

WARRIOR NEWS

Event Calendar

January, 2012



Volume 4, Issue 5

February 20th	No School Presidents Days
February 28-29th	AIMS Testing
March 12th–16th	No School Spring Break
April 10-11th	AIMS Testing
April 12th	High School <u>Early Release</u> 12:00
April 16-19th April 16-17th	Middle School AIMS Testing High School Stanford 10 Testing
April 20th And May 7th	No School High School and Middle School
May 21-24th May 24th	<u>Early Release</u> High School and Middle School Last Day
Call the front office if you have any questions. 602-864-7731	

The Only Constant in Life Is Change

By Debra Slagle, Superintendent

I've come to realize over the years that change is difficult, even when it is "good" change. WPA has experienced a lot of change this year, which no doubt has been a bit disconcerting to some students and parents. I believe as members of our learning community, you should hear from us about what is happening, relative to your student's education.

Over the past three years, WPA's enrollment and performance of students on AIMS has dropped. Because we take very seriously the academic growth and performance of our students, in October, we hired Jack Rowe as Director of Curriculum and Instruction with extensive experience as an educator and working with schools to improve the quality of their education. Mr. Rowe's responsibility has been to work directly with teachers to improve instruction and analyze the data we have gathered so we could gain an understanding of why these decreases have occurred and strategically create a plan to address the issues identified. Since October, we have increased the level of accountability of teachers; increased the amount of training teachers have received in best practices, relative to the past three years; reinstated some of the policies and procedures that have changed since we were a highly performing school; replaced some staff members who were not highly effective; lost some staff members who did not agree with the higher levels of accountability; and purchased a new testing system that is designed to help us better track how our students are doing in reading and math throughout the school year so we can immediately address any areas that the tests show need to be improved. We have recently created a Core Team that consists of teachers, office staff and administration to work with me as we go forward and work hard, helping our students grow academically and increasing our enrollment and performance to previous levels and beyond.

Because of the decrease in enrollment and cuts in education funding at the state level, the size of our faculty and staff is smaller. However, our class sizes remain significantly smaller than many of the surrounding district schools. These reductions have resulted in a healthier budget overall and increasing our sustainability as we go forward. We will carefully approach adding additional faculty members as we increase enrollment in the future.

Mr. Allen, who has done an excellent job as assistant principal for the past three and a half years, has taken over as principal. Ms. Campbell, who has been at Westwind for ten years, has moved into the guidance counseling position. Ms. Campbell started at Westwind as a parapro while she was in college. She returned after her student teaching as a Social Studies teacher and Student Government Sponsor. Ms. Campbell has her Bachelors Degree and Masters in Education from ASU. Ms. Campbell assisted in creating Westwind's E-Cap used for academic planning, which most of our students have completed. Both Mr. Allen and Ms. Campbell have a clear vision of what an effective school requires; and they are deeply committed to the success of every student. Westwind Community Schools' Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Jack Rowe, will continue to work directly with teachers on improving curriculum and instruction.

Unfortunately, Ms. Breland, one of our English teachers, had to move out of state because of a family emergency. She has been replaced with Mrs. Bryant, an experienced English teacher who moved to Arizona recently because of her husband's employment. Mr. Miller was hired to take over Ms. Campbell's teaching duties in Social Studies. Mr. Miller is a graduate of ASU's School of Education and has several children of his own. Mr. Clarke started after Winter Break as one of our math teachers. He is an experienced and excellent math teacher who is committed to preparing our students for AIMS this semester and increasing their performance in math beyond that. We are very fortunate to have these professionals join our staff, especially midyear when often it is difficult to find teachers of this caliber.

As we enter the Spring Semester, we begin looking forward at next year. I encourage your input on how we can better serve your students and bring more students to Westwind for the upcoming school year. If you have any questions regarding the changes, please feel free to contact Mr. Allen or me. We would be more than happy to talk with you.

Welcome from the Principal

I want to start off 2012 by welcoming back our students and parents. We've seen a lot of changes within our school recently, and I'm very optimistic about the year ahead! I am committed to the Westwind family and to the success of every single student, both in and outside of the classroom.

I want to extend an invitation to you as parents to visit with me whenever you have any questions or concerns. Communication is key in a successful organization and our staff is committed to improving it. I have listed the staff directory below; please feel free to contact your child's teachers if you have any questions or issues as well.

I've always stressed that success begins with attendance. I encourage parents to be involved with your child's education and activities. When parents are involved and interested, student performance has proven to increase.

It is truly an honor and privilege to be the principal of Westwind, and I look forward to a fantastic year ahead!

– Matt Allen

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