

STILWELL SENTINEL

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The West Des Moines Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability or socioeconomic status in educational programs and activities.

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you goes out to all of the volunteers who helped with our registration process. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

PARENT TO PARENT: FAMILY TRAINING ON AD/HD

Have you been searching for a reliable source of information about AD/HD and how to manage the issues related to the disorder? **Parent-to-Parent** is a six-session interactive program for parents of children with AD/HD. Classes begin Tuesday, October 6th from 6:30-8:45 p.m., and will continue each Tuesday for 6 weeks. **REGISTRATION CLOSES SEPTEMBER 15th, and class will fill up quickly!** Please call Julie Igram for more information and to register 515/223-6730. The AD/HD Parent Support Group sponsored by CHADD Meets first Monday of every month at West Des Moines Library from 7-9 p.m. (If it is a holiday, we meet the following Monday). For questions please call Julie Igram at 515/223-6730.

T TEAM NEWS

"Love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue." --Rainer Maria Rilke

Wonder begins with a question. Who owns the questions? Our goal this year is to help students discover their own—to search for their own essential questions! Through the year, students will be encouraged to think about what they want to know and why. Three essential questions: What do you know? What do you do when you don't know? And most important—What do you do when you don't know what you don't know?

Language Arts: We will be searching for what's worth knowing—filling the margins of our stories and the margins of our minds with questions. Authors set us up—hoping we have questions that will keep us turning the pages. We will have some fascinating mind maps to share with parents at conference time. And writers have questions. That's where they begin. In the second quarter you will hear about the portfolio. This will be the gathering place for the year's stories and artifacts—an autobiographical record of your eighth grader's year—and a long list of questions.

You will see weekly reading records designed to focus on specific reading strategies. The students are learning to look for examples of effective writing. They are noticing their questions.

They are forming opinions and looking for inspiring ideas that make them think. They are learning how to read between the lines to make inferences and how to visualize. Reading strategies also have an impact on their writing. They should always be thinking about what they can learn about writing from the books they are reading. Reading for a half hour six days of the week is required homework. Be sure to make time for book talk at home.

Math: The T-Team is very excited about all of the opportunities to work with math this year. We have a new math textbook this year and all of the resources can be accessed online at glencoe.com. Please take advantage of these great resources. Here are a few mathematical questions for Stilwell students to ponder: How do I use proportions to make a picture nine times its original size? What formula do I need to use to find the amount of space being used in my classrooms? Why is the order of operations crucial to follow in Algebra? In what ways do I use math in my other classes on a daily basis? Has math been an easy subject or a hard subject in the past? Why has math been easy or hard? Do I use math for anything outside of school? Answer: You sure do!!! Just ask mom and dad. We will ponder each one of these questions at some point this year.

Science: A scientific question is one that can be answered by gathering evidence. Scientific thinking and problem-solving skills are used to carry out investigations and gather evidence. During their year in eighth grade science, T-team students will develop their own scientific questions and develop the inquiry skills necessary to carry out scientific investigations. These skills will include developing hypotheses, controlling manipulated and responding variables, interpreting data and drawing conclusions. The conclusions they draw may lead students to pose new questions. Topics for eighth grade science will include Chemical Interactions, Motion, Forces and Energy, Human Biology and Health, and Inside Earth.

Social Studies: In eighth grade social studies, students will be answering the questions: Who were the first Americans? How did this country become the United States? How are we governed under the umbrella of the Constitution. We begin by discussing artifacts that historians use to understand a past that originates as far back as the ice age. We'll journey with Columbus to the New World, sail with the early explorers, and create colonies as the English did 400 years ago in 1607 with the formation of Jamestown. We'll study the American Revolution and how we then created a framework for our

government. As the year comes to a close we'll discuss the events that led to a Civil War. In the process we will work together—representing the strength of this great country. E Pluribus Unum – Out of Many, One

Meg Smith: Most students on Team T will see me in their classrooms as their Tiger Time teacher or co-teaching with Mr. Sigrist, Mr. Stein, Ms. Powell or Mrs. Urban, helping all students with their learning. My questions often focus on helping students become self-directed and self-assessing. Did I try my best? Do I keep looking for answers when the work gets tough? Am I keeping organized? Do I follow through and turn assignments in on time? Do I have a positive attitude about school? What is working for me? What do I need to do differently? Students who plan for success will be successful!

In addition to our focus on essential questions, the team theme for the year is building relationships. Students will have daily opportunities to practice relationship skills. They are learning how to solve problems together, talk about ideas together, write and respond together, build together, support each other.

They will be in groups and teams all year long as they work to solve problems and share their learning. All that teamwork will be challenged and reinforced when we take our field trip to Camp Mitigwa in April where we will learn how to survive— together. You will be hearing more about this trip.

T Team Members: Dale Herzberg, Pam Herzberg, Tim Miller, Julie Powell, Joe Sigrist, Meg Smith, Ben Stein, Shelly Urban

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The West Des Moines United Methodist Church at 8th and Grand holds FREE adult ESL (English as a Second Language) classes twice a week -- Mondays and Thursdays, 6:00–7:45 p.m. -- and provides childcare at no charge.

2009 FREE adult ESL classes will start Monday, September 14th at 6:00 p.m. There will be two levels of instruction:

- ESL I – Students new to speaking and understanding English
- ESL II – Students who speak and understand English but want to improve

All adults eager to learn to speak English are welcome. If you have any questions, please call Jennifer at 971-0958.

STILWELL DADS

We are looking for dads (moms are definitely welcome too) who would be interested in helping supervise our students during lunch. This could be on a one-time, monthly, weekly, or daily basis. Whatever would work to accommodate your schedule. It is a great opportunity to have our parents in our school. If you are interested and would like more information please contact Mr. Miller.

COLLABORATION DAYS

The Stilwell staff will use our collaboration days in September to meet as a staff to work on our building goal, to meet as departments to work on department goals, and to work on developing effective strategies to assist our special needs students in the regular classroom setting.

PAYSCHOOLS BRINGS ONLINE CONVENIENCE TO WEST DES MOINES COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENTS

The West Des Moines Community School District offers convenience to parents by providing an online payment processing system called PaySchools.

With this system, parents can access PaySchools through the district web site and pay for school lunches either by e-check or Mastercard, Visa or Discover cards. The parent will immediately receive an e-mail receipt confirming their purchase(s).

PaySchools offers parents the ease of being able to make purchases 24 hours a day/7 days a week, the security of knowing the school has received payments, the protection of sensitive account information (credit card and bank account numbers are not stored in the database), and the convenience of having records of purchases and payments available online.

For more information about Payschools, visit the district website at www.wdmcs.org and click on the PaySchools icon. Be aware that when you begin the process for the first time, you will need to set up two accounts – one for WDMCS Nutrition Services and one for PaySchools (**EACH** will require you to create a username and password).

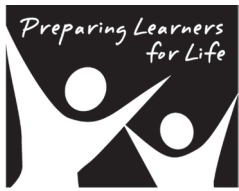
Questions? Please contact Lynnae Moossavi at 633-5085 or email her at moossavil@wdmcs.org.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Our first Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meeting of the year will be held on Thursday, September 10th at 7:00-8:00 pm in our Media Center. Everyone is welcome. Please contact our chairperson Deb Lind at 222-0330 or via email through davedeblind@mchsi.com if you have any questions.

GET CONNECTED – FREE PARENT EVENT

Let us help you put the parenting puzzle together. A free workshop for parents and those connected to students entering 4th - 7th grades. Sponsored by the West Des Moines Community Education Advisory Council. For more information visit www.wdmcs.org or call (515) 633-5001.



Information

WEST DES MOINES

COMMUNITY For the Parents of the West Des Moines Community Schools
SCHOOL Office of School/Community Relations

August 31, 2009
www.wdmcs.org

Board Highlights

At the meeting on Monday, August 24, the Board of Education:

- Heard a report from Valley and Walnut Creek Campus students about the Fast Track Diplomat Camp they attended this summer;
- Held a hearing and approved the easement for the Wastewater Reclamation Authority;
- Held a hearing on the Crestview Elementary School north addition;
- Established a hearing on September 14 for an easement with MidAmerican Energy;
- Authorized Shive-Hattery to provide a proposal for engineering design services to address moisture transmission at Valley Southwoods;
- Accepted as complete the work of six contractors on the Western Hills remodeling project;
- Approved change orders on the Crestview and Indian Hills projects;
- Approved the contract with the University of Iowa College of Nursing for a student nurse practicum;
- Authorized the amendment to the agreement with the Iowa Department of Education to extend a special project contract with a district teacher;
- Approved the lease agreement with Drake University for the Valley graduation ceremonies on May 30, 2010;
- Approved the roster for the Building a Learning Community Committee;
- Denied open enrollment applications received after the deadline.

Next meeting: Monday, September 14, 2009
7:00 p.m.
Learning Resource Center

VOTE on Sept. 8 - School Board Election

Four candidates are vying for three seats on the Board of Education: incumbent Jill Hansen and Elizabeth Brennan, Mark Lagomarcino and Veleta Lucas-Empty. Current Board members Susan Moritz and Barbara Burnett are not running for re-election.

Meet the candidates at a forum on:

Tuesday, September 1
7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Learning Resource Center - Community Room.

The candidate forum is sponsored by the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce.

PEEL Vote - September 8

Voters will be asked to renew the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy -- \$1.34 per \$1,000 of taxable property value.

Key Facts:

- This levy will NOT increase property taxes, but continue a levy that is already in place.
- This vote is to approve a continuation of the same levy that the West Des Moines Community School District has depended on for more than 50 years.

Funds generated would be used for:

- Building repairs, renovations, additions, and safety improvements
- Purchase of computer systems and other educational technology
- Purchase of school buses

By law, PEEL funds may not be used for educational programs, textbooks or salaries.

Please remember to VOTE on September 8! Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

We're Ready for the Flu Season!

As the school year gets underway, the H1N1 virus is in the news again. Students and staff are taking extra precautions to avoid the spread of all types of flu. The district is following the guidelines in the Polk County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan for Schools.

District staff are expected to take the following precautionary measures:

- Classroom surfaces must be disinfected twice daily with Virex II. This disinfectant just has to be sprayed on desks/countertops, etc. and does not need to be wiped dry.
- Ample time must be provided for students and staff to thoroughly wash hands. Soap and water should impede the spread of germs.
- If access to soap and water is not available, students and staff will use the hand sanitizer that is provided in all schools.
- Food treats brought into the classroom must be eaten in the cafeteria or other common space in each school.

Additional information will be posted on the district web site at www.wdmcs.org. If you have questions, please contact your school nurse.

You Are Invited

To a reception honoring retiring and newly elected members of the Board of Education
Monday, September 14
6:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Learning Resource Center.