

Westside Wire

News and information for WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
Parents and the West Houston community.

From the Principal *Michael McDonough*

Dare to Be Bold—The Next Great Step for Westside High

The 2010-11 school year at Westside High School will look similar to last year in many ways. We will continue to work hard toward making this large and diverse comprehensive high school seem smaller through our organizational structure. Particular attention has been paid to increasing the number and type of interventions we will have in place when students begin to struggle and find themselves needing academic, emotional, physical, or social supports. We have always realized that challenges can surface both in and out of the classroom, and we will continue to meet those head on. Finally, we will continue to make Westside High

The drive for single lunch can be summed up in two words: access and opportunity.

School a community where everyone is met with dignity, respect, and a sense of feeling safe while on campus.

So what's new? The primary rumors

that began upon my arrival to Westside last February 1 were that (a) I was bringing a dress code, (b) I was getting rid of late start Thursday, and (c) I would suspend all off campus lunch privileges. Let me assure you that none of these are true. The final rumored change that surfaced last May was that we would move to a single lunch for this school year. I am excited to confirm that we will indeed have one solitary lunch period each school day this coming school year for all students. And now let me tell you why this will be one of the best decisions we make as a campus for your child.



The drive for the single lunch can be summed up in two words: access and opportunity. The single lunch will allow students to have better access to tutorials and support from their teachers. We will be able to re-

energize our large number of clubs for kids in a way that is real and genuine.

Class meetings, and guest speakers, will be more easily scheduled, as they will be part of the overall school day. Additionally, the single lunch takes some constraints off of our master schedule, and that will be seen through class sizes that are more balanced.

The mechanics behind the single lunch have already become a point of curiosity for many, and so let me share with you the changes we have made in anticipation. Our direct supervision will be doubled during lunch every day. Through the generosity of our PTO, we have increased seating by purchasing additional benches for the long corridors on the Eastern portion of the campus. Plans are under-

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WHS on the Web
For a complete calendar of Westside events, visit us at www.westsidewolves.org



Calendar of Events at Westside High—Home of the Wolves

August

- 9 Athletic Booster Club (ABC) Meeting, 7pm
- 12 Westside Story—10th Anniversary Event
- 20 Back to School Bash, 6pm, Commons
- 23 First Day of School

Please confirm dates and times on the website or by calling Westside at 281-920-8000.

September

- 6 No School
- 7 1st PTO General Meeting for school year, 7:00pm, Library
- 13 ABC Meeting, 7pm
- 15 Open House, 6:30pm
- 17 No School
- 30 Dance Show

October

- 5 PTO General Meeting, 7pm, Library
- 8 Report Cards
Homecoming Game, 7:30pm, Butler
- 9 Homecoming Dance, WHS
- 11 ABC Meeting, 7pm
- 13 College Night, 6pm
- 27 Blood Drive

Principal from page 1

way to increase the overall seating capacity of our courtyard, as HISD will be constructing an awning-type cover so that rainy days do not eliminate outdoor seating as an option. Additional satellite carts will be set up to sell food items, and our outside vendors will be able to more easily staff and distribute their offerings for a single lunch as opposed to two long servings. We will also open our smaller gym each day for those looking to burn off a few calories; and we have made plans to have the library open during the lunch period as well so that kids can have access to those resources. Clubs will meet throughout the building and our teachers will offer 25 minutes of tutorials two days a week. Finally, the Off Campus Lunch Permit for students will remain so that students with permission from you and approval from us can still leave campus.

As those families returning to us for this school year likely remember, we did try this for seven days this past May. Six of those days went off without incident; sadly, one of those days was not as smooth. Students, like adults, crave structure and predictability in their life. And though many of them would never admit it, students do not like changes to their routine. Thus we knew that the change in lunch – for seven days in May of all times – was going to be a

risk. That being said, we learned a great deal from that endeavor. Namely, we found that every student had been admitted to the serverly within 25 minutes, and those leaving campus were able to do so in a reasonable amount of time. It was through this learning that we grew with confidence around the idea that the single lunch is what is best for our students.

This change in structure will be tough the first few weeks of school. I expect that when you come to campus and see it in action, you will initially find it hectic. It will certainly be different to see kids scattered everywhere, enjoying the company of their friends before they head to the library to print off that last piece of research they need for a project. Or watching as three friends come downstairs from a tutorial in S2, and hurry as they hope to catch the last bit of the Live Music Club meeting in the MTV hall. Or perhaps it will be simply watching as kids assemble around a staircase, brown bag lunches on their laps, and begin to plan the next Junior Class Officers meeting. Whatever the scenario, this is going to be different, and it's going to be a challenge. However, the benefits are substantial when you realize the opportunities that kids will have as we grant them access to everything we offer during their school day on their campus.



When we remember our purpose as a school, and the essence of the professional work done by the over 250 adults on campus, we recall a few simple truths: that when we form as a community, when we gather as a group larger than just ourselves, and when we act in the best interest of those we serve, we can achieve so much. Yes, it will be crowded and the

search to find “your spot” will continue. That being said, through my 18 years spent working with students either just leaving elementary school or desperately trying to graduate high school, I have learned that kids find their way and they figure it out.

I look forward to this coming school year, and hope that this August will find you filled with the same excitement that we always bring back from Summer. And should you want to come and chat about anything during lunch time, simply look for me cruising the halls, weaving through outstretched legs, avoiding the juice box or acoustic guitar, and watching as our students take advantage of all we have to offer. No longer will we dismiss those nearly 60 minutes we have available at our discretion – instead we will seize the opportunities this single lunch can provide us.

Newsweek Ranks WHS Among Top Schools in the Nation

Each year, *Newsweek* magazine ranks the best high schools in the nation. These rankings are based upon the “Challenge Index” determined by dividing the number of Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge Exams administered by the school to all students by the number of the school's spring graduates.

For 2010, only 1,622 schools, or 6 percent of the approximately 27,000 U.S. public high schools, met the standards to be included on the *Newsweek* list. Making the cut for the 5th consecutive year, Westside came in at 312. While a lower ranking from last year, we still administered more AP exams in 2009 than in 2008 but we also graduated many more seniors that year which impacted the ratio and position.



The article, along with a complete listing of schools, can be found at <http://www.newsweek.com/feature/2010/americas-best-high-schools.html>.

Time to Get Started

August has arrived and that means it is time to think about returning to school. When we think about returning to Westside, we think of the friends we will re-connect with, new teachers to meet and the opportunity to share with staff from years past. In a way, that is what the "Westside Story – 10th Anniversary" is all about. If you have received this issue of the WIRE before the August 6, late reservation date, it is not too late to join in the festivities. Go to whs10th@gmail.com to ask for details. The next issue of the WIRE will have a re-cap of the event, which is sure to be a big success!

The next item of business is to support your student through the WHS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO can help you connect with other parents and staff to get questions answered, to help you to find ways to assist around the school or just be involved. No commitment of time, talent or treasure is too small to make a difference at your child's school, at any grade level. Whether you decide to work on a committee, volunteer in the Library or College Center, send in goodies, write a check to our "Dollars for Scholars" campaign or attend PTO meetings, your student will benefit from your efforts.

The PTO has been able to fund these items through your generosity in the last school year:

- Benches for student seating in the building interior
- Marquee Maintenance Contract
- Purchase of DVD Equipment
- Holiday Gift to staff of a beautiful poinsettia plants
- Fund the Honor Roll Breakfast and the Alumni Breakfast, both in January
- Requested funding for field trips and department supply needs
- Provide meals to "Shattered Dreams" participants (anti drinking & driving campaign)
- Assist with meal for Custodian Appreciation Day
- Provide the meals for New Teacher/Mentor Luncheon, Staff Back to School Lunch, Staff Appreciation during the school year, End of Year Staff Breakfast
- Purchase a new "Westside Wolf" flag for our front flagpole
- Provide direction and decorations for Homecoming
- Disburse ten \$1000 PTO Spirit Scholarships to Class of 2010 Seniors
- Award the WHS Teacher of the Year with an appreciation check
- Supply snack items for students taking the TAKS test
- Beautify the grounds quarterly with flowers and plants
- Assist WHS staff in recognizing our Volunteers in Public Schools at a spring luncheon in the Outback
- Purchase three bronze plaques as a 10th anniversary gift to Westside High School, honoring the three Principals that have guided Westside
- Publish and fund the "Westside Wire"

Now go mark your calendars for the Back to School Bash, August 20! Be sure to check in at www.westsidewolves.org and www.westsiddepto.org for information on Open House, Homecoming and College Night or for contact information if you would like to volunteer. We look forward to meeting you!

WESTSIDE PTO

PRESIDENT
Cathy McDonnell

1ST VICE PRESIDENTS (MEMBERSHIP)
Disa Lyon
Barbara Nassab

2ND VICE PRESIDENTS (FUNDRAISING)
Kiki Hummel
Shelby Doehring

TREASURER
Kelly Simmons

RECORDING SECRETARY
Debbie Noriega

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Janna Wright

VIPS
Rhonda Monteverde
Michelle Dunwell

PARLIAMENTARIAN
Kelly Cramer



Looking Ahead at Upcoming Events

As you can tell from all the important dates throughout August, we hit the ground running the first day of school August 23. Here's some information on events early in the school year:



Open House: Here's your chance to experience a "day in the life" of your child at Westside. We'll meet at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, September 15 and you'll follow your child's schedule through an abbreviated "day." Meet each teacher and learn what they'll be doing in class this year!

College Night: Each year we welcome representatives from colleges and universities across the nation to Westside to answer your questions about their school. All students and parents are invited to join us Wednesday, October 13 at 6:00 pm to check out the future!

Parent Nights: The Fall Parent Meeting dates were not available at press time. Please check our website and weekly news for information.

Homecoming: Our Homecoming game is Friday, October 8 at 7:30 pm vs. Madison at Butler Stadium and the dance will be held Saturday, October 9 at Westside. Watch our weekly e-news for details of all Homecoming events.

Blood Drive: The Fall blood drive sponsored by Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is currently scheduled for Wednesday, October 27. Give the gift of life!

Kick Off the School Year with Westside Spirit at the Bash

Students, parents and staff come together Friday, August 20, to experience that great Westside spirit! We'll start at 6:00 pm in the Auditorium so please park in the lot on Briar Forest at the front of the school. Principal McDonough will give everyone a look ahead and share some of the new and exciting things in store for the coming year and our Inertia Dancers, Cheerleaders and Pride will pump things up at our first Pep Rally of the year. If you're new to Westside, we'll also have some tips on making a smooth transition during the first few weeks of school.

Then it's off to the Commons where area restaurants will offer a variety

of dinner options and you'll have some one-on-one time with staff, students and parents. Visit with the deans and learn more about our small schools, talk to the coaches and stop by the numerous tables featuring our clubs and organizations. Our PTO and other parent organizations will be more than happy to share their insights on getting involved at the high school level and we'll have great WHS spirit items for sale. We'll wrap things up at 7:30 so don't miss a minute of this entertaining and informative evening. Please join us and find out why we're Westside Proud!



Student Drop-off, Pick-up, and Parking

The only place to drop off your children at Westside is the Student Lot at the back of the school. It is extremely dangerous to unload passengers at the median or by the curb on Briar Forest and there is no U-turn permitted in front of the school. In addition, the Circle Drive is limited to the Special Education buses or those dropping off handicapped children. We cannot allow other vehicles through immediately before or after school due to the congestion it causes. This is a fire lane and must be kept clear for emergency vehicles at all times.



These safety precautions also apply to picking up your children after school. We know it takes additional time to go through the Student Lot, so please plan to be in the vicinity of WHS by 7:30 am to ensure your child gets to class on time and have

patience after school. We also ask that you arrange timely transportation each day for your child as we do not have the staff resources to supervise students after 4:00pm.

Visitors to the Westside Campus should park in the Circle Drive off Briar Forest in the spaces designated for that purpose. Please do not park in reserved spaces or the fire lane! If the Circle Drive lot is full, you may park in the adjacent lot in front of the school except during the

hours of 7:00-8:00 am and 2:30-4:00 pm on school days when the lot is reserved for school buses only.

There is a limited amount of parking on the city streets around campus. It is strongly recommended that students who drive to school purchase a parking space in our Student Parking Lot. Information and parking applications are available at school and on our website.

The Westside Story 10th Anniversary Celebration, August 12th

Once upon a time there was a very active West Houston neighborhood that had a problem. The problem was that the high school their students were slated to attend was quite a long distance away. This particular community had a "small town" feel and knew that they belonged together, growing and learning. The people had a vision: bring a high school out to the West side.

After 30 long years, many promises and lots of work, Westside High School finally became a reality 10 years ago.

It does not seem like ten years has passed since then

—Principal Scott Van Beck opened the doors, former education secretary Dr. Rod Paige attended our Opening Ceremonies, and President H.W. Bush was our highlighted speaker!

We've come a long way in ten years. From a student population of 1700 to nearly 3000 today, the number of sports, clubs and activities has grown steadily. To celebrate and recognize these accomplishments and many more, the community is invited to participate in the "Westside Story, 10th Anniversary

Westside Story 10th anniversary celebration

Celebration", Thursday, August 12, 2010 at the Westchase Marriott, 6-9pm.

The celebration provides an opportunity for old friends, students, parents, faculty and community to reconnect while sharing memories of Westside days through memorabilia and performances by Inertia, Choir and Band Ensemble. We will hear from our past Principals Scott Van Beck and Paul Castro, and from our current Principal Michael McDonough.

A silent auction will raise funds to establish an endowment on behalf of Alumni to provide scholarships for WHS students. If you are interested in serving on the endowment committee, please contact Jacque Doughtry at 281-627-1771 or Vicki Townsend at 281-493-9392.

To learn more about the anniversary, please join our mailing list at whs10th@gmail.com. Tell your friends and join us for a fun-filled evening journey down memory lane!

Engrave Your Name in Westside History

For a limited time, the Westside PTO will be offering engraved bricks to individuals, groups, clubs and businesses in honor of Westside's 10 year anniversary.

Brick sales will begin at the Westside 10 year anniversary event which will be held on August 12th and will continue until 12/31/10. The bricks will be laid in a special anniversary section of the back courtyard in Spring 2011. Brick order forms will be available at the

Westside High School front office after August 12th and will be sent home with students the first day of school.

Small bricks (4"x8") will be sold for \$50 and large bricks (8"x8") will be sold for \$80. Take advantage of this limited time opportunity to engrave your name in Westside history.



Westside Wire

Communication is a Westside Priority



While we know communication with your child's dean or teacher on personal issues will be an integral part of your time at Westside, there is an enormous amount of information available to you on our website at www.westsidewolves.org.

Our student/parent handbook, the *Westside Way*, is another useful tool to learn more about our school and become familiar with policies and procedures.

That being said, a high school by its very nature has activities, announcements and news on a daily basis. We strongly encourage you to sign up for our WHS Community List Serve to receive our weekly newsletter via email. It's simple and free; please use the link on our homepage or send an email to dbaron@houstonisd.org with "subscribe to list serve" in the subject line. The news is sent in a text only format every Monday afternoon and includes a link to the full color newsletter (with photos) posted on our website.

Thank you!



The Westside PTO wishes to thank the following underwriters for their support:

- Heritage Texas Properties
- Embrace Orthodontics
- Memorial Athletic Club
- Meg Beach—Gary Greene Realtors

Westside Wire

Day of Week	Date	Time	Event	Place	Who
Monday-Friday	August 2-6	8am-3pm	Open I.D. Days—Avoid the long lines on Wolf Days. Come early to get your I.D.!	Attendance Office	All
Thursday and Friday	August 5-6	1pm-4pm	Athletic Physicals—All athletes must have a physical to participate in sports. Get yours at the school for convenience. Cost is \$25.	Field House	Student Athletes
Monday	August 9	1pm-4pm	Senior Wolf Day—Get your I.D., schedule, textbooks, and locker	Auditorium	Seniors
Tuesday	August 10	1pm-4pm	Junior Wolf Day—Get your I.D., schedule, textbooks, and locker	Auditorium	Juniors
Wednesday	August 11	1pm-4pm	Sophomore Wolf Day—Get your I.D., schedule, textbooks, and locker	Auditorium	Sophomores
Monday-Wednesday	August 9-11	4:15pm	Off Campus and Parking for Juniors and Seniors—pick up forms and attend 10 minute training. (must attend 1 day)	Auditorium	Juniors and Seniors
Thursday	August 12	1pm	Westside Ambassadors Training	Mini-theatre	Westside Ambassadors
Thursday	August 12	8am-3pm	Freshmen I.D. Day	Attendance Office	Freshmen
Friday	August 13	8am-3:30pm	Freshmen Wolf Camp—Learn your way around campus, meet your dean, get schedules and lockers. Bring \$6 or a brown bag lunch.	Commons	Freshmen
Saturday	August 14	9am-11:30am	Freshmen Textbook Distribution—If you didn't get your textbooks after Wolf Camp, come back and get them today. Bring your schedule and I.D.!	Commons	Freshmen
Saturday	August 14	9am—1pm	Off Campus I.D. Badge Pickup—bring completed forms with all signatures, \$5 cash, and your regular I.D.	Attendance Office	Juniors and Seniors



Summer Assignments

Students were notified of Summer assignments during class in May. They are posted on our website (use the link on our homepage) for your convenience. Here is an overview of classes that have assignments:

English: All students enrolled in Pre-AP and AP English classes in the Fall have required summer reading assignments. Students taking Prep classes have the option of completing the assignments for extra credit.

Math: Review packets are posted for both Prep and Pre-AP in Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and Pre-Calculus as well as AB and BC Calculus.

Science: AP Biology and AP Environmental Science

World Languages: Chinese (Levels 1-3 and AP). German (Levels 2-4), AP Latin (Level 3/4) and Spanish (Level 1-Native Speakers and Level 4 AP).

Alumni Endowment Fund

As a relatively new school, Westside is still in the process of establishing traditions. We are taking the next step toward establishing a lasting tradition by starting



the Westside Alumni Endowment Fund! This fund will be a permanent way in which deserving Westside students can apply for a scholarship to help

them attend college. We will be soliciting funds from area businesses, corporations and individuals . . . if you know of a business or individual who might be interested in being a part of a lasting legacy, either by making a contribution or being part of the Endowment Fund Committee, please let us know.

All contributions are tax deductible and should be made payable to *Westside High School PTO Alumni Endowment Fund*.

As we prepare to celebrate Westside's 10th year, we hope you will consider making a gift that will provide scholarships for many years to come! We are very excited to "kick off" this tradition and look forward to providing this opportunity to fabulous Westside students. We sure hope to see you on August 12th at the Westside Story anniversary celebration!

Jacque Daughtry
WHS PTO President 2002-03 & 2003-04
jjd359@aol.com 281-627-1771

Vicki Townsend
WHS PTO President 2001-02 & 2004-05
vickitown@aol.com 281-493-9392

First Day Packets



Look for a large envelope to come home with your child the first day of school. The packet contains required HISD forms you need to complete and return, the *Westside Way Student/Parent Handbook*, and information and forms for our volunteer program, PTO, ABC, etc. you'll want to check out. Please be sure you read the Handbook section on school policies and procedures as it is updated every year!

The information provided will help you and your child understand the "ins and outs" of things like attendance, dress code and cell phone use. You can avoid problems down the line simply by becoming familiar with school policy now. Our thanks for to the PTO for the many volunteer hours committed to compiling and distributing the packets!

Parking and Off-Campus Lunch

Juniors and Seniors... Come to the WHS Auditorium Monday-Wednesday, August 9-11 or Wednesday, August 18 at 4:15 pm to pick up an Off-Campus Form, Off-Campus Lunch Form and/or WHS Parking Form. You will also receive the mandatory 10-minute training from Officer Hernandez required for these privileges. Please remember, to receive off-campus privileges you must meet eligibility requirements which will be reviewed at the sessions. Our website will be updated with the new forms and parking information

(including PTO reserved spaces) when available. Students who bring the completed Parking Application and payment may purchase their parking space after the scheduled meetings, 5:00-5:30 pm on the days noted.

Remember, you must have a current driver's license to purchase a parking space. A permit will not suffice.



Premium Parking Spaces

A limited number of premium parking spaces are available in the student lot. These spaces are in the front corner closest to the field house and sell out very quickly! Available for purchase through the PTO for \$100, cash or checks are accepted. See "Parking" article to left for details.

Westside

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Wire

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Houston Independent School District
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Westside Wire

Westside High School PTO Membership Form 2010-2011

Father's Name:			
Mother's Name:			
Street:	City:	Zip Code:	Email Address:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Business Phone:	
Westside Student's Name(s):	Grade:	Dean:	Small School:
1.			
2.			
3.			
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 (Includes 1 decal) <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Leader of the Pack (Includes 2 decals) <input type="checkbox"/> extra decals \$3 each			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I would like to contribute to the PTO College Scholarship Fund @ <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> other <i>** This fund is separate from Dollars for Scholars **</i>			
<i>New Policy: For a current Senior to be eligible for the PTO Spirit Scholarship Fund, the family must join the PTO by November 1, 2010.</i>			
Amount Enclosed \$ _____		(Payable to "WHS PTO")	Check # _____
RETURN TO: WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL ~ 14201 Briar Forest Drive, Houston, Texas 77077 ~ Attn: PTO Membership			