

December 7, 2009

Character Counts! Quote of the Week

"You can't escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."
— Abraham Lincoln

Important Dates in December

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| Dec. 3 | Title I Partners in Print at Crestview Elementary, 6:15-8:05 p.m. |
| Dec. 9 | 6th Grade Orchestra Concert 9:30-10 a.m. in the gym |
| Dec. 9 | PBS monthly Celebration 1:30-2:15 p.m. Classrooms |
| Dec. 10 | 5th and 6th Grade Orchestra Concert at Valley Southwoods, 6:30 p.m. |
| Dec. 11 | Fourth grade to Nutcracker at Civic Center, 2 p.m. |
| Dec. 15 | Northside Band K-6 Grade Assembly, 9:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. – Hillside Gym |
| Dec. 18 | Winter Sing, 2:45 p.m. in the gym |
| Dec. 18 | Winter Parties in classrooms starting at 3:15 p.m. |
| Dec. 21 - Jan. 1 | Winter Break, No School for Students and Staff |

POSTIVE BEHAVIOR CELEBRATION



The PBS monthly celebration will be Dec. 9. Each class will be paired with another class to allow students to practice indoor recess games. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate being respectful, responsible, safe, and good listeners as they learn rules to new games, take turns playing, encourage others and clean up and store games when finished.

Hillside's Parent Teacher Organization graciously provided \$100 worth of board games, decks of cards or Lego sets to each grade level to assist with this special activity. Thank you Hillside PTO! We appreciate your generosity.

Community Forum on Facility Planning

Monday, December 7 from 5:30-7 p.m.
Learning Resource Center – Community Room
3550 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines

You are invited to offer feedback on the direction, scope and sequence of future building improvements throughout the school district. Projects would be funded by the state wide sales tax and the Physical Plant and Equipment Levy.

A preliminary facility improvement plan was developed last summer. This fall, teams of staff and parents held several meetings to prioritize improvements at each school. Now, the Superintendency is gathering more information prior to developing a recommendation to the Board of Education.

Questions? Contact Kay Rosene, 633-5023 or rosenek@wdmcs.org.

Valley Girl/Boy Basketball Game

Valley High School and the Valley Athletic Department would like to invite Hillside students to attend a special elementary school night at a Valley girl/boy basketball game.

Students and staff members will be admitted free if they are wearing a shirt or sweat shirt with their school name or present a school ID. **Parents must pay.** The cost for adults is \$5 and for students is \$3.

Please sit in the North bleachers, display good sportsmanship, be respectful of other spectators, watch the game and enjoy! Your school will be asked to stand up and be recognized sometime during the game. We will be selecting a few students to participate in contests at halftimes.

Hillside Elementary is invited to the game on **Fri., Jan. 15.** The sophomore/JV games start at 4:45 p.m., the girls' game is at 6:15 p.m. and the boys' game is at 7:45 p.m.

Parental Involvement in Reducing Bullying *by Ed Redalen, Iowa Statewide PIRC director*

It has been determined that each day 160,000 students in the U.S. stay home from fear of being bullied. They are scared to go to school; thus, they lose out on opportunities to learn.

Another issue is the students who bully. They have a greater risk of getting in trouble with the law. Some estimates show that by age 25, one in four students who bully will have spent time in jail.

The latest numbers on bullying show that one in four students is bullied, one in five admits to being a bully, over a quarter of a million kids are physically attacked each month and eight percent of students have missed school because they were afraid.

Bullying has been around since the days of the one-room schoolhouse, but kids say parents still don't understand. Experts say it's vital that you learn about your child's school day...every day. And sometimes, specifically ask about bullying.

"You can be sensitive, have empathy with them so they realize they are not alone. That's one of the most devastating feelings is that you feel, 'I'm all alone in this. Nobody understands, nobody cares,'" says Dr. Allen Carter, a psychologist.

Carter says parents should take their children's fears seriously. They must talk to teachers, the principal, the bully's parents...do whatever it takes to stop the pain.

Parental involvement is the key to reducing and preventing bullying and the problems it brings. The National Crime Prevention Council offers the following tips to parents to help prevent bullying incidents in your child's school and community:

- Listen to your child. Encourage him or her to talk about school, social events, classmates and the walk or ride to and from school so you can identify any problems he or she may be experiencing.
- Take your child's complaints of bullying seriously. Probing a seemingly minor complaint may uncover more severe grievances.
- Watch for symptoms that your child may be a bullying victim. These symptoms include withdrawal, a drop in grades, torn clothes or the need for extra money or supplies.
- Tell the school or organization immediately if you think that your child is being bullied. Alerted caregivers can carefully monitor your child's actions and take steps to ensure his or her safety.
- Work with other parents in your neighborhood. This strategy can ensure that children are

supervised closely on their way to and from school.

- Teach your child nonviolent ways to resolve arguments.
- Teach your child self-protection skills. These skills include how to walk confidently, staying alert to what's going on around him or her and standing up for himself or herself verbally.
- Help your child learn the social skills needed to make friends. A confident, resourceful child who has friends is less likely to be bullied or to bully others.
- Praise your child's kindness toward others. Let him or her know that kindness is valued.
- Don't bully your child yourself, physically or verbally. Use nonphysical, consistently enforced discipline measures as opposed to ridiculing, yelling or ignoring your child when he or she misbehaves.

Although anyone can be the target of a bully, victims are often singled out based on psychological traits more than physical traits. The National Resource Center for Safe Schools says that passive loners are the most frequent victims, especially if they cry easily or lack social self-defense skills. Many victims are unable to deflect a conflict with humor and don't think quickly on their feet. They are usually anxious, insecure and cautious and suffer from low self-esteem. In addition, they rarely defend themselves or retaliate and tend to lack friends, making them easy to isolate. Therefore, it is vital that you instill confidence in your child and empower him or her to become a healthy, socially adjusted adult.

The Pacer Center (www.pacer.org) in Minnesota is also home to the National Center for Bullying Prevention. Iowa PIRC staff met with Pacer Center staff and are partnering with them in providing information to Iowa schools. The following Web sites may be of value:

Middle/High School –
www.pacer.org/bullying/mhs/index.asp

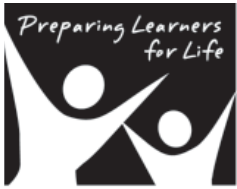
Elementary – www.pacer.org/bullying/kab/index.asp

Both sources are relevant, creative and of direct use by students. They are a resource to educate students against bullying and empower them to respond to bullying situations.

Note: In the next *Hillside Headlines*, (Dec. 14) we will provide information on how parents can prevent their children from bullying.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Crime Prevention Council, National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, National Resource Center for Safe Schools



WEST DES MOINES
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS

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

DEC. 7, 2009
www.wdmcs.org

informal

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

At the regular meeting Nov. 23, the Board of Education:

- approved the trip request for the Valley High School cheerleaders to the national championships in Dallas, Texas
- approved the trip request for the Valley High School and Valley Southwoods jazz bands to the Coe Jazz Festival in Cedar Rapids
- approved the trip request for the Valley High School Chorale to a show choir contest and field trip in Chicago
- approved the trip request for the Stilwell orchestra to the Worlds of Fun Music Festival in Kansas City
- approved change orders for Crestview and Indian Hills construction projects
- approved the amendment to the agreement with Drake University Head Start
- approved purchase of Web to Print software from Xerox
- approved the agreement with the Iowa Department of Education for Valley to continue participating in Authentic Intellectual Work
- approved a rental agreement for the Des Moines Menace to use Valley Stadium
- approved Kids West fees for the summer 2010 and 2010-11 school year
- approved Board policies in the 300 series, along with others related to non-discrimination and research projects
- authorized the district to request approval from the School Budget Review
- recognized outstanding accomplishments of students and staff
- reviewed open enrollment applications.

**Next meeting: Mon., Dec. 14
7 p.m.
Learning Resource Center**

ONLINE CALENDAR EXPANDING

Many of you are already familiar with the online calendar used by the CIML and Valley athletics at www.cimlsports.org. All athletic events are posted and updated at this site and are available to download to your computer or mobile device.

Starting in January, the online calendar will be expanded to include:

- Stilwell and Indian Hills athletic events
- band, orchestra, vocal music, debate and drama events for grades 7-12
- district-wide events such as days off, School Board meetings and end of quarter and semester days
- other school events such as dances, parent-teacher conferences and much more!

To access the calendar, log on to www.cimlsports.org, click on league calendar, then member schools and then WDM Valley.

COMMUNITY FORUM

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A preliminary facility improvement plan was developed last summer. This fall, teams of staff and parents held several meetings to prioritize improvements at each school. Now, the Superintendency is gathering more information prior to developing a recommendation to the Board of Education. Please contact Kay Rosene at 633-5023 or rosenek@wdmcs.org with any questions.

FLU SHOTS AT THE LRC

The Polk County Health Department will be offering a seasonal flu vaccination clinic for staff and students in the West Des Moines Community School District

**Thurs., Dec. 10 from 7-9 a.m.
Fairmeadows Room - Learning Resource Center**

The Flumist seasonal flu vaccine will be available to any staff member or student. The injectable seasonal flu vaccine will be available to pregnant staff and students, staff up to 64 years old with medical conditions and health care personnel (teachers, associates and building secretaries who help in the nurse's office or who have direct contact caring for students).

For seasonal flu shots and mist, the PCHD accepts insurance or requests a \$15 donation. No one will be turned away for inability to pay.

If you have questions about the clinic or your eligibility, please contact your building nurse.

AN OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

Celebrate Christmas the way they did back in the 1920's with a visit to the Historic Bennett Country School (4001 Fuller Road next to Jordan Creek Elementary) Dec. 6 and 13 from 2-5 p.m. You can participate in family friendly activities, shop for a unique gift and snack on old fashioned goodies. The event is free and open to anyone. Please contact the West Des Moines Historical Society at 515-225-1286 for more information.