

WESTERN SCHOOL CORPORATION
Home of the Panthers
Russiaville, Indiana 46979

Dates to Remember

- February 20, 2017
President's Day (School is in Session)
- March 27—31, 2017
Spring Break (No School)
- April 14, 2017
Good Friday (No School)



PANTHERS

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Principal's Page</i> | 2-3 |
| <i>A Message From Your School Board</i> | 4 |
| <i>After School Childcare Program</i> | 4 |

**A Message From Our Superintendent:
Mr. Randy McCracken**

Drug Education Program

Western recently had a drug education program for our staff that was excellent. Jim Ginder from the Hamilton County Health Department shared with us many of the things that are out there that are both legal and illegal, and what some kids are doing. We now want to offer this same information to our parents and community on March 7, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in our auditorium. I would encourage all parents, regardless of the age of your child, to attend this program. Knowledge is power, and by knowing what to look for and by helping one another, we may actually be able to beat this drug epidemic that is plaguing our community and schools.

Also, as we look ahead, we want to plan more programs for parents on a variety of topics, such as: internet safety, college planning including financial aid, and technology tools to help your child.

Bus Stop Arm Violations and Student Safety

I wish I could say that all drivers stop when they see the red lights of a bus flashing and the stop arm extended, but unfortunately I cannot. Stop arm violations occur often and our concern is for our students' safety. Our bus drivers emphasize the importance of students looking both ways, making eye contact with the bus driver, and waiting until they are signaled to cross but the more this can be emphasized the better. It should also be communicated that students should actually wait a safe distance off the road until the bus is fully stopped before approaching the bus, and even then, be aware of approaching cars from all directions to ensure that all drivers are alert and fully stopped. When a vehicle can be identified by using the license plate, we do report the violation to law enforcement and pursue charges.

Survey Feedback

I appreciate the feedback we received on our Technology and Climate Audit Surveys during the first semester of this school year. We had a good sampling of parent responses from each building on both surveys.

The Technology Survey revealed that overall; the use of technology is an important part of preparing our students for the future with 95.64 % agreeing. Having a technology device in the classroom and feeling that the device is beneficial to their child's education also had the majority agreeing at 73.82% and 74.18% respectively.

Challenges with the technology included: general iPad issues, either no Wi-Fi at home or slow connection, charging issues (problems with cords/chargers or remembering to charge), distractions from other tasks (games), and parent lack of knowledge on apps or how to help.

Positives of the technology included: less books, prepares students for the future with technology, its impact in the classroom, eLearning Days, and educational games.

Challenges of digital curriculum included: parent lack of knowledge on how to help, general iPad issues, no physical book to refer to, Wi-Fi issues, and they still have too many books to carry; everything should be on the iPad.

Benefits of the digital curriculum included: less books/paper, being able to use it for snow days at home, looking up information quickly, teaching students how to use technology, and the ease of turning in work.

Parent suggestions on how we can help parents help their child with the technology included: give explanations and updates to parents on how technology is being used, have a class for parents on how to use the iPad, tutorial for eBackpack, keyboards to use on the iPads, and keep fees low.

The Climate Audit Survey also revealed that overall the majority of parents are pleased with the School Corporation with 94.8% agreeing that they are proud that their child attends Western School Corporation. Over 90% also agreed that they feel welcome at the school, that we set high standards for students, that we have a caring and compassionate staff, that parents are involved, that they feel comfortable contacting the school with questions or concerns, and that communication with families occurs in an open and respectful manner. And, over 86% feel they are well-informed about how their child is doing in school, that the school corporation is moving in the right direction, that we have a good balance of technology and other best practices for learning, and that the school corporation has created a safe learning environment for their child. The two remaining areas from the survey with 82.24% and 75.68% agreeing respectively, were that teachers assign high-quality homework that helps their child learn and that discipline is handled fairly and consistently.

Plans are already in the works to improve on some of the areas listed above. Other areas will continue to be discussed as action plans are created in order to make our great school corporation even better. Thanks again for your time in responding to our surveys. Your feedback is very much appreciated.

Principals' Page...

Western Primary School

By: Steve Arthur

Calling All Kindergarten Students for the 2017 – 2018 school year! Ready, Set, Go! It's time to start thinking about Kindergarten Round-Up. If you have a child who turns five years old on or before August 1, 2017, you can help your child "Get Ready" by visiting Western Primary School on March 22nd or March 23rd for Kindergarten Round-Up. **We'll help you "Get Set" by registering your child and giving tours of the Primary school. In addition, we will assess your child for Kindergarten readiness and provide you with information on ways to help your child be "Ready to Go" when school begins in August!**

A limited number of staff will be available each day to give incoming students a readiness assessment. Please call 883-5528 to schedule your child's assessment.

Kindergarten registration forms are available on line at www.western.k12.in.us. To speed up the registration process, you may print the registration forms, fill in the required information, and bring them to school the day of your appointment. You will also need your child's birth certificate, immunization records, and proof of residency. Please give us a call at 883-5528 if you have a question and need further assistance.

Round-up Dates and Hours:

March 22nd / Last Names A-L: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Western Primary

March 23rd / Last Names M-Z: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Western Primary

Western Intermediate School

By: Pat Quillen

It's that time of year once again. Our staff and students are preparing for the intense rounds of ISTEP and IREAD testing that will begin at the end of February. Overall, our ISTEP scores have been high for Howard County in the last two years. However, at WIS we believe that "Being a Panther Means Being the Best," so our staff and students are working even harder to raise those scores to where we feel our school should be performing.

The adoption of the new Everyday Math series has been our first step in providing students with a more rigorous curriculum. The intense lessons are challenging students each week to think beyond basic skills and apply those concepts to real world scenarios. Our morning remediation sessions, AMTAG classes, and enrichment times have been put into practice to reach a variety of learners to meet students' needs. ISTEP Applied Skills begins February 27 and IREAD will start on March 13.

We ask that our students get extra rest and eat a healthy breakfast on those days we are testing. As much as possible, we also ask that any appointments be made for the afternoons as we generally test in the mornings. Through hard work and cooperative efforts we are confident our students at WIS will continue to enjoy the success they deserve.

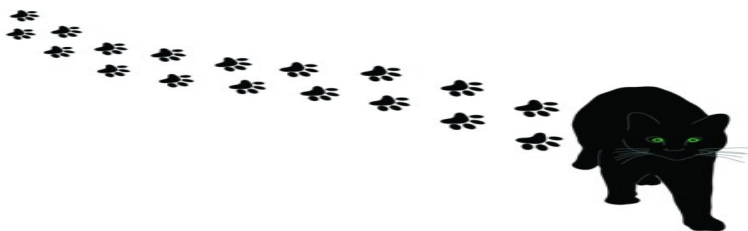
Western Middle School

By: Tracy Horrell

It's that time of year when we get the opportunity to show what we know by taking the ISTEP. Testing will take place on two separate time frames. The testing windows are Feb 27th-March 10th and then after spring break April 17th -May 5th. It's critical that all students show up to school on time and eat a good breakfast. We want to make sure that we give our best on the test and demonstrate the amazing knowledge that our students have gained throughout the year. We can't wait to celebrate the successes later this summer.

Speaking of celebrating, we have a few accomplishments that we want to make sure you are aware of and help us celebrate. WMS celebrated our first Kindness Day. Teachers and students in the Kindness Club wore #kindness shirts and practiced showing kindness to everyone during the day. During that same week, we celebrated students who demonstrated growth in all three areas of NWEA during our recent testing session. Students who showed growth in reading, math, and language received a ticket to attend the honor breakfast where donuts and milk were served. College Go! week is an event sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education that shines a spotlight on attending college. Students and staff at WMS participated in a variety of events, including an essay contest. WMS was declared the winner for both the student and school contests resulting in \$529 for the student and \$1,000 for the school!

These are just a few of the accomplishments that I wanted to highlight. We are most proud of all student academic successes and athletic successes. As Western Middle School continues to "P.U.S.H." (Persisting Until Success Happens) towards excellence!



Western High School

By: Rick Davis

We have crossed the halfway point and are headed downhill on our journey through the 2016-17 school year! As we roll full steam ahead, our counselors are busy with the beginning stages of scheduling for next school year, and we are also preparing for the onslaught of testing that comes our way beginning with Part I of the ISTEP starting the last week of February.

The testing situation can be a bit difficult to follow with the many changes over the past couple of years. Different classes have different graduation requirements. If you are in the class of 2017, you need to pass the End of Course Assessments (ECA) for algebra I and English 10. Members of the Class of 2018 also need to pass the ECAs but could have met an equivalent requirement by passing ISTEP+ Math 10 and English 10 exams (which were given to them as a pilot and for school accountability) last year. As for students in the classes of 2019 and 2020, they will need to pass the ISTEP+ Math 10 and English 10 exams during their sophomore year in order to graduate. Students taking biology will take the corresponding Science 10 ISTEP+ test for federal accountability. The Science 10 test does not impact graduation status. Those students who do not find success on the graduation qualifying exams are provided remediation and additional opportunities to pass. A waiver to the graduation qualifying exam does exist, but it has very strict requirements regarding academic performance and attendance. As you can read, statewide testing can be confusing. If you have any questions about the testing and your child, please contact Student Services.

Western High School is excited about the potential and opportunities that lay before us on this last half of the 16-17 journey. We thank you for the support through the rough and difficult patches as well as during the times of joy and celebration. We look forward to working with you and continuing to move Western on to bigger and better things for our students, staff, and the Western Community.

A Message From Your School Board President:**By: Scott Gaskins**

On behalf of the Board, I would like to wish everyone a belated Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that we are over half-way through the school year. As you know, the first semester of the school year was one of the more challenging for the school, its employees, community and most importantly our students in recent memory. As a Western graduate and a parent of current students, I am proud of how the staff, students, and community have gone above and beyond to help those in need.

I would also like to congratulate the school on their 2016 ISTEP results. While several schools in the state saw grades decrease with the new testing, Western continues to perform at a very high level. The grades for 2016 were A for the Corporation, High School, Middle School while the Intermediate/Primary were given a B grade. This is the fourth year in a row the Western Corporation has been an A rated school. Congratulations to the teachers and the students on this great accomplishment!

After School Child Care Program

If there is enough interest, an After School Child Care Program will be offered for students in grades K thru 6 who attend Western schools, during the 2017-2018 school year. There will be a survey coming home with current students mid March 2017. It will also be available at Kindergarten Round-up and in the Primary and Intermediate buildings for parents to pick up. If we have enough interest for the program, it will be offered. If you are interested, please be watching for the survey which will be available mid March.

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