

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

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A new beginning rekindles the passion our staff has for our profession. The new school year begins for Weston Public School students on Thursday, September 3. Over the past few weeks, staff have been back preparing for the return of our students. Teachers new to the Weston Public Schools began an orientation and induction program on August 25 and all teaching staff officially report on August 31. Professional Development training and meetings to ready our staff are planned through September 2.

The incoming Pre-Kindergarten class will be the class of 2023. Collectively as a school system we are committed to ensure that all students are prepared to meet the challenges of the world now and in the future. Our success as a school district is directly connected to our talented, dedicated faculty and staff; strong parental and community support and involvement; and a system of continuous improvement that permeates all aspects of our work.

Throughout the 2009 budget season, I shared with the Weston community that the Weston Public Schools is a community of practice, focused on large-scale instructional improvement guided by best practices in education. As a professional learning community, we are committed to continuous improvement, preparing students for 21st century learning, developing quality instructional practices and programs in a fiscally responsible way. This is what drives the Weston Public Schools! It will take all of us, including our community, to contribute in a meaningful way to continue our tradition of excellence.

Important work occurs in our school system throughout the weeks of July and August. Our commitment to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning led to many timely summer projects such as curriculum renewal, technology infrastructure upgrades, advanced placement course training for teachers, Smartboard technology installation, curriculum writing, and two distinct week-long summer institutes in inquiry-based science education and building respectful classrooms and school communities. Twenty five teachers and administrators participated in the Summer Institutes trained by our own teaching staff. In addition, more than 30 teachers were involved in revising curriculum to ensure alignment with new state and national standards in elementary language arts, physical education, health, and family consumer science.

New textbooks were purchased for grade 8 and 11 Social Studies, middle school Spanish, high school Chinese and Advanced Placement Government. In addition, elementary music resources were purchased for the new school year. Additional Smartboards have been installed in 55 classrooms as a result of generous PTO philanthropy and individual donations. Through the generosity of the Weston Education Foundation and PTOs, a new TV Production Studio is equipped with state-of-the-art

equipment at Weston High School. The completion of this first phase of equipment purchase and installation will greatly enhance teaching and learning. Also, the Weston Public Schools will be able to broadcast a number of school events and host timely discussions on topics of interest on Channel 78.

The recruitment and selection of new staff continued throughout the summer. Eight teachers have been hired as well as a new Assistant Principal for Weston Intermediate School and Hurlbutt Elementary School. Within a few weeks, our district web page will feature a photo display and profile of each new staff member. The value of highly qualified teachers and administrators is indisputable, and we continue to hire the “best” for Weston.

During late fall 2008, the Board of Education decided to revamp the entire school bus transportation system and move from a three-tier to two-tier start and end time structure for the new school year. Middle and high school students will attend school on the first tier schedule and elementary and intermediate school students will attend school on the second tier schedule. As a result of rerouting all routes, riding time has been reduced on all buses and should greatly improve the efficiency of our transportation system and contain costs. These improvements should increase bus ridership and reduce traffic and congestion on School Road. We will continue to place Traffic Monitors on the campus and we appreciate the cooperation of all residents who may travel on School Road during arrival and dismissal times.

One of our many cost savings initiatives in the 2009-10 Budget is our partnership with Energy Education. Rising energy costs have continued to take over increasing budgeted dollars and, as a result, the WPS has adopted an energy management and conservation policy. We have contracted with Energy Education; a nationally renowned company with expertise in assisting school districts realize energy cost savings. David Lustberg has been hired as our Energy Education Specialist. A customized comprehensive, people-driven energy management plan is being developed to reduce energy-related expenses.

It has been a busy and productive summer for our custodians and maintenance staff. All life safety systems at each school were cleaned and inspected. This includes all fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems, emergency lights, emergency generators, and fire extinguishers. Additional smoke detectors were installed at Hurlbutt and additional emergence battery lights were installed at both Hurlbutt and the Middle School. A camera and buzz-in system is installed at both Hurlbutt and the Middle School. All ventilation systems have been cleaned and serviced with new air filters. Additionally, there were carpet removal projects completed with floor tile installed in its place. Many classrooms were painted, and work proceeds on cleaning and preparing the heating systems in all schools for the winter season including the design of a new boiler for the Middle School.

Our Technology Department installed 55 Smartboards with 40 of them the result of generous philanthropy from Weston parents, school PTOs, the Weston Education

Foundation, the Weston Gun Club, and other donors. A wireless network has been installed in all schools that cover approximately 70% of classroom areas. The increased access and functionality of our network will facilitate an improved instructional environment and enhance our students' access and utilization of technology.

I believe the Weston Public Schools are poised for a great 2009-2010 school year due to the commitment, dedication, and skill of our staff.

As we begin this new school year, we are committed to designing the best educational experiences to meet the needs of our students and preparing them for 21st century learning. This is a school district dedicated to continuous improvement and your continued support and generosity are greatly appreciated.

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