choir class. The freshman and sophomore chorus finished in second place in class AA mixed choir. At the individual level, seniors Erin Brady and Marie Dabat received outstanding solo awards while junior Jessie Crawford and freshman Tiffany Wiechelt earned outstanding accompanist awards.

❖ West Allegheny Elementary Horizons students Maxwell Bruce and Yash Lahoti (Donaldson), Sai Bhatte (McKee), and Dakota Forrest (Wilson) teamed up for a first place finish at the Calcu-Solve competition sponsored by the Brentwood School District on May 7, 2009. Besides the team victory, Maxwell Bruce and Sai Bhatte were awarded medals for being among the top ten individual high scorers. Maxwell took second place and Sai, ninth place. Students worked individually and in teams of four to solve math word problems. Twenty-eight teams from various school districts in Allegheny County participated in the event. Also representing West Allegheny were Trent Michaels, Billy Robertson, Julie Burns, and Gabby Morton (Donaldson); Megan Ye, Anden Acitelli, Hannah Salvucci, Sarah Behr, and Garrett Powell (McKee); and Moira Gibson, Hunter Sullivan, and Lily Seibel (Wilson). Horizons teachers, Dee Augustin, Vince Bianco, and Karen Evans Meyers coordinated the activity.

❖ The following students were inducted into the West Allegheny Middle School chapter of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) on April 17, 2009: eighth graders Frank Chen, Elysse Cimocho, Wyatt Gardner, Nick Hower, Katie Hutton, Robyn Lutz, and Erica Schweinsberg; and seventh graders Heather Amper, Andrew Becker, Sarah Becker, Jesse Bolind, Jarrett Bordo, Ryan Borgo, Jed Buck, Carli Cardillo, Theresa Diffendal, Gabie Eaborn, Alaina Fritz, Michaela Gardner, Zach Graziani, Ray Haim, Alexis Irwin, Lara Jakiel, Justin Josey, Haley Joyce, Josh Kolarac, Aubrey Leasure, Lizzie Murn, Alec Palmer, Jocelyn Perry, Logan Powell, Tanner Sansonetti, Vishu Saravanan, Zach Scott, Rachel Smith, Cole Toulouse, Emma Wilson, and Spencer Wolfe. Eighth graders inducted into the NJHS in 2008 include Joey Bandi, Mike Behme, Oleg Chubko, Amanda Dezulovich, Kayla Dunhoff, Mason Ervin, Taylor Faix, Kylie Godwin, Kayla Greer, Nick Halbedl, Allie Hamilton, Anthony Hartzog, Katlyn Hoge, Kristi Kubatka, Joey Kvederis, Kassandra Kyriakis, Adam LaRue, Kaylee Lewis, Jacob Linsenbigler, Sierra Loehrer, Shannon Mance, Alexa Partin, Morgan Partyka, Brent Perry, Missy Radovich, Brendan Scanlon, Katy Scruppi, Carlee Stefanski, Gabby Tissue, Nadiya Wahl, Eryne Wiethorn, and Shannon Ye. This honor is reserved for seventh and eighth grade students who have maintained at least a 3.5 grade point average during middle school and who have demonstrated the qualities of leadership, service, character, and citizenship. Jeff Kiser is the staff advisor.

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- ❖ West Allegheny Middle School eighth grader Chris Esper won a silver medal in the seventh and eighth grade division of the Allegheny County “Challenge 24” competition held in Jefferson Hills on May 8, 2009. Also representing the district were sixth graders Mario Fiordilino, Kyle Scott, and Ryann Tillman-Pratt and eighth grader Josh Graham. These students qualified for the county level competition by winning the West Allegheny Middle School “Challenge 24” competition. The rules of “Challenge 24” prohibit the use of paper, pencils or calculators. Participants are required to derive the answer “24” using each of four given numbers only once and applying any combination of operations. The activity was coordinated by eighth grade math teacher Renee Treonze, who accompanied the students to the event.

- ❖ Donaldson Elementary fourth grade student Natalie Sciulli took third place at the State level in the PTA Reflections contest for her entry in the dance choreography category. She was honored at the PTA Reflections State Awards Breakfast in Allentown, Pennsylvania. To qualify for state level judging, she was awarded a first place in both the local and regional competitions for her entry, in which she choreographed a tap dance to “Thoroughly Modern Millie.” Donaldson students Anthony Dellovade and Sydney Williams were also regional winners. Wilson fourth grader Kayla Wade placed second at the regional level in the dance category for her choreography of a gymnastics routine to “I’m a Believer.”

- ❖ Three West Allegheny elementary students Natalie Sciulli (Donaldson), Chloe Kehm (McKee) and Karly Krisovenski (Wilson) were included in the group of dancers that captured first place at the Access Broadway Dance Competition for a tap dance number from “42nd Street.” Natalie also finished in first place for a tap solo.

- ❖ West Allegheny Middle School eighth grader Elysse Cimoch was accepted to the Robert Morris School of Engineering & Math (SEMS) Residential Summer Workshop for forensic science to be held at Robert Morris University July 22-24, 2009. Participants will learn crime-scene investigation techniques like analyzing blood and DNA. Applicants to the program were required to write an essay and submit a teacher recommendation.

- ❖ The West Allegheny Eighth Grade Brass Quartet was featured at the Law Day Program sponsored by Magisterial Judge Anthony W. Saveikis at his office on May 5, 2009. Quartet members Joseph Bandi, Alex Nolte, Melissa Radovich, and Anthony Marucci performed a variety of patriotic selections throughout the awards ceremony honoring residents Erma Dodd, Rita Melvin, and Elsie Boustead for their community service.

- ❖ West Allegheny High School junior Alexis Valenti and senior Von Lester were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at an awards ceremony on April 22, 2009, at Parkway West Career and Technology Center. Alexis is enrolled in the health assistant program at Parkway and Von, the carpentry program. Honorees received pins, certificates, and honor stoles presented by the teachers from their respective programs.

- ❖ West Allegheny high school senior Rachel High has been selected as West Allegheny’s 2009 SHASDA Student Performance Award winner. This award is designed to recognize improvement relative to expected performance. Areas of improvement used by administrators and staff in the evaluation process included attendance, grades, achievement test scores, academic subjects, and the practical and fine arts. Rachel was honored at the SHASDA (South Hills Area School Districts Association) Conference in April 2009, at Southpointe at the Hilton Garden Inn in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania.

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❖ West Allegheny Middle School art club members created wall murals depicting a variety of American-themed images in the eighth grade Social Studies classrooms. The murals featured symbols like the bald eagle and the Declaration of Independence as well as such historic landmarks as the Capitol and the Statue of Liberty. The purpose of the project was to supplement the emphasis on American history reflected in the social studies curriculum and install permanent displays of student artwork in the building. Working on the project were eighth grade students Abbey Stoica, Milena Donne, Kayla Greer, Kylie Godwin, Julie Zanella, Kristen Suchanek, Robyn Lutz, Lauren Kirkpatrick, Luke Kandrats, Savannah Buhite, Deborah Heyl, and Katie Hutton. These students spent a total of 25 days, which often included time beyond the regular school day, planning, drawing, and painting. Also contributing to the displays were Stephanie Celedonia, Julia Snyder, Jackie Dunn, Rachel Marx, Kassandra Kyriakis, and Shannon Ye. The project was completed under the direction of middle school art teacher, Sharon Harn.

❖ The following West Allegheny High School athletic teams qualified for WPIAL playoffs: Boys' tennis, Rita Wilson, head coach; Boys' and Girls' track and field, Jim Hamilton, head coach; Baseball, Bryan Cornell, head coach; and Softball, Mindi McFate, head coach.

❖ The West Allegheny boys' and girls' track and field team members who qualified for PIAA finals and placed at the WPIAL Championships are as follows: Keri Dantley, triple jump, first place (WPIAL Champion) and long jump, second place; Ben Simmen, javelin, fourth place; and Matt Kovach, 400-meter, fourth place. The girl's 400-meter relay team of Nicole Skosnik, Kaci Vandergrift, Taylor Bui, and Keri Dantley did not medal at WPIAL but qualified for PIAA competition. PIAA Track and Field Finals are scheduled for May 22 and 23, 2009, at Shippensburg University.

❖ The West Allegheny girls' softball team will play in the WPIAL semifinals at California University of Pennsylvania (CalU) on May 20, 2009, against Trinity. If the Indians win, they automatically qualify for the PIAA tournament. If not, they must play another game to enter the tournament. Finals are scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2009, at CalU.

❖ Amanda Schiavo, a West Allegheny eighth grade volleyball player has been selected to attend the 2009 USA Volleyball Girls Select Training Camp (GSTC) for the position of Libero. USA Volleyball organization manages the USA National Men's and Women's Volleyball Teams, the USA Olympic Teams, and also USA Youth and Junior National Teams. Tryouts were conducted in 32 cities nationwide from February through April 2009. Over 2600 athletes participated in these tryouts and range in age from 13-18 years old. Amanda participated at the Columbus, OH tryouts and was selected in the top 19 out of 130 participants (ages 13-15).

❖ West Allegheny High School students planted spring flowers to beautify an area along Route 60 on Saturday, May 9, 2009. They met at the Montour Run on-ramp to the Parkway West (near the former location of Wickes Furniture) at 9:00 a.m. and worked on the project until noon. Volunteers included National Honor Society members and students in the Honors Biology class. High school biology teacher Marsha Herring coordinated the project in conjunction with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

❖ The following students were recognized for their artwork at the West Allegheny Middle School art show held on May 13-14, 2009, at the middle school: sixth grade: Jacob Curti (first place), Gregory Wasek (second place), Marla Kirkpatrick (third place); seventh grade: Jacob McCallister (first place), Kiersten Kelly (second place), Garrett Kosis (third place); eighth grade: Jacob

Linsenbigler (first place), Brent Perry (second place), and Nadiya Wahl (third place). Middle school art teacher Sharon Harn coordinated the art show.

- ❖ During the week of May 11, the West Allegheny Middle School Library hosted a Book Fair, which generated \$900 for the library. In conjunction with the event, a book drive to benefit the Children's Hospital library raised \$300 in cash and over \$800 worth of books to help stock the young adult section in the new hospital. Several boxes of gently used books were also collected for the hospital's family resource area. Middle school librarian Tammy Turner coordinated the events.
- ❖ In response to the recent police tragedy in Pittsburgh, three West Allegheny students at McKee Elementary School took the initiative to raise money for the Fallen Heroes Fund to benefit the families of the three slain police officers Eric Kelly, Paul Sciullo II, and Stephen Mayhle. Fifth grader Stephanie Accorsi convinced the student council to sponsor a team dress-up day on April 23, 2009. For a monetary donation to the fund, students and staff were able to wear their favorite team shirt or hat to school that day. McKee Student Council staff advisors Mary Beth Hill and Scott Meehan reported the event generated \$370.25 for the fund. Besides the school-wide effort, first grader Macy Priddy and second grader Eva LaGard raised an additional \$13.00 on their own by operating a Kool-Aid stand in their neighborhood. Members of the Pittsburgh SWAT Team visited McKee on May 13, 2009, to accept the donation and demonstrate some of their equipment.
- ❖ The Donaldson Student Council sponsored Gum Day and Hat Day on April 30 and May 1, 2009, to raise money for the Fallen Heroes Fund. Students and staff contributed a total of \$500 to benefit the families of the three slain Pittsburgh Police Officers Eric Kelly, Paul Sciullo II, and Stephen Mayhle. Student Council staff advisors are Tiffany Mangan and Tonya Zang.
- ❖ Members of the West Allegheny Middle School Student Government organization celebrated National Teacher Appreciation Week on May 12, 2009. With money they earned from fundraisers, they furnished a breakfast cart and served teachers and support staff members coffee, juice, donuts, and muffins in their classrooms. Middle school English teacher Katie Troup is the Student Government staff sponsor.
- ❖ Debbie Turici, West Allegheny elementary visual arts teacher, was re-elected for a second term to serve on the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) Board of Directors. The fifty-four members of the Board are elected by the teachers and paraprofessionals in Pennsylvania. With 191,000 members, PSEA is the largest union in the Commonwealth.
- ❖ West Allegheny High School English teachers Elizabeth Shannon and Jennifer Fox serve on the Executive Board of PCTELA (Pennsylvania Council Teachers of English and Language Arts). Shannon is the secretary and Fox is the treasurer. As members of the executive board, they will help coordinate the November 2009 NCTE convention in Philadelphia sponsored by PCTELA. In her role as the Personnel Coordinator of the conference, Shannon is responsible for placing hundreds of volunteers into committees and running the local affiliate office. Fox will serve as the Financial Coordinator, handling registration fees and all other monies required for the conference.
- ❖ The West Allegheny Food Service Department received a \$3,000 grant from the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association for converting from cardboard to plastic beverage containers. The grant will be used for the purchase of permanent signage in the cafeteria areas to promote nutrition awareness relating to dairy products and the basic food groups.