

# HILLTOPPER

WESTERN HILLS ELEMENTARY  
633-5900  
www.wdm.k12.ia.us/whills

BETH THORNTON, PRINCIPAL  
September 8, 2009

Dear Parents,

I would like to inform you of a project I am taking part in called SAM (School Administration Manager). The SAM Project helps Principals use data to reflect on their practice and develop a plan to reframe their roles, become more effective leaders, and improve student achievement. My goal is to be in the classrooms for 60 percent of my day. My time in the classrooms will be spent collaborating with teachers and working with students in small groups. This is a paradigm shift since typically Principals were seen as the manager of the school. Research shows that principals who develop a strong instructional relationship with staff and students impact student achievement. In order for me to accomplish my goal I am using Kathy Bullis as my Time Coach. Kathy manages my calendar to ensure that I have time to get into the classrooms. I may not be in my office as much as before but, I am always free to meet if you need anything. If you would like to meet for any reason please let Kathy know and she can get you on my calendar.

A data collector will be shadowing me the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>. Every five minute my "shadow" will take data on what I am doing. The data collector can't talk to me, or anyone else. The data collector will carry a clipboard with a stop watch and will be as "invisible" as possible and not disrupt our work. Surveys with randomly selected students in our highest grade level and parents will help determine how people in our school view the role of a principal. A survey form will be given to all teachers, also. I will receive the results of the data collection ten days later and will work with my SAM to increase the percentage of time I spend on instruction.

I appreciate your support with this project and hope that your children see me as an active part of their educational journey.

Thank you,  
Beth Thornton, Principal

## PICTURE DAY

**School pictures are scheduled at Western Hills for Friday, September 11.** An information packet will be sent home with your child. **Please return with your child on the day of pictures.**

## PRIMARY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Primary Enrichment Program includes kindergarten and grades one, two, and three. In this program, gifted and talented facilitators work with the classroom teachers as a resource person to observe and stimulate the children's thinking. Your child may mention that Mrs. Twit, Western Hills Extended Learning teacher, has been working with the whole class or in a small group setting. Her purpose is to collaborate with the classroom teacher in planning and implementing activities designed for students who may benefit from differentiated activities.

Mrs. Twit may work with small flexible groups of targeted students for short periods of time. Groups will be formed based on student need and interest. These groups are intended to change depending on the purpose of the classroom extensions or activities.

The Primary Enrichment curriculum in grade K-3 is based on the Kingore Observation Inventory, developed by Dr. Bertie Kingore. The KOI helps teachers to recognize behaviors in the following areas: advanced language, analytical thinking, meaning motivated, perspective, sense of humor, sensitivity and accelerated learning.

## **NEWS FROM THE NURSE**

At Western Hills we are following the Public Health Department protocols for prevention of H1N1. This includes cleaning our environment and using good hand washing practices . Here are our expectations at school

- Staff and children wash hands for 20 seconds (or as long as it takes for them to recite the ABC song) and turn off water with towel when done
- Staff wash hands upon arrival every day
- Children wash hands upon arrival every day
- Staff and children wash hands after using the restroom
- Staff and children wash hands before meals
- Hand sanitizers will be used when there is no available facility, as on field trips

## **PTA NEWS**

Destination Book Fair!

**Our Scholastic Book Fair will be held from October 1-8, 2009.** We will have special hours on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup> and Tuesday evening **October 6<sup>th</sup> during the Waffle Dinner.\*** The Book Fair raises money and provides books for our school. We are looking for Book Fair volunteers. If you are able to help, please contact Andi Lipman at 221-2532.

(\*Please note that the Waffle Dinner date has been changed from the date which appears in the WDM school district calendar.

## **STORAGE NEEDED FOR WESTERN HILLS PLAY SETS**

Plans are underway for this year's performance! In the meantime, we are looking for a home for our play sets. In lieu of building a separate play wing :) we are hoping someone has a contact for some place to store this theater stuff. Please contact Terry Soto at [sotot@wdmcs.org](mailto:sotot@wdmcs.org) or 556-6819 if you have any ideas.

## **BIKES/SKATEBOARDS/ROLLER BLADES/SCOOETER/ROLLER SHOES**

To enhance student safety to and from school, we recommend that only students in grades 4-6 ride their bicycles to school. Wearing bicycle helmets is encouraged and required by some schools. Bicycles are to be walked on school property and parked in the bike racks. The school district is not responsible for students riding bicycles to and from school, and assumes no responsibility for bicycles on the school grounds. Bicycle locks are encouraged. Damage or theft of bicycles should be reported to the local police department.

Bicycle riding should be considered a privilege. The bike riding privilege may be revoked if a student does not abide by the school guidelines and/or causes safety concerns.

Skateboards, scooters, roller shoes and roller blades are **not** allowed on school property.