

Westside Wire

News and Information for WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Parents and the West Houston Community.

Volume 14, Issue 1

August 2009



Transforming To A Stronger Foundation

By: Mr. Paul Castro, Principal

This month, Newsweek ranked us #186 in the nation in their annual ranking—our highest mark yet and we expect our student performance to earn us a TEA Recognized status for this past school year. However, we are not where we could be and we know it. Toward that end we are going to redirect our resources—people, time and money—to close the gap between our potential and our current state.

To begin with, we are changing parts of our administrative structure. We will have two deans per house. Alaina Turner will be moving to our college center where she will be able to use her guidance skills with all juniors and seniors. Jason Catchings will be our School Improvement Facilitator over programs. Monica Williams will be leading a program to work with a

group of historically students that we've identified as having potential to break through. All of their students will be picked up by new deans, though they will still be available for guidance and direction when needed. Drew Bissell will not be house-based, but will keep all of his students. The rest of the school will look like this:

East 1: Gina Morris and Michelle Griggs

East 2: Marcy Baez and Tracy Portis

North 1: Lori Lambropoulos and Lia Nguyen

North 2: Cheryl Byrd-Williams and Erik Ostergren

South 2: Valerie Leverett and Nadine Ghosn

Deans will keep their seniors, but other students will stay in their

houses to be served by the new team. This will not change the level of service that students and parents see from their deans. Administration will also be focused on improving the quality of communication with parents and students. We will administer frequent surveys through Survey Monkey to get feedback about our performance.

Classroom instruction is our core business. Toward that end, we have added instructional coaches in each of the main subject areas. These people will be in the classroom for half of the day and coaching teachers for the other half of the day. Their job is to improve the instruction and assessment practices in the building by working closely with teachers and giving them coaching and feedback on their practice.

(Continued on page 2)

Calendar of Events at Westside High—Home of the Wolves

August

- 3-22 Important Back-to-School Dates on Page 3
- 21 Back-To-School Bash, 6 p.m.
- 24 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

September

- 7 No School
- 8 PTO Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Library
- 16 Open House, 6:30 p.m.
- 21 Fall Undergrad Yearbook Pictures
- 28 NO SCHOOL

October

- 5 Band Concert, 7 p.m., MT
- 6 PTO Mtg, 7:30 p.m., Library
- 8-10 Theatre Production, 7 p.m., BB
- 10 SAT at WHS
- 13 Choir Concert, 7 p.m., Auditorium
- 14 College Night, 6 p.m., Commons

- 14 Report Cards
PSAT Administered at WHS
- 17 Homecoming Dance, Commons
- 20-23 TAKS Exit Level Retests
- 22 Orchestra Concert, 7 p.m. Auditorium
- 28 ACT at WHS
Blood Drive
- 29-31 Random Act of Dance, 7:30 p.m., Auditorium

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

Please confirm dates and times on our website or by calling 281-920-8000.

(Continued from page 1)

To address feedback from our Conversations Community Meeting this past January, Alaina Turner will be joining Micki Karacek in the College Center. We are also moving the College Center to South 1 so that it is more accessible to parents and students. It will have much more room and more space for computers for student use.

Finally, HISD has taken teacher grade books online. Beginning in late September, parents and students will be able to log in to a secure website and see live grades. That means that when a teacher updates her grade book, you will see that grade within a minute. This will satisfy the number one request from Conversations.

We look forward to the upcoming school year. We will work to continue making Westside a school that people are proud to call their school of choice.

A Look 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 24th. Here's some information on events early in the school year:

Rush Week: Make the most out of your high school years - Meet new friends by joining a club with others who share your interests! During Rush Week, September 14-18, our WHS clubs set up informational tables in the Commons and invite students to come learn more about their organization.

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 16 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 14 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 16 at 7:30 pm vs. Milby at Barnett Stadium and the dance will be held Saturday, October 17 at Westside. Watch our weekly e-news for details of all Homecoming events.

Blood Drive: The fall Blood Drive sponsored by the National Honor Society and Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is currently scheduled for Wednesday, October 28. Give the gift of life!



BACK TO SCHOOL BASH FRIDAY, AUGUST 21st

AUDITORIUM

- Meet Principal Paul Castro at 6:00 p.m. with a presentation of new and exciting things to come in 2009-2010
- Performances by Inertia, WHS Cheerleaders, Pride

COMMONS

- One-on-one time with staff, students and parents
- Visit with the Deans; Talk to Coaches
- Club and Organization Information Tables
- Parent organization information including PTO and Booster Clubs
- Dinner available from local restaurants

Important Back to School Information

Day of Week	Date	Time	What	Place	Who
Monday-Friday	August 3-7	8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.	Open I.D. Days-Avoid the long lines on Wolf Days...Come early to get your I.D.!!	Attendance Office	All
Monday-Wednesday Monday Wednesday	August 10-12 August 19 August 20	4:00 p.m.	Form Distribution and Mandatory Training for Off-Campus Privileges and Student Parking	Mini-Theatre	Seniors and Juniors
Thursday	August 13	8:00 a.m.-11 a.m. Last Name A-L 12:00 p.m.-3:00p.m. Last Name M-Z	Freshman I.D. Days	Attendance Office	Freshman who did not come 8/3-8/7
Thursday	August 13	1:00 p.m.	Mentor Training	Mini-Theatre	Upper-classmen who signed up to be mentors
Friday	August 14	8:00 a.m.	Freshman Wolf Camp*	Commons	Freshman
Saturday	August 15	9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Freshman Textbook Distribution	Bookroom	Freshman
Monday	August 17	1:00 p.m.	Wolf Days	Commons	Sophomores
Wednesday	August 19	1:00 p.m.	Wolf Days	Commons	Juniors
Thursday	August 20	1:00 p.m.	Wolf Days	Commons	Seniors
Friday	August 21	6:00 p.m.	Back-to-School Bash	Commons	Students and Parents
Saturday	August 22	9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	Off-Campus I.D. Pick Up**	Attendance Office	Seniors and Juniors

*Bring \$6 for lunch

**Bring your Off-Campus Forms completed with all signatures, pay the \$5 fee (cash only) and exchange your regular I.D. for your Off-Campus Badge.





Refreshed and Ready to Go

By: Cathy McDonnell, PTO President

Welcome to a new school year at Westside High School. I hope your summer break was both refreshing and productive. Whether your student is a freshman or a senior, each year brings a fresh start. As we begin this new year, it is time to sit down and set goals with your student. As you think about ways to accomplish these goals, think about ways that you, as a parent can be part of the success.

Your support of your student through the WHS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is one way you can help. The PTO can also help you to connect with other parents and staff to get questions answered, to assist around the school or just be involved.

We have a great tradition at this school of getting things done with the help of our very generous parents. No commitment of time, talent or treasure is too small to make a difference. Whether you decide to work on a committee, volunteer in the Library, send in goodies, write a check or attend PTO meetings, your student will benefit from your efforts.

And speaking of tradition, Westside celebrates its 10-year anniversary this year! There will be many opportunities to participate, so stay tuned.

Mark your calendars for the Back to School Bash, August 21. Come visit us at the PTO table and sign up for the year -- see you there!



Top 10 Reasons to join the Westside High School PTO

By: Christie Petrie, 1st VP Membership

10. You can help us reach our goal of over 600 family memberships.
9. Membership includes a "W" decal for your car.
8. Membership includes a student directory.
7. Your support helps us show our awesome teachers how much we appreciate them.
6. Your support helps us make improvements to WHS's facility like the purchase of flat screen TVs in the Commons and installation of Direct TV service in the classrooms.
5. Your support makes activities like College Night possible.
4. Your support provides added funding for WHS's academic departments and library.
3. Your support helped provide \$12,000 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 on page 8, attach a check and return it to the WHS office.

WESTSIDE PTO	
President Cathy McDonnell cmcdonnell935@sbcglobal.net	
1st VP-Membership	Christie Petrie
2nd VP- Fundraising	Kiki Hummel
Treasurer	Kelly Simmons
Recording Secretary	Debbie Noriega
Corresponding Secretary	Janna Wright
VIPS	Shelby Doehring Rhonda Monteverde
Parliamentarian	Kelly Cramer



PTO MEETINGS
 Second Tuesday of the Month
 7:30 p.m. Library
 September 8
 October 6



HISD... Moving In The Right Direction

By: Greg Meyers, HISD Trustee

It is hard to believe another school year is upon us. By now, many of you have hopefully heard the great news of the achievement gains in HISD and specifically here at Westside High School. This past year, we knew we could surpass the prior year's gains, which were remarkable - 58% of our schools were rated exemplary or recognized. At the time of this writing, we expect to see over 70% of the schools in HISD rated either exemplary or recognized! It is exciting to see our district moving in the right direction, and am committed to make sure these strides continue. There is much more work to be done.

We must continue to expand learning opportunities for our students and provide the necessary reforms to insure that these gains continue. Additionally, I have continued to focus on insuring that your tax dollars go to where they are truly needed - the classroom. By implementing a zero-based budgeting approach with the central administration functions, we saw over \$10 million in savings, much of which was able to flow to our schools. I am honored to continue the opportunity to represent you on the Houston ISD Board of Education.

I look forward to having the opportunity to see you this next school year and invite you to come to my monthly community meetings.

Please do not ever hesitate to contact me at my office: 281-759-4475 or via e-mail at gmeyers@houstonisd.org.

**CLASS OF 2013...
WELCOME TO
WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL!**



PTO Parking for 2009 –2010

The price for premium, reserved student parking has been REDUCED! For only \$25 extra, you can park in the front of the student lot, and 100% of your fee will go directly to the WHS PTO. This year, these special PTO parking spaces will only be \$100 (cash or check). And, although there will also be fewer spaces available (40 in total), they are the best ones! PTO spaces will include half of the first two rows of student parking closest to the school building (spaces 1-20 and 59-78), sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

These go on sale in the Main Office on August 10-12 and August 19-20 at 4:45 until spaces are sold out. Forms will be available and officer trainings will be held at 4:30 in the mini-theater on the same days.



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.

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.



First Day Packets

A large packet will come home with your child on the first day of school. It contains required HISD forms you need to complete and return such as the *Westside Way* Student/Parent Handbook, and information and forms for our volunteer program, PTO, ABC, etc. 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.

Join the WHS UIL Academics Team!

By Cyndy Elliott, UIL Academics Coordinator



The UIL Academic Program is the largest of its kind in the world. Each year, thousands of students compete in district, region and state competitions, and tens of thousands use UIL materials and academics to enrich their scholastic experience, broaden their general education and to apply what they've learned in class. While each contest has specific outcomes and goals, the purpose of the program in general is to teach students critical reading and thinking skills, writing, and problem-solving skills.

Westside UIL Academics is looking for talented, focused and competitive students to be a part of our team! Everyone is welcome – compete in your best subjects! By joining the team, you will:

- meet kids from other schools that you wouldn't normally have a chance to associate with
- have a lot of fun learning to compete academically
- learn a whole new way to study and manage your time more productively
- see a noticeable improvement on the ACT and SAT
- be more attractive to schools and scholarship committees; UIL alone awards millions in scholarships every year.

The rewards are great for the limited time you commit. And what's more, it's FREE! For more information on UIL Academics, including a list of contests and sponsors, visit our new webpage at <http://hs.houstonisd.org/westsidhs/students/uil.html>. We'll also have a table at the Bash in August so stop by and check us out!

National Honor Society

By: Ms. Patch



Meetings are the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 3:30-4:00 in either the mini-theater or the auditorium. The first meeting is on Tuesday, September 1. Dues of \$25 should be paid before October 6. Junior dues paid receive a T-shirt. Senior dues paid are for the cord and stole for graduation. If there are any concerns contact dpatch@houstonisd.org.

Student Drop-off, Pick-up and Campus Parking



The only place to drop off your children at WHS is in 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. 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. 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.

Please plan to be in the vicinity of WHS by 7:30 am to ensure your child gets to class on time & 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 WHS 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 a.m. and 2:30-4:00 p.m. on school days.

Students with off-campus privileges MUST park in the Student Lot if they intend to exercise those privileges during the school day. Information and parking applications are available at school and on our website.

Westside High School

14201 Briar Forest, Houston, Texas 77077
Phone: (281) 920-8000 Fax: (281) 920-8059

The *Westside Wire* is published by Westside High School PTO as a vehicle to inform parents and the community of happenings we think you may find of interest. Information for publication comes from Westside Staff and the PTO Board. Questions or comments can be sent to smanks@aol.com.

Susan Manks, Editor
smanks@aol.com

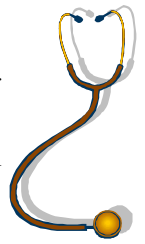
Wolves Varsity 2009 Football Schedule

Date	Team	Site	Time	
8/22	Cy Creek	WHS(SCR)	9 a.m.	
8/27	Sharpstown	Butler	7 p.m.	
9/04	El Campo	El Campo	7:30 p.m.	
9/11	Conroe	Butler	7:30 p.m.	
9/18	Elsik	Crump	7 p.m.	
9/26	Dallas Adams	Kincaid-Dallas	2 p.m.	
10/03	Lamar	Delmar	6 p.m.	
10/10	OPEN			
10/16	Milby	Barnett	7:30 p.m.	Homecoming
10/24	Bellaire	Butler	1 p.m.	
10/30	Madison	Butler	7:30 p.m.	
11/06	Chavez	Butler	7:30 p.m.	Senior Night



Athletic Information

All paperwork, including athletic physicals completed after April, must be completed and turned in before the practice season begins for volleyball, cross country and football.



Football practice begins on August 10th with a team meeting at 7 p.m. Final football paperwork check in will be on August 6th and August 7th.

Music Booster Club

By: Barbara Thompson, President

Music Boosters looks forward to another exciting year in the Westside Music programs! 2008-09 brought many individual and group ‘firsts’ for our music students; for example Westside Band earned first division (superior) UIL ratings at the varsity level in both marching and concert competitions! I am confident the year ahead will be exciting for students and spectators alike.



Music parents should plan to attend the “Music Kick-off” meeting planned for Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 6:30 pm in the Band Hall. Following a short information session about Boosters, we will move to break-out sessions with the directors regarding Band, Choir and Orchestra. Important information will be shared at this event, so be sure to attend!

As we look ahead to 2009-10, Music Boosters has set high goals: to expand our Music Scholarship awards to graduating seniors planning to pursue studies in music; to make our Spring Banquet memorable and affordable for all music students and their families; and to support activities which enrich the musical experiences of our students. I hope you will get behind those goals by joining the Westside Music Boosters organization this year. Most importantly, I ask you to support our talented students by attending their upcoming concerts and events. Our student musicians work very hard, and we need to let them know we appreciate them!



Westside

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Wire

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
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WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL
Houston Independent School District
4400 West 18th Street
Houston, TX 77092-8501

PTO Membership Form 2009-2010

Parent's Name:

Parent's Name:

Street

City:

Zip:

Email Address:

Home Phone:

Cell Phone:

Business Phone:

Westside Student's Name:

Grade Level

Dean/Small School

1.

2.

3.

I'm Interested in PTO Volunteering Opportunities ___Yes

YES, I WANT TO JOIN THE PTO for 2009-2010 \$50 Leader of the Pack \$20 Family \$10 WHS Faculty/Staff

Yes, I would like to contribute to PTO College Scholarship Fund \$10 \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other

Yes, I would like an extra copy(ies) _____ of the Student directory at \$5.00 each (or 2 for \$9)

Yes, I would like to have the Westside Wire emailed to me rather than delivered via U.S. Postal Service

Amount Enclosed \$ **(Payable to "WHS PTO")** **Check #:**

Return completed form with payment to: Westside HS, 14201 Briar Forest Dr., Houston, TX 77077, Attn: PTO Membership