

THE BULLDOG GAZETTE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 7

14 NOVEMBER 2008

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sometimes a student who traveled through the elementary school years without any difficulty gets into academic or behavioral trouble in the middle grades. The child who was always careful about assignments and who got projects in on time now never brings home homework, fails to meet deadlines, or just "forgets." The friendly, easygoing child gets into a fight or talks out in class or gets into some other sort of mischief—sometimes serious, sometimes not. Now what?

There are a multitude of reasons why a young adolescent gets into trouble. Trying to impress peers, beginning to show independence from adults, inability to control emotions and emotional outbursts, lack of strategies for learning or a weakness in an academic area, and yes, they do just plain forget some things.

No misbehavior or academic sloth should be condoned, but it can be understood. If a student is getting into fights because he or she

has anger management issues, then devising methods of tamping down anger is in order. If, on the other hand, he or she is being teased, or if the fight was a one-time-only thing with a friend, then talking about conflict resolution is appropriate. Can't remember homework? Check the assignment notebook daily (see Connecting Families on the flip side). Project seems overwhelming? Help your child break the work into smaller parts. Failed to master something in grade school? Set aside time to review. What's essential is to find out what will make things go better the next time.

No matter what, each child must accept the consequences for his or her actions. Getting your child out of a consequence does a disservice to everyone involved and inhibits learning, both short- and long-term.

These are the best years to turn mistakes into learning. Spend time talking with your middle schooler about

the issue. Remember, her first telling of her side might be filled with half-truths and defensiveness. Stay calm, keep listening. If a teacher is involved, speak to the teacher to hear the other side, without letting emotions get in the way. Middle grades students are terrific at getting adults mad at each other or getting them to take over what should be the *student's* plan for changing the future. Further, they will do everything necessary to protect their fragile egos.

If the behavior continues, connect more regularly with the school. This is why the school-home partnership is so important.

Middle schoolers will make mistakes, as we all do. Working together, families can deal with the consequences and move on, and hopefully be the better for it.

Taken from National Middle School Association's "Family Connections", November 2008, www.nmsa.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

17 November— *Math Olympiads for grades 5 & 6*

19 November— *Thanksgiving Feast*

25 November— *Intramural Awards*

26-28 November— *Thanksgiving Recess (no school for students)*

12 December— *Winter Dance for grades 7 and 8*

17 December— *Winter Music Concert, time TBA*

22 December-4 January— *Winter Recess (no school for students)*

5 January— *Classes resume*

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THANKSGIVING FEAST IN THE CAFETERIA



Parents are invited to attend the Thanksgiving feast in our cafeteria on **Wednesday, November 19th**. So that adequate quantities of food can be prepared, parents are asked to call the school to "make a reservation." This will prevent the food prepared for later lunch shifts from being eaten by parents or other family guests in an earlier lunch shift.

It is our goal to accomplish the feast during the regular

lunch period so that academic time is not compromised. In order to make this happen, there will be no alternate entrees offered except the PBJ. No salads, wraps, tuna cups or special orders of any kind will be available.

Because it is a "feast", every tray will be a complete meal. Everything that is offered will be put on the trays. We will only consider gravy optional.

Thanksgiving Feast Menu:

- Turkey
- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
- Stuffing
- Corn
- Cranberry Sauce
- Warm Apples and Cinnamon

Please join us for this Thanksgiving event!

STUDENT GRADESPEED ACCOUNTS



Student Gradespeed accounts are now available. All students may log into Gradespeed, view their assignments and grades, keep track of their educational responsibilities, and access information on their success. Parents may also view the same information through the Parent Gradespeed portal. A link to the Student Gradespeed site is provided

on our webpage, as well as the on West Point Middle School Intranet page.

A login and password will be given to each student. The first time the student logs in, a password change will be required to secure individual student information. All users are responsible for their individual login information

and should take every precaution to prevent others from being able to view their accounts. Abuse of this site may result in the loss of access privileges.

Please notify the school (845 938-2923) if you do not wish your child to have a Student Gradespeed account.

YEARBOOKS ON SALE



The yearbook staff is proud to announce that the 2008-2009 West Point Schools yearbook is now on sale. We are excited to add changes and improvements to this year's book, such as a screen printed hard back edition, with an exciting new layout and theme. The yearbook is a student-produced publication with pictures of all students

enrolled in both the elementary and middle schools.

There are new features to include the ability to purchase your yearbook online with a credit card. Alternatively, the order form attached to the newsletter may also be used.

Until December 19 the price will be \$27. For the remainder of the year the price will

be \$32.

Buy your yearbook early and save money! BUY NOW!

If you would like to purchase your yearbook online go to:

www.jostensyearbooks.com

DoDEA CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) will administer its biennial Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) from November 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009. The CSS provides valuable feedback to DoDEA from its most important customers – students and parents - about the quality of education it provides and areas needing improvement. The 2008 DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey represents a departure from tradition in that the survey will be administered to students in grades 4-12 and sponsors for each child enrolled in DoD schools from Pre-kindergarten/ SureStart through 12th grade. As with prior Customer Satisfaction Surveys, participation remains voluntary and maximum participation is encouraged in order to obtain reliable and valid data. Historically, teachers, educational support staff, students in grades 4-12, and sponsors for each child enrolled in

DoD schools from Pre-kindergarten through 12th grade were asked to complete the CSS. This year, parents and students will participate in the CSS while DoDEA Administrators, teachers, and educational support staff will participate in a separate survey, the DoDEA Employee Satisfaction Survey, to be administered during March 2009. As with the CSS, participation in the DoDEA Employee Satisfaction Survey is voluntary and maximum participation is encouraged in order to obtain reliable and valid data.

The surveys were developed through a review process of various groups... Area offices, superintendents, principals, Education Directorate staff members at the DoDEA headquarters, and external sources such as DMDC. Some questions were adapted from the *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Schools* with additional DoDEA-specific questions.

The 2008 CSS contains more parent/student specific questions, particularly with regard to guidance and counseling. The surveys take approximately 20 minutes to complete and are available online at www.dodea.edu (click on the CSS graphic link). Parents who do not have access to the Internet should contact their child's school to determine other alternatives – such as using the school's computers. The Customer Satisfaction Survey is part of DoDEA's continual efforts to improve the quality of education provided to DoD military and civilian dependents. The CSS provides a forum for parents and students to have their opinions heard and to communicate their level of satisfaction with issues related to DoD schools. The focus of the 2008 CSS is to concentrate on how parents and students of DoDEA schools feel about instruction, curriculum, programs, and services, among other topics.



CHARACTER COUNTS– TRUSTWORTHINESS

The Character Counts program is well underway again for this school year. Character Counts is the nation's largest non-profit, non-denominational character education program in the country.

For the past several weeks, the students have been discussing the important essence

of the first Pillar of Character – Trustworthiness. Students have learned that trustworthy people are honest and have integrity. They keep their promises and are reliable and loyal. Next week, seminar classes will further discuss this character trait by watching a video on trustworthiness and following up with a class discussion. There will be five

more Pillars of Character. The school is joining up with Youth Services and each month will be spend some time exploring the meanings of these pillars and seeing how the concepts fit into our daily lives. If you would like to learn more of this program, please feel free to contact the school counselor.



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BOOKMARK OUR WEB SITE

HTTP://

WWW.AM.DODEA.EDU/
NY_VA/WESTPOINT/
MIDDLE/INDEX.HTM

MISSION STATEMENT

WPMS STRIVES TO PROVIDE ALL
LEARNERS WITH EXEMPLARY
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT
INSPIRE LIFE-LONG LEARNING IN
A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT.

QUICK NOTES

- Roof Work Underway: The middle school roof replacement project has begun. The work schedule will not conflict with recess, and all efforts will be made to minimize the noise during the instructional day. Parents and students are urged to proceed cautiously when walking by the construction area, as there may be vehicles moving around on campus. All contracted roof workers will wear a yellow USMA contractor badge while on site.
- Turkey Trot: On Monday, November 17th WPMS Intramurals will host a Turkey Trot. The race is open to all 5th and 6th grade students. This is a one mile race. The sign-up for the Turkey Trot is located on the desk near the front office. Prizes for fastest 5th grade girl, 6th grade girl, 5th grade boy, 6th grade boy. Get a flock of friends and join in the fun!
- Intramurals Kickball Championship: Tuesday, November 18th, rain or shine!
- Fall Intramurals Awards Ceremony is planned for on Tuesday, November 25th.
- Scrapbooking Enrichment Seminar: Students are invited to attend a hands-on scrapbooking enrichment class during Seminar on 2 December. The group size is limited to the first twenty interested students who sign up.
- Modified Basketball: The Girls and Boys modified basketball seasons get underway next week. Practices begin on 17 November. Sign-ups take place at FMWR's Child and Youth Services.

PTO NEWS

We now have a Parent Teacher Organization link on the WPMS homepage! You can access our membership form and spirit wear order form via this link. In the near future we hope to expand the information available on this new link! Thank you, WPMS Education Technician, for setting up this link for us!

The PTO held a General Membership meeting on Thursday, November 13th,

in the middle school auditorium. Standing committee reports were provided and the Read-a-thon parent survey results were discussed. Additionally, the constitution and by-laws received a passing vote from the general membership in attendance. A revised budget was presented and approved, which included the additional funds brought in by the Read-a-thon.

Remember to keep sending in those Boxtops, Campbells'

Labels, Tyson Labels, and used Ink Cartridges! The profit from each one of these programs truly does add up and directly benefit our schools!

The WPS PTO would like to wish everyone a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving Holiday!

