

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.

UPCOMING WINTER CONCERTS

(All of our concerts will take place in our auditorium.)

<u>Orchestra</u>	December 8, 2009	7:30 p.m.
<u>7th Grade Band</u>	December 10, 2009	6:30 p.m.
<u>8th Grade Band</u>	December 10, 2009	8 p.m.

The winter band concerts are rapidly approaching! The band department invites you to come to the concerts at the Stilwell auditorium Thurs., Dec. 10. The seventh grade concert is at 6:30 p.m. and the eighth grade concert at 8 p.m. Concert and jazz bands will both perform. Parents of band members are reminded of the concert attire required this year – hite on top and black on bottom. Details can be found on page five of the handbook.

Chorus

8th Grade Chorus Concert Information: Tues., Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m.

The eighth grade mixed chorus will perform, followed by the *women's choir and show choir.

7th Grade Chorus Concert Information:

There are two sections of seventh grade chorus that meet on alternate days during fourth period. Because of the number of students, each section of will perform their own concert in a staggered schedule. Families and friends should attend the concert that their child performs in. There will be an opportunity to arrive to and leave the concerts from 7-7:15 p.m. and 7:45-8 p.m. Please come and go as you wish during the transition times, though we encourage you to either stay or come early to support the women's choir/show choir at 7:15 p.m.

Day 1 7th Grade Chorus: Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m.

Transition time from 7-7:15 p.m. Background music provided by students.

***Women's Choir/Show Choir: Dec. 17 at 7:15 p.m.**

Transition time from 7:45-8 p.m. Background music provided by students

Day 2 7th Grade Chorus: Dec. 17 at 8 p.m.

** A reminder to families that students who participate in women's chorus and show choir perform in both the Dec. 15 and 17 concerts. These are combined groups that have both seventh and eighth grade students involved.*

STILWELL BOOKFAIR IS DECEMBER 7-11

You are invited to this celebration of reading during our annual book fair the week of Dec. 7. Our book fair will provide books selected specifically to appeal to junior high school students. The book fair is open to students and parents from 8:05 a.m.-3:15 p.m. each day. It will also be open the evening of Dec. 10 before and after our seventh and eighth grade band concerts. A great time for some holiday shopping.

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.

I-TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

I-TEAM STUDENTS AND STAFF EMBODY THE VOCABULARY THEY ARE STUDYING!

Learning a **myriad** of new words is one focus of the I-Team this year. So far the students have studied 80 words in their language arts classes with the ultimate goal of 250 words by the end of the year While they might initially find the words **abstruse**, after an **arduous** year of studying the words, reviewing them, finding them used in their reading books and in the media, they will be more **proficient** in understanding the words. The students' brains will not **atrophy** this year!

I-Team members Mrs. Eastman Mr. Korpanty, Mrs. Ruckle, Mrs. Woods, Mrs. Talbot, Mrs. Garringer, Mrs. Kraus, Ms. Podber and Mrs. Reed have put a great deal of effort into planning meaningful Tiger Time activities. In order to **facilitate** conversations about the issues of harassment and exclusion that sometimes occur in schools where students feel **segregated** or **alienated**, the I-Team Tiger Times read and discussed the short story "A Letter from the Fringe." In the story, one character reflected on the fact that people respect and value diversity in nature and suggested that kind of tolerance and acceptance should be extended to fellow humans.

"I think of the butterflies in the science museum. There are hundreds of different kinds. If they were all the same, it would be so boring. You can't look at the blue ones or the striped ones and say they shouldn't have been born. It seems like nature is trying to tell us something."

I-Team students found this quote an **opportune** way to **entreat** the entire school to recognize and honor diversity. Of their own **volition**, they **deftly** created over 200 unique butterflies to **embellish** a bulletin board which features the quote.

Next month our community service project will be close to home. The **dauntless** I-Team students will ask for sponsorship pledges as they participate in a walk-a-thon to raise money to purchase items for Toys for Tots. (We are hoping that the weather doesn't **impede** our walking this year!) The student who raises the largest donation in each of the seven I-Team Tiger Times will go shopping with the teachers to pick out the contributions at Toys R Us. We hope to find a match program from a local business. Last year Bob Brown Chevrolet matched the I-Team's donation of \$1,700 worth of toys!

One of topics the I-Team intends to promote in Tiger Time activities throughout the year is pride in our state and our city. Following a **fortuitous** opportunity to **caucus** as team, will **queue** up for a field trip Nov. 24 to the Hall of Pride to learn even more about the accomplishments of our state and its citizens. We will also **muster** the troops and walk the **commodious** skywalk on our way to Kaleidoscope at the Hub for lunch.

I-Team has lots to celebrate! Sorry, we don't mean to **gloat**, but we are quite **giddy** with the number of students making the A or B Honor Roll. We had one member of our team who made the OPUS Honor Choir with their **euphonious** singing. Tanvi Yenna is our **aspiring** singer. Saketh Undurty, another I-Team member, received **accolades** in band and was selected to play in the district and state honor bands. All I-Team teachers came to the **consensus** that fall conferences were a success with 86 percent attendance, despite the **intervening** flu.

We had many I-Team students participate in fall activities such as cross country, football, volleyball and we enjoyed watching the students show their **pro prowess**. Some students showed great **aptitude** for performance in the fall play and mock trial teams. In fact, Team I students are so busy with their activities at Stilwell that they are **ubiquitous**!

Here is what is presently happening in the individual I-Team classes:

SOCIAL STUDIES: Mrs. Ruckle's social studies scholars recently wrapped up a unit on the 13 colonies, during which students learned about the perils of settling Jamestown, researched the benefits of **migrating** to different colonies and investigated potential causes of the Salem witch trial hysteria. Students are acting as true historians, learning to evaluate sources and write Document Based Question, or DBQ, essays where they theorize why things happened in history and use evidence to prove their theory. Next, students will examine the tensions that emerged between the colonies and England, which eventually led to....war! On a fun note, the students have

enjoyed watching Mrs. Ruckle's growing **girth**! She is expecting her first child in January.

MATH: New textbooks and materials that accompany them allow students to practice extra problems, take practice tests and quizzes on-line, have on-line tutors and seek help with homework problems using the Hot Math Connection. There is vocabulary for each chapter that the students must know and use when discussing math. There is a vocabulary test with each chapter. (Moodle is a good source to practice the vocabulary.) Mr. Pythagoras and what his angle is will be studied in the next chapter. Of course, to understand the Pythagorean Theorem, one must understand square roots, radicals and squares. Students will be using a number grid and calculating distance between two ordered pairs on the grid. Late in the year, this will be tied to slope and intercepts.

SCIENCE: Students in Mr. Korpany's science classes have been exposed to a wide-range of science concepts. Every student has a science notebook, which contains all written assignments from class. The notebooks display a variety of work dealing with topics such as the nature of science, basic laboratory techniques, lab safety, problem solving, forces and motion, metric system and changing technology. As the year continues, topics will include plate tectonics, geologic time, properties of matter and energy, molecules, atoms, biochemistry and health.

LANGUAGE ARTS: These were busy weeks as Mrs. Woods' students were gearing up for ITBS. Students reviewed language arts skills and studied various test-taking strategies. Turning Point Clickers have been used for playing review games. Independent reading continues to be a focus-on the I-Team. Students are assigned reading homework consisting of 30 minutes of student-choice reading a night and completion of reading records. The advanced English students read the same amount but complete letter-essays every three weeks. Parents are encouraged to help students find the time and quiet space to accomplish this reading. First quarter results showed that I-Team has read 212, 524 pages with an average of 1,935 pages per student. Ask your student how many pages they read first quarter. As mentioned previously, vocabulary study is a key component of I-Team language arts classes. Research has shown a person needs to hear, read and/or use a word 40 times before it becomes part of his/her working vocabulary. Students have done an excellent job of taking and making these words their own.

We hope you can **deduce** from this report that the I-Team students and teachers are having a busy year!

MAGAZINE CAMPAIGN

We would again like to thank everyone who worked so hard on our magazine sale. The efforts of numerous people allowed us to sell over \$60,000 worth of magazines. The profit (45 percent of our total sales) is used to fund our activity program. The major portion is dedicated to music, athletics, drama and student council efforts. Extended classroom activities such as field trips, mock trial, future problem solving and Math Counts are also funded by our sale. We would like to extend a special thank you to Jessica Stutz and Kris Harrison for heading up the team of volunteers that helped check in our orders. We couldn't have done it without their help!!

SCHOOL CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Up-to-the-minute recordings about cancellations, dismissals and closings are available at **633-5555**. The WDMCS hotline is provided as a service for students, parents, staff and community members to call if school must be cancelled or dismissed early due to weather conditions or other emergencies.

ParentLink, the district's emergency notification system, will be used to notify families of cancellations, early dismissals or other emergencies. Calls are made to home phone numbers, cell phone numbers and/or work numbers as provided to the school and entered into the Infinite Campus data system.

This information is also shared with the local media on **television stations** KCCI-TV 8, WHO-TV 13 and WOI-TV 5; **FM radio stations** KJJY (92.5), KIOA (93.3), KGGO (94.9), KHKI (97.3), KWQW (98.3), KZZQ (99.5), KSTZ (102.5), KAZR (103.3), KLTI (104.1), KPTL (106.3) and KISS (107.5); and **AM radio stations** KPSZ (940), WHO (1040), KWKY (1150), KRNT (1350) and KXNO (1460).

Student days missed due to school closing will be made up beginning June 3, 2010.

THE PASS OUT GAME

It has recently come to our attention that students at some of our schools are playing a very dangerous game they are calling the Pass Out Game. Students take a number of deep breaths and have someone lean against their chest. The student passes out and other students laugh at them. Once the pressure is taken off the chest, the student comes back and supposedly gets a high. This is happening in bathrooms at school. In another version of the game, a student is literally choked until he/she passes out.

Additional information on this dangerous activity is available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8995984/>, www.chokinggame.net and www.stop-the-choking-game.com.

These on-line resources tell us that this practice kills thousands of brain cells, can lead to death and can lead to stroke later in life...as soon as five years. The Pass Out Game seems to be more prevalent with middle school students but does occur at the high school and even elementary school levels.

If we discover a student engaging in this alarming activity at school, his/her parents will be contacted immediately and asked to take the student to the family doctor. Please be on the alert for any behaviors by your student that could point to the Pass Out Game or Choking Game. Above all, we want to work with you to keep all our students safe.



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

Nov. 16, 2009
www.wdmcs.org

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

At the workshop Nov. 9 at Indian Hills Junior High, the Board of Education:

- took a gallery walk and learned about technology, interdisciplinary activities, collaboration, benefits of teaming, middle school characteristics, ESL and explorative coursework at the school
- learned about Positive Behavior Support at Indian Hills and the expectation for students to be responsible, be respectful and be ready
- learned about the pyramid of interventions for students who are identified as at-risk
- learned about the school's reading and math resource programs
- learned about the After the Bell program for students who want extra homework time at school
- learned about the many before and after school activities for Indian Hills students.

At the regular meeting Nov. 9, the Board of Education:

- approved a change order for Indian Hills construction
- approved the contract with Drake University Head Start to provide space at Phenix Elementary
- approved a contract with Iowa Network Services to provide additional bandwidth to the District
- reviewed open enrollement applications

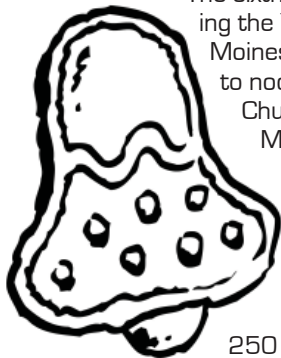
Next meeting: Mon., Nov. 23

7 p.m.

Learning Resource Center

THE GREAT COOKIE WALK

The sixth annual Great Cookie Walk benefiting the Youth Justice Initiative of West Des Moines will be held Sat., Nov. 28 from 9 a.m. to noon at the West Des Moines Christian Church fellowship hall located at 4501 Mills Civic Parkway.



Hosted by the Young Energetic Seniors group of the WDM Christian Church, the Great Cookie Walk is known for fresh, homemade, gourmet holiday cookies. Last year, more than 250 cookie varieties and 1,200 cookies

were sold, awarding YJI more than \$4,500. In the past five years, the event has donated more than \$18,000 to YJI, which is a publicly funded, restorative justice program that positively and effectively redevelops young offenders.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

This week is American Education Week, designed to celebrate public education and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education. The weeklong celebration spotlights the different people who are critical in building great public schools for the nation's 50 million K-12 students. American Education Week's celebration days include:

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The district will send a test message via ParentLink in the next week or two. By implementing a test message, we are able to assess the system and make any modifications prior to the onset of severe weather conditions.

This information is also shared with the local media on television stations KCCI-TV 8, WHO-TV 13 and WOI-TV 5; FM radio stations KJJY (92.5), KIOA (93.3), KGGO (94.9), KHKI (97.3), KWQW (98.3), KZZQ (99.5), KSTZ (102.5), KAZR (103.3), KLTI (104.1), KPTL (106.3) and KISS (107.5); and AM radio stations KPSZ (940), WHO (1040), KWKY (1150), KRNT (1350) and KXNO (1460).

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