



Parent Matters

W C P S S P A R E N T N E W S L E T T E R



Superintendent's Column

When former WCPSS Superintendent Bob Bridges described what students need to succeed, he frequently talked about them standing on a three-legged stool. Those three legs are the home, the church (or other strong community support system), and the school.

If any one of those legs were short, Dr. Bridges would say, a student would have to actively maintain his or her balance to stay upright. Students with great skill and ability would be able to stand and adjust. If *two* legs of the stool were short, then the stool would be at such a steep angle that few students can stand. Even the most agile and strong-willed would eventually get tired, and then all they can do is hang on like most students in that situation. Hanging on becomes the focus; learning becomes a distant consideration. And some-

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Community Involved in Multi-Year Assignment Process

Bill Poston, *Communications*

This year, for the first time, WCPSS will provide a multi-year student assignment proposal that promises families greater stability and predictability. The public engagement process has also been improved to provide for greater public input on decisions that reduce overcrowding and fill new schools.

Between 2009 and 2011, ten new schools will open in Wake County. The WCPSS Growth and Planning Department knows where those schools are being built and when the schools are due to open. By using new planning tools, Growth and Planning is now better able to plan student assignment more than one year in advance.

The multi-year assignment proposal will provide families increased stability, predictability, peer group continuity and better defined feeder patterns. There will be less year-to-year uncertainty for families and proposals will seek to provide more opportunities for students to move together from elementary to middle and from middle to high school.

This assignment proposal will impact students at the elementary, middle and high school levels. The last assignment plan only included elementary students.

The process for community discussion of the proposal has also been improved this year. The Growth and Planning staff will first provide a draft proposal online for comment, then hold community engagement meetings to discuss the draft proposal.

Growth and Planning staff hope to present the draft proposal in early November, with Community Engagement Meetings later that month.

New Schools Opening for 2009-10 and 2010-11

FIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: E23 Banks Road Year Round Elementary, E34 Lake Myra Year Round Elementary, E21 Eastern Wake area year round elementary, E27 Herbert Akins Road Year Round Elementary and E30 Alston Ridge Year Round Elementary.

THREE MIDDLE SCHOOLS: M6 Northeast Wake area year round middle school, M9 Holly Grove Year Round Middle School, M10 Mills Park Year Round Middle School.

TWO HIGH SCHOOLS: H2 Heritage High School and H6* Eastern Wake area high school.

*Final approval of H-6 pending action from school board and county commissioners.

School Meal Prices

Student breakfast and lunch prices will stay the same for a third consecutive year. Despite a national trend that reflects the price of school meals increasing an average of nearly \$.35 cents for other school districts across the country, our school breakfast and lunch prices remain unchanged since 2005. However, students who choose to purchase à la carte items will find prices have increased. The changes, effective August 4, increased all school breakfast à la carte items to \$1.25. This new price represents an increase of 50 to 75 cents depending on the item. À la carte lunch items have also increased to \$1.50, an increase of 15 cents.



The higher prices are necessary to absorb the rising cost of food and supplies, while keeping regular school breakfast and lunch at an affordable price for families. WCPSS Child Nutrition Services appreciates your understanding.

School Lunch a Great Value

Our school meals are a great value for students and offer healthy choices that are not always possible with a box lunch. WCPSS students receive fresh, North Carolina-grown produce throughout the year, including a variety of fruits and vegetables like watermelon, cantaloupe, berries, cabbage, sweet potatoes, apples, and broccoli. In addition, our cafeterias serve many whole grain, high fiber products that are included in sandwich bread, hamburger buns, pizza crust and hoagie rolls. Each meal is served with one carton of skim or 1 percent plain, chocolate or strawberry milk.

To see what kinds of delicious, well-balanced meals are being offered to your child each day, please visit <http://www.wcpss.net/child-nutrition/> to view the monthly school menus for 2008-09. We also invite you to have lunch with your student; our CNS staff would be happy to serve you!

2008-2009 Child Nutrition Services Prices

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH
Elementary	\$.80	\$ 1.75
Middle	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00
High	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00

(Note: Not all high schools offer breakfast)

*Some students may qualify for free or reduced-price breakfasts/lunches. Please refer to the federal guidelines that are provided by the school if you wish to apply.

Convenient Lunch Payment Option

Paying for lunch is now easier than ever! This year, parents have the option of signing up with a new service called MyLunchMoney.com. The service is easy to use and allows parents to deposit funds into their child's lunch account anytime they want from their home computer, phone or fax. Parents can even set their accounts to be used for "meals only" or to include snacks and à la carte items.

To get started, parents must enroll at www.myLunchMoney.com or call 1-800-479-3531. Parents will need their child's ID or NCWISE number to enroll. This number can be found on their child's report card or schedule. There is a \$1.95 service charge when depositing money into a student's account.



Holiday Help with Lifelong Learning

You've barely washed away your sandy summer residue before you're breaking out the holiday lights. Don't panic. Lifelong Learning has 250+ course offerings to help you make this holiday season one of your most enjoyable ever!

Back to Basics — Baking Yeast Breads: Learn to prepare and package savory loaves as holiday gifts.

Reedy Creek MS 6:30 - 9:30pm Wednesdays 10/1 - 10/22

Back to Basics — Recipes for Novice Cooks: This class is Cooking 101 on steroids! Learn to make delicious traditional and not-so-traditional holiday entrees.

Reedy Creek MS 7 - 9pm Mondays 11/3 - 11/24

Preserving Your Family Heritage — Digital Storybook: Memories and family stories should be shared from generation to generation. Make a beautiful, heartwarming gift for anyone on your list — plus one to keep for yourself!

Knightdale HS 6:30 - 9pm Tuesdays 10/7 - 11/14

Want to register? Contact Lifelong Learning at 850-1807 or visit our website at <http://cs.wcpss.net/lifelonglearning>.

Construction Underway for 2008-09

Ashley Smith, Communications

We are in the second year of our 2006 Capital Improvement Plan, which calls for major renovations to 13 existing schools and the construction of 17 new schools to be opened between 2008 and 2011. As part of our ongoing building program, this year we opened three new year-round schools, bringing the number of year-round schools to 49 and the total number of schools in the system to 156. Our three new year-round elementary schools are Laurel Park Elementary, Mills Park Elementary and Sycamore Creek Elementary. Next year we will open four new schools; two of them are future elementary school facilities that could potentially open as middle schools for the first year to help ease crowding (see map).

While renovations continue, a few special construction projects, much larger in nature, required students to move to temporary facilities or swing space while their campus is being renovated. At each swing school, accommodations are made for a cafeteria, main office, and enough classrooms to serve students in a safe learning environment.

Smith Elementary and Root Elementary both started the school year at swing space in order to make way for renovations at their schools.

Smith Elementary has moved to a swing school at the new Banks Road Elementary. Banks Road is located at 10225 Chambers Road in Raleigh. Smith Elementary's renovations are expected to be complete by 2009 and Banks Road Elementary will open as a new school that same year.

Root Elementary moved to a temporary modular campus at North Hills East. The North Hills East campus is located at 305 Church at North Hills Street in Raleigh. Root Elementary will remain there until the Fall/Winter of 2009 when renovations are expected to be complete.

Upcoming Relocations

During winter break, Wilburn Elementary will move to a swing space modular campus and students will continue the school year in their temporary location at 3851 Spring Forest Road in Raleigh, with an additional 8-classroom modular to accommodate their program. They will be there until the summer of 2010 when their renovations are scheduled to be completed.

River Bend Elementary will move out of their temporary location at the Spring Forest modular campus over Thanksgiving break and will start Monday, December 1 in their new permanent school building at 6710 Perry Creek Road in Raleigh.

Parents interested in learning about their school's construction status may visit the WCPSS Facilities Department website for a complete list at www.wcpss.net/facilities/, in the General Information section, under "Bond Program Projects," and by clicking on "CIP 2006." Each major renovation project and new school project is listed and updated regularly.



E23 Banks Road Elementary
 E34 Lake Myra Elementary
 M10 Mills Park Middle site of the future Alston Ridge Elementary
 M9 Holly Grove Middle site of the future Herbert Atkins Road Elementary

Did you know?

The Evaluation & Research Department has created two new publications, *Teachable Moment* (for teachers) and *Facts for Families* (for parents), to disseminate information about our research findings and provide a starting point for conversations throughout the community. This is part of a new set of publications designed to give families and schools common information on which to base discussions about helping students achieve. *Facts for Families* is sent to schools for distribution to parents. You can also download it in *English* or *Spanish* at: http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/schools_parents.html.



Keeping Your Children Safe in an Online World

Nancy Mangum, *Instructional Services*

In our globally connected world, the risks that children face today can be very different from those that we faced as children. Online safety is something that parents, teachers and schools are concerned about. Keeping our children safe begins with talking to them about the dangers. Just as our parents taught us not to get into a car with a stranger, we must teach our children how to keep themselves safe online.

Setting Rules

The following are some rules that all children should learn about using the Internet:

- Don't give away any personal information. This includes your age, your school, your address or phone number.
- Never meet an online friend in person without an adult there with you. Online we do not know who someone really is. I might say I

am a 10-year-old boy but really I am a 25-year-old man.

- Don't give out your password, except to adults in your family or your teacher.

Tips

Here are some tips for parents that can help keep your child safe:

- Put the computer in a high traffic area in your house like the kitchen or family room.
- Talk with your child about what they are doing online.
- Monitor your child's online activity.
- Be actively involved in your child's online experiences.
- Let your child know that they should tell

you about anything that happens online that makes them feel uncomfortable or upset.

- Get to know the friends that your child has online.
- Have conversations with them about ways to keep themselves safe and establish rules for their online activities.

Remember, even if your child is technology savvy, they still need your guidance. Teach them how to be safe online so that they can protect themselves. Start the conversation today.



To learn more and to help your kids learn about Internet safety, visit these websites:

<http://www.netsmartz.org/>

Excellent website for parents and students. The site has activities that will help you start a conversation with your child about online safety. *Netsmartz 411* provides on- and offline learning activities for parents to facilitate discussions with their children and teens about Internet safety. Visit "Parent FAQ" to learn more about how and why parents should use *NetSmartz*.

<http://www.getnetwise.org/>

Good resource for parents. *GetNetWise* has resources that show parents how to keep their family's online experiences safe and secure. There are how-to videos ranging from setting your search engine to filter unwanted sites in its search results to activating your computer's security settings.

Do You Know Where Your Children Have Been ... on the Internet?

Lisa Belsha, *Technical Communication Services*

Internet browsing applications keep a record of all websites that have been visited called a history. These histories are a great way to see which websites have been accessed by children in your home.

In Internet Explorer 7

1. Click **View — Explorer Bar — History**
2. A list of visited websites appears on the left of the screen (History)
 - Options will be: today, previous 2 days last week, 2 weeks ago, 3 weeks ago
3. History can be searched and sorted by clicking **History** at the top of the list

In Mozilla Firefox

1. Click **History**
2. Click **Show All History**
3. Click **Views — Show Columns** to change the information being displayed
4. Click **Views — Sort** to change the order of displayed results

Making Time to Vote

Robert G. Sox, Curriculum & Instruction

The mission of the Wake County Public School System is to “educate each student to be a responsible and productive citizen who can effectively manage future challenges.” One of the greatest American responsibilities is to engage in civic life through the process of voting. Students may have many classroom opportunities for participatory decision making, but it is important to help connect classroom learning to real-world experiences.

Since 1996, Kids Voting has provided thousands of Wake County students the opportunity to experience the election process by casting a Kids Voting ballot at their parents’ polling site. In an effort to allow the Kids Voting experience to reach a greater number of our students, many schools will provide an opportunity to cast a school day ballot.

Since it is a presidential election year, on Saturday, September 13, Kids Voting NC Wake County, in partnership with the NC Museum of History, conducted a candidates’ forum. Questions from middle and high school students were presented to candidates. Elementary students

participated in presentations, book reviews, and a variety of engaging hands-on civic and patriotic activities in the Museum lobby.

In addition to the voting opportunity, Kids Voting NC Wake County provides materials and resources for teaching civic responsibility to each school.

You can help your child make a deeper real world connection to the Kids Voting process by making the voting process a part of your conversations at home.

For additional information about Kids Voting, please visit: www.kidsvotingwake.org.



New PSAT Opportunity for High School Sophomores

This year, Wake County students in grades 10 and 11 will have the opportunity to take the Preliminary Student Aptitude Test (PSAT), when it is administered at their high school in October free of charge.

The PSAT is a college preparatory exam that provides practice for the SAT, encourages high-scoring students to take advanced placement courses, and is part of the selection process for juniors to enter the National Merit Scholarship Program.

While any student in grades 8 to 12 may take the test at his/her own expense, in the past, WCPSS has administered a free PSAT to students in grade 11. Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, the Wake County Public School System will begin administering the PSAT to students in grade 10 instead of grade 11.* However for 2008-09, WCPSS will administer a free exam to 10th and 11th-grade students, before the transition takes effect in 2009.

Making the shift will be better for students

Sr. Director of High School Programs Ruth Steidinger

says making the PSAT available to eligible tenth grade students will provide an earlier opportunity for school staff to identify students capable of being successful in advanced placement (AP) courses. It will also provide an opportunity for earlier preparation for taking the SAT by using the PSAT as a benchmark for setting goals for improvement.

When students take the PSAT, College Board produces the AP Potential, a report that identifies students who may be likely to score well on AP exams. The report has been useful in motivating students to take challenging advanced placement courses.

“We’re hoping the shift will lead to identifying more tenth grade students eligible to enroll in AP courses who may not have thought they could,” said Steidinger.

The 2008 PSAT test date is Wednesday, October 15. Students must sign up for the PSAT at their high schools. Eligible students must complete Algebra 1 before taking the PSAT.

* In special cases, the PSAT may be administered to 11th-grade students in order to qualify for merit-based opportunities or to students who have not completed Algebra I in the 10th grade.

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is an integral part of the comprehensive secondary school program in Wake County.

The mission of Career and Technical Education is to provide offerings that meet student needs, interests, abilities, and aspirations and respond to actual or anticipated opportunities for employment, advanced education, and practical life application. The Career and Technical Education program offered in Middle and High school encourages responsible career choice for students.



Middle school students are offered exploratory courses in business and information technologies, life skills, technology systems, and career decisions.

Each middle school has a Career Development Coordinator to support the school-to-career connection and facilitate business alliance activities.

In the high schools, introductory courses are available at grades 9 and 10, advanced and specialized instruction at grades 11 and 12. Courses are offered in the areas of agriculture, business and information technology, career development, health occupations, family and consumer sciences, marketing, technology, and trade and industry. Each high school has a Career Development Coordinator to support the school-to-career connection and facilitate business alliance activities. Special Populations Coordinators provide support services for qualifying students needing special assistance or intervention to succeed in a CTE course. Dual enrollment and advanced placement opportunities are available at local community colleges.

For more information about CTE visit the CTE website at: http://www.wcpss.net/school_to_career/ctel or schedule an appointment with your child's Career Development Coordinator by visiting the school.

Acronym Glossary

Ever trip over an unfamiliar acronym in an educational report, such as CogAT or ASVAB? WCPSS has created an Acronym Glossary to help you understand all of these educational acronyms. More than 300 of the most commonly used acronyms throughout WCPSS have been defined and presented in alphabetical order. You can check it out at: <http://www.wcpss.net/glossary/word/list>.



Sign Up for E-news

If you would like a convenient way to receive up-to-date information about the school system, the Communications Department has two new electronic newsletters that will provide the latest information from the classroom to the boardroom.

Wake School – Community News is a twice monthly e-newsletter that reports on the latest school board meetings, policy changes and education trends.

The Classroom Connection is a twice monthly e-newsletter that reports on the good news happening across the district as well as innovative techniques teachers are using in the classroom.

Signing up to receive E-news is easy. It is located on the Wake County Public School System website (www.wcpss.net).

Interim Reports Issued (Traditional Calendar)

First Quarter: September 22 – 26
 Second Quarter: December 8 – 12
 Third Quarter: February 23 – 27
 Fourth Quarter: May 11 – 15

HIGH SCHOOL EXAMS
 January 20 – 23
 June 5, 8 – 10

*These dates will differ for Wake Early College High School (WECHS). Please visit the WECHS website or contact the school for a list of dates.

Wake County PTA Council

As school begins, parents across Wake County collectively wish the best for their students. We all want our children to succeed in school, but what can we really do to ensure their success? How can we positively influence the educational process and help them get the right start to life?



National PTA says that family involvement is the key to student success. But what does family involvement mean? What does it look like? How can we possibly get involved, especially when we're working so hard just to keep our heads above water?

For every family, *involvement* means something different:

- For some, involvement means having a parent in the child's classroom on a regular basis, assisting the classroom teacher in class projects and events, and chaperoning field trips.
- For some, involvement means making sure the child shows up on time for school every day, having eaten a good breakfast and bringing all the appropriate materials, so that the child is prepared to learn.
- For some, involvement means including calm times at home in the evening so that children can unwind and prepare for the coming school day.
- For some, involvement means just spending time every day discussing what's going on in school and in the child's life, offering support and encouragement.
- For some, involvement means reading together on a nightly basis.
- And for some, involvement means all of the above and more.

The real point is that every family will find their own ways of getting involved. But we *all* have the responsibility to do that. We *all* have the responsibility to support and encourage our students.

If you are looking for ways to specifically get plugged into your child's education, please do not hesitate to contact your school's PTA/PTSA president. He/she can help you find ways to get involved. Even if you can only offer 30 minutes of time, you can be part of the solution, part of the positive community of volunteers that are making a real difference in the lives of the children at every school in Wake County. If you don't know how to contact your PTA President, contact your school's main office, and they will direct you as to contact information.

Thanks for all you do for the children,

Sarah Martin

Wake PTA Council President, 2008-2009

Superintendent (cont'd from front page)

times they fall.

Our students depend on all three legs of the stool. As WCPSS's current Superintendent, I am accountable for whether our schools are healthy, safe and effective learning environments where your child can and will thrive. Our vision is that *every child graduates on time, prepared for the future*, and everything we do must work toward that vision. For those students who are having trouble balancing on the stool, it's not enough for educators to ask for more support from the home and community. We also have to ask if we are doing enough ourselves.



And we're doing that. We are deeply involved in responding to a curriculum management audit that saw room for improvement in our academic programs. We're also focusing attention on the *two vital behaviors* that students must adopt in order to graduate on time, prepared for the future:

- Attend school regularly
- Learn the Standard Course of Study

We are constantly reviewing how our students are learning, what we teach, how we teach it, and how our school system supports learning and teaching from the cafeteria to the athletic field to the Superintendent's Office. What we are discovering is that while WCPSS is doing a good job preparing most students for the future — better than most comparable school districts in our nation — we have many more opportunities for improvement.

It's not just about more resources, although our growing student population needs them. It's not just about parental and community involvement, although we are actively and enthusiastically welcoming businesses, faith communities and families to our school doors. It's about accepting that WCPSS must be there for *every* child from kindergarten to 12th grade: the one bound for Harvard, the one struggling in a broken home, the one overcoming a disability, the one new to Wake County, and the one whose family has been here for generations.

We stand in support of *every* child in the Wake County Public School System. We stand in support of *your* children. Please help support them in their studies and attendance. Please let your school know what we can do to support *you*. And thank you for entrusting their education to us. It is a responsibility that we are proud to bear.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background.

Stay Connected

Circumstances, usually inclement weather, sometimes force WCPSS to cancel classes, open schools late, or close them early. Occasionally, occurrences such as gas leaks, water outages or power loss will force a small number of schools to close, open late, or dismiss early while the rest of the system remains on schedule.

In each of these circumstances, the Wake County Public School System has plans and procedures in place to handle the situation and communicate with parents. In particular, WCPSS will post regularly updated information about system and school status on www.wcpss.net. The school system will also communicate school closings and similar information to local media outlets.

You can help!

- Keeping your contact information up-to-date will keep you informed of decisions to close school or release students early. Remember to provide your school with any new, additional and changing phone numbers you obtain throughout the year. If you receive a phone call from our school system through our automated service, the number will show up as 411 on Caller ID displays.
- Be one of the first to know about the latest news concerning the Wake County Public School System by signing up to have information sent directly to your e-mail account through our E-mail Notification Service and Electronic Newsletters. To subscribe, go to www.wcpss.net.

Online Learning with Community Schools: Click to Learn

Fitting a course into a busy schedule is not always easy for most people. You might find the flexibility afforded by our online course program, *Click to Learn*, a solution to your scheduling dilemma. You can begin any of the six-week courses in whatever month you choose, and also work on the lessons at any time you choose. Those lessons are available on the website, you can click on your classroom and study your lessons at any time, day or night.



Is your child preparing to take the SAT/ACT test soon? Our online SAT/ACT preparation courses I and II are only \$72 each and offer a very flexible schedule for busy high school or middle school students.

For more information on how to register for this and other Online Learning courses offered through Community Schools, contact Beth Lynch at 919-713-0557 or visit <http://cs.wcpss.net/wcpssonline> and click on "Click to Learn."

The Wake PTA Council wants you and your child to get moving this Fall! They have challenged PTAs across the County to form Walking Clubs. If your school is not yet participating in this initiative, contact your PTA president to find out how your school can get involved.



GET
CONNECTED!

For news and features about
education in Wake County.

TUNE INTO

The School Connection

TELEVISION SHOW

Channel 11 in Raleigh

Mondays at 10:30 a.m.
Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.
Fridays at 12:30 p.m.
Fridays at 6:00 p.m.
Sundays at 6:30 p.m.

Channel 11 in Cary

Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m.
Fridays at 6:00 p.m.
Sundays at 1:30 p.m.

SC THE SCHOOL CONNECTION

FOR A COMPLETE SCHEDULE
VISIT WWW.WCPSS.NET/SCHOOLT.V

ParentMatters



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www.wcpss.net

Wake County Public School System programs are staffed and offered without regard to race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, citizenship status, political affiliation, or disability.