

Westside

Wire

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

From the Principal, *Michael McDonough*

A New School Year, New Challenges

This past April, my father and I attended our 33rd consecutive Home Opener for the Houston Astros. The excitement around a new baseball season has always energized me and filled me with hope. How well would the team pitch? Would Jose Cruz (my hero) come through again with a big hit? And what new pieces had they added to the Astrodome/Minute Maid Park to make the experience more powerful and enjoyable for us? Each of these crossed my mind as I walked through the doors, my ticket gripped in one hand, my glove in the other (still take it to this day in hopes of finally getting a foul ball), and a big smile across my face.

I look forward to seeing you come and support your kids, our kids, as they will impress you with their courage, their tenacity, and their pride.

The promise of a better tomorrow, a better season, is infectious – and can motivate even the biggest skeptic. As this summer nears an end, I look forward to greeting this coming school year with that same zeal.

The 2010-11 school year brought us many achievements. We administered just fewer than 2500 AP exams – one of the largest numbers in the entire country. Our student athletes performed in the playoffs in all but one sport, with the baseball team taking us on a roller coaster of emotions just short of the State Championship. We had dancers perform across the globe and a marching band that progressed to Regionals – a first for any HISD High School. The Black Box, Mini-Theater, and Auditorium found themselves at capacity nearly every week as our fine arts department continued to strengthen their reputation across the city. Students found new ways to express themselves on campus through various new clubs, organizations, and competitions. Faculty and leadership found themselves traveling all over the country as they remained abreast of the newest research

around student learning. And we graduated the largest class of seniors in the history of the school (with a gigantic sum of scholarship money as referenced below).



And through all of that we worked hard to continue to make our kids stronger and smarter each day. According to the state, based on our TAKS scores, we should be rated as an acceptable school. This is not what we think of ourselves, and is certainly not anything that we will accept without argument. Yet I ask that you please not misunderstand me – the critical words are those we will have on campus as we prepare for the return of our students. You see, if we settle for those scores, and pay

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WHS on the Web

For a complete calendar of Westside events, visit us at www.westsidewolves.org



Westside Tops District List in Scholarship Offers



The preliminary district Scholarship Report for 2010-2011 is in and HISD students were offered over \$126 million this past year! Topping the list is Westside High School at \$19,963,562! (That amount is preliminary, and our final number exceeds \$21 million!) Rounding out the top five are De-Bakey at \$18,186,177, Lamar at \$16,872,148, HSPVA at \$12,655,582 and Bellaire at \$10,844,158.

While the numbers represent a significant increase over last year, the district recognizes that much can be attributed to more effectively gathering the information from seniors. Many thanks to our

College Center staff for working with our kids to ensure all their scholarship offers were entered into the system. Way to go, Westside!

Principal *from page 1*

attention only to that which is flattering, then we will not serve our students and certainly not our community. We cannot be afraid of information regarding our practices, and I trust that each family will continue to hold us to a high standard. The idea that the access we offer our students, the opportunities that are in place, and the relationships we continue to build are merely acceptable just will not work. It can be better. It must be stronger. And we will not simply stand pat.

Being a part of the Westside family is something special. It is rare for a school to be able to celebrate such true diversity without sacrificing anything for those it serves. Even through the recent budget cuts that hit every campus across the state, we have been able to maintain our focus. Through all of that work, and the commitment from our faculty, staff, and community, I am most excited about what our campus has planned to support our teachers in the classroom as they do the most important work there is. And while I remain committed to the tenets that have made this school successful as we head further into our second decade, it is through a simplified focus on strengthening our relationships that we will make our greatest gains. Dealing with the human being, and

the imperfections that lie in all of us, is what makes education such a perplexing, baffling, humbling, and maddening profession. At the same time it is painfully rewarding. And that is what brings us back each August.

The 2011-12 school year will continue to bring challenges. A new STAAR exam replaces the TAKS, budget forecasts are no brighter, and we will have to do more for our kids with less. All of this must occur without sacrificing any of the confidence our community has in our ability to be a great school. These challenges will be tough and will require more collaboration than we have ever needed before. The stakes are rising to new levels, and our kids need us in ways we cannot even yet imag-

ine. That being said, I am humbled by the honor I have to lead this wonderful faculty and staff as we prepare these young people for a future we will scarcely recognize.

The support from you, from all of our families, and from our community is the final piece needed to propel Westside to the top. So as we enter through the doors this August, let us all do so with that same belief that this year will be our best. That Westside can and will prepare our kids for the brightest of futures. I look forward to seeing you come and support your kids, our kids, as they will impress you with their courage, their tenacity, and their pride. I know this as they amaze each and every time.

New Student Registration

The Registrar's Office will be open to accept new student registration during the summer on the following dates/times:

- Tuesday, August 2, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Wednesday, August 3, 1:00– 5:00 pm
- Thursday, August 4, 8:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Tuesday, August 16, 4:00 – 6:30 pm
- Thursday, August 18, 4:00 – 6:30 pm

Please note that the first day of school, August 22, we will not begin registration until 10:00 am.

Washington Post Ranks WHS Among Top Schools in the Nation



The *Washington Post* recently released their list of America's Best High Schools. These rankings are based upon the "Challenge Index", determined by the number of Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or Cambridge Exams administered by the school to all students, divided by the number of the school's spring graduates.

Only 1,905 schools of the approximately 27,000 public high schools met the standards to be included on the *High School Challenge* list. Making the cut for the 6th consecu-

tive year, Westside came in at #237; a significant jump from last year's #312.

While familiar specialized HISD schools such as Carnegie Vanguard (#14), De-Bakey (#62) and HSPVA (#168) ranked high, a look at area comprehensive high schools shows how impressive our results were. Bellaire came in ahead of WHS at #126, but we topped Memorial (#265), Stratford (#400), Cinco Ranch (#448) and Lamar (#925).

See the full listing of schools at <http://apps.washingtonpost.com/highschoolchallenge/>

Gearing Up For Fall



Rested or not, things will be rocking again in a few weeks at Westside! The Fall semester begins with the Back to School Bash on August 19th. I love this WHS tradition which showcases our many, many organizations and draws friends back together. It is an evening to re-commit ourselves to a new year for the students, staff, and parents.

We have much to be proud of at Westside High School. Having just celebrated our 10 year anniversary last year, we move into a time which requires us to keep the energy and momentum going. Our public schools are the cornerstone of our community, and we all have a huge investment in their success. It is up to us to do all we can to help our principal and staff keep Westside going strong in academics, fine arts, athletics, school spirit, and to build a positive, wholesome culture at the school.

The Parent Teacher Organization plays an important part in energizing

Westside. Our purpose is simply to enhance the educational experience of all students by providing services and materials needed above and beyond those provided by the school district. Our enthusiasm, work, and contributions help make Westside the outstanding high school it is for all of the students and staff. Our work helps to set Westside apart from other Houston high schools. Please join the PTO this year. Come to our meetings, voice your ideas, volunteer your time if you can (there are a wide variety of ways). All are wanted and welcome.

There is much to do this year to keep our school on the right trajectory, both in achievements and in public image. I have been involved with PTO's for 14 years, and have always found it a great way to contribute to my own children's school experience. I have made wonderful friends, and we have all enjoyed supporting our "west Houston small town" community. In the absence of an involved, invested community of

parents and residents, schools will naturally decline. Now is the time to keep our beloved high school moving forward. I look forward to working with the Westside parents, principal, and staff and to a fantastic Fall semester.

On a final note, I thank Cathy McDonnell for her 2 years as our past PTO president. Cathy led us with a steady and professional hand through changes and great achievements. She also provided the inspiration for our 10 year Anniversary Celebration last August. As we head into our next decade, Cathy will remain part of our PTO, working to expand our Alumni Association into a large and effective pillar of Westside High School.

See you at the Bash!
Go WHS Wolves!

The Westside Wire — How Do You Read It?



Last year the PTO spent over \$8000 in production costs and postage for the quarterly Westside Wire.

We know the Wire is a very important way to get information out to all of our Westside families. More and more, though, we're hearing that many of our families are reading the Wire on our website or email rather than the printed copy that gets mailed to their homes.

The PTO is considering reducing costs for the newsletter by printing and mailing copies only to those families who prefer to receive it in that format. Additional copies would also be available in the front office for those who would like to pick one up. We love the idea that the money saved could be spent on other items for our students!

If your family would like to continue receiving the Wire in the mail, please fill out and return the form on the back of this newsletter.

WESTSIDE PTO

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Open House

Here's your chance to experience a "day in the life" of your child at Westside. We'll meet at 6:30pm on Wednesday, September 14 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!



HISD Back-to-School Fest August 6th

HISD is partnering with the City of Houston to help students and their families prepare for the upcoming school year.

Students will be able to get free school supplies, uniforms, and immunizations at this event, while families will have an opportunity to visit informational exhibits showcasing programs and services provided by HISD, the City of Houston, and other community organizations. It will be held from 8:00 a.m. to noon at the Brown Convention Center.

Check www.houstonisd.org for details.



T-Shirts and Hoodies!

Westside PTO will be selling t-shirts and hoodies at the Back-to-School Bash (August 19) and every Friday during lunch in September.

T-shirts are \$15 and hoodies are \$35.

Kick Off the School Year with Westside Spirit at the Bash

Students, parents and staff come together Friday, August 19, 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.

Top 10 Reasons to Join the Westside High School PTO



10. You can help us reach our goal of over 600 family memberships.
9. Membership includes a "W" decal for your car.
8. Your support helps publish this quarterly Westside Wire which brings relevant school news to every Westside family.
7. Your support helps us show our awesome teachers how much we appreciate them, including a \$1000 honorarium for the Teacher of the Year.
6. Your support helps us make improvements to WHS's facilities, like the purchase of additional benches for the hallways and flat screen TVs in the Commons.
5. Your support makes activities like College Night and Back-to-School Bash possible.
4. Your support provides added funding for WHS's academic departments and library.
3. Your support helped provide \$10,000 in PTO spirit scholarships to graduating seniors last year. You must be a member of the PTO for your child to be eligible for the PTO spirit scholarship.
2. It's a great investment in your child's education.
1. It's easy! Just complete the membership form at www.westsidepto.org/forms, attach a check and return it to the WHS office.

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 under announcements to subscribe!

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.

Athletic Booster Club Fall and Spring Sports Meetings August 25th



The Athletic Booster Club's kick-off meeting will be Thursday, August 25th at 6:30pm at WHS. This meeting is for all fall and spring sports athletes and parents.

Come to the meeting and find out about this year's booster club and how we can all help our athletes and coaches have a great year. We'll start with a brief meeting of all coaches, parents and athletes. Then we will break into individual

sport sessions to meet with coaches to find out what's in store for your athlete this year. Make plans to attend.

Your Athletic Booster Club membership shows your support for the athletes and athletic programs offered at Westside High School. Your ABC membership will help our athletic programs maintain fields, facilities and scoreboards, provide first aid supplies for the athletes, student athletic awards and student athlete scholarships.

Hope to see you there!

Come Run with the Wolves

Athletic Physicals August 3rd & 4th



Athletic physical exams for 2011-2012 sports will be available on campus for your convenience.

The cost is \$30, cash only, and the physicals will be given in the Field House on August 3rd and 4th from 5-7pm.

Middle school students are welcome to have their exams at Westside as well.

Westside Wire

Day of Week	Date	Time	Event	Place	Who
Monday-Friday	August 1-5	8am-3pm	Open ID Days—Avoid the long lines on Wolf Days. Come early to get your ID!	Attendance Office	All
Wednesday and Thursday	August 3-4	5pm-7pm	Athletic Physicals—All athletes must have a physical to participate in sports. Get yours at the school for convenience. Cost is \$30, cash only.	Field House	Student Athletes
Monday and Tuesday	August 8-9	10:30-11:30am	Parking Permits — Pick up forms from the office or print them from the website. Bring cash payment with required documents to pick up your parking permit.	Main Office	Students who want to park in the student lot
Monday	August 8	1pm-4pm	Senior Wolf Day—Get your ID, schedule, textbooks, and locker.	Auditorium	Seniors
Tuesday	August 9	1pm-4pm	Junior Wolf Day—Get your ID, schedule, textbooks, and locker.	Auditorium	Juniors
Wednesday	August 10	1pm-4pm	Sophomore Wolf Day—Get your ID, schedule, textbooks, and locker.	Auditorium	Sophomores
Thursday	August 11	1pm	Westside Ambassadors Training	Mini-theatre	Westside Ambassadors
Thursday	August 11	8am-3pm	Freshmen ID Day	Attendance Office	Freshmen
Friday	August 12	8am-3:30pm	Freshmen Wolf Camp—Learn your way around campus, meet your dean, get schedules, lockers, and textbooks. Bring your ID and \$7 or a brown bag lunch.	Commons	Freshmen
Tuesday or Thursday	August 16 August 18	4pm-5pm	Parking Permits — Pick up forms from the office or print them from the website. Bring cash payment with required documents to pick up your parking permit.	Main Office	Students who want to park in the student lot
Friday	August 19	6pm	Back-to-School Bash — Kick off the year with Westside spirit and find out what's new for the 2011-2012 school year.	Commons/ Auditorium	Students and parents



Summer Assignments

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

English: All students enrolled in AP English classes in the Fall have *required* summer reading assignments. Reading assignments for students taking Pre-AP and Prep classes are *recommended* and give students the opportunity to start the year with extra credit!

Math: Math packets are *recommended* for both Pre-AP and Prep students and offer the opportunity to earn extra credit. The AP Calculus packet is *required*.

Science: Students enrolled in AP Biology and AP Environmental Science are *required* to complete the posted Summer assignments.

Parking Permits

Permits are required to park in the Student Parking Lot. Applications are available on our website or can be picked up in the Main Office during summer hours (8:00am-noon and 1:00-6:00pm Monday – Thursday).

A limited number of premium PTO reserved parking spaces are available. These spaces are in the front corner closest to the field house and cost \$100. School assigned parking spaces cost \$75.

Bring the completed application, required documents and cash payment to the Main Office on August 8 or 9 from 10:30-11:30am or August 16 or 18 from 4:00-5:00pm to pick up your permit.

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

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.

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.

Please be sure you read the Handbook section on school policies and procedures as it is updated every year! The information

Our thanks to the PTO for the many volunteer hours committed to compiling and distributing the packets!



Tennis Tryouts August 1st

Tryouts for the tennis team are set for Monday, August 1st at 9am. In order to try out, you must come with a completed physical form, appropriate tennis attire, and tennis shoes.

We're looking for competitive individuals who are willing to work hard and be part of a winning team!

Off-Campus IDs

Off-Campus ID procedures have changed this year!

7th Period Off-Campus Parent Consent (seniors) and Home Lunch Parent Consent forms (juniors and seniors) are now available on our website (use the Forms Quick Link on our homepage) or you can pick them up in the Main Office during summer hours (8:00 am-noon and 1:00-6:00 pm Monday – Thursday).

and bring them and \$5 cash to campus when you come for your ID.

That's it. You will be eligible to go Off-Campus the first day of school. But keep in mind that this is a privilege... and one you will lose if the requirements are not maintained.

Complete the form(s), including the required notarized parent signature,



Volleyball Tryouts August 1st & 2nd

Tryouts for the 2011 Westside Volleyball team will begin on August 1st, beginning promptly at 8am. Players should arrive at 7:15 to turn in required paperwork.



Tryouts will run for two days, August 1st and 2nd, and the first day of practice will be August 3rd for all players who make the team.

Westside

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Wire

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Westside Wire

Westside Wire Quarterly Newsletter – print copy request

Parent/Guardian Name:

Street:

City/Zip Code:

Westside Student's Name(s)

Grade Level

1.

2.

3.

The quarterly PTO newsletter is available at www.westsidewolves.org. *Return this form to the school only if you wish to continue receiving a printed copy of the newsletter in the mail.*

RETURN TO: WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL ~ 14201 Briar Forest Drive, Houston, Texas 77077
Attn: PTO Membership