

THE BEAR FACTS



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow Supporters of WBHS:

The year is near end. During much of the year, I've shared words about the excellent work of some of our volunteers. There are about a half dozen PTSA volunteers who have given an amazing amount of time over several years of service. There will be difficult people to replace. Juanita Horrocks, our recommendation for Southeastern District PTA Volunteer of the Year, has averaged giving 15 hours a week for many years. Jim Staepel has been a right hand for Juanita, giving many hours often doing tasks without high visibility in the Bruin Café. Julia Walters has done a wonderful job with the Newsletter and webpage. Karen Gometz has been a "on the mark" treasurer, and done an amazing job. Connie Roberts worked "Spiritwear" for years before DECCA took on the task of the school store to market apparel items for WBHS. Louise Sullivan has been Second Vice President, and overseen the task of membership. All of these people have served in multiple volunteer roles, in the office, Bruin Café, parking and early dismissal passes, clinic volunteers, picture day and yearbook projects.

As we come to the end of the year, the Scholarship Committee has chosen two seniors for \$1,000 scholarships. They are Carter Gresham and Grace Zurschmit. We wish both of the graduates well as they continue their

education.

The officer positions have been filled for next year. Kym Parker will be serving as Second Vice President. Wren Wassel will be Treasurer, and she brings experience and precision. Kim Barbish will be our Recording Secretary. Ziette Hayes continues as First Vice President; Ziette is an amazing and gifted leader. Kym Pool will continue as Recording Secretary.

The PTSA works because of volunteers. While I have put before you the names of a half dozen volunteers who are exceptionally gracious with their time and energy, there are another 50 to 75 volunteers who give helpful presence to making good things happen. We have volunteers in the office every school day for four hours, 8:20 a.m. into lunch. It would be virtually impossible for a business with 200 employees and 2200 customers present to operate with one very good secretary. Lois Utt is amazing, but our volunteers increase Lois by 40% to 50%. Most of these volunteers serve one day per month, or an average of an hour a week. The Bruin Café requires about a half dozen volunteers on Thursday and ten volunteers every Friday. We could use more on Friday. There are many people who help with hospitality events, preparing a dish for a luncheon or a casserole for a breakfast;

these faithful people have stepped up to help when Cathy Haskett put out the plea. The PTSA works well because a half dozen people are willing to give three to fifteen hours per week. We need three or four more people willing to contribute considerable time next year. The PTSA doesn't need everyone to be like the Marines, "the few, the faithful and the proud." It doesn't take many of these folks who come with absolute devotion to do our task. We need a multitude of people willing to help an hour or two a month, or an hour a week. We need many people willing to prepare a casserole, or fruit, or cookies, or to assist a couple of times a year for several hours. If you are willing to serve as a Marine, active duty special assignment, or a reserve in the next year, please let me hear from you. My email is ministercbc@aol.com, and I'd love to hear from you about volunteering for the next year.

Larry Coleman
WBHS PTSA President





Dear Bruin Family Member:

As the old saying goes...time really does fly by. It seems like only yesterday that we were opening our doors to students to begin this school year and here we are only a few weeks away from our 43rd graduation ceremony. I could not be more proud of the accomplishments of our students and staff this school year!!

We have had a wonderful school year at "The Branch." I would like to personally thank the PTSA, parent volunteers, and other members of the Western Branch community for their continuing encouragement of our school programs. Parents and local businesses continue to support our academic and athletic programs with donations, sponsorship of programs, and with products at a reduced cost to the school. In addition, parent volunteers and booster clubs continue to back both our athletic teams and music programs. The success of our programs, both academic and athletic, is directly related to the support received from our parents and the local community. We appreciate all that you have done and will do in the future for Western Branch High School.

When students and staff return in September 2011, we will officially begin our first full school year after completion of our renovation. All classrooms have Smart Boards, LCD projectors, document cameras and a fully integrated data network. We are excited about the opportunity to better serve our students with the latest in educational technology.

To celebrate the completion of construction, we plan on hosting an open house Saturday, October 29, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This event follows the homecoming football game which will be played Friday, October 28th against Great Bridge High School. WBHS Alumni, former and current faculty members, and the entire Western Branch community are invited to attend. Please plan to join us as we celebrate this milestone at Western Branch High School.

Have a great summer and we look forward to working with you next school year.

Yours in Education,
John R. Sykes III



Dear Western Branch High School community,

This is my last newsletter for the Western Branch High School PTSA. While I am excited that my son is graduating and moving on to college and his future plans, I feel a sense of nostalgia knowing that I will no longer be involved in the creation and distribution of the WBHS PTSA newsletter.

I am so grateful to each and every one of you who contributed to the newsletter with articles and information, comments and criticism, and encouragement. The newsletter is only as good as the input provided by each of you.

Ron Dickerson will be the new newsletter/website chair beginning with the 2011-2012 school year. He has experience developing websites. I've seen some of his work and it is awesome. I know you will be as supportive to him as you've always been to me.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Best wishes to all for the success of your students in their future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Julia Walters

**HELP
WANTED**



2011-2012 Open Positions

Bruin Café Coordinator

Treasurer

Newsletter/Website

Recording Secretary

Volunteer Coordinator

Office Volunteer Coordinator

And many more!

Our goal is to match interested members with the current coordinators so that they can provide assistance for a smooth transition. Please contact any PTSA Board member or wbhsptsa@wbhsptsa.org if you are interested in learning more about serving on the WBHS PTSA!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 7 - Spring Sports Banquet

June 8 - Senior Party

June 10 - Senior Breakfast

June 10 - Graduation Practice

June 10 - Senior Awards Assembly

June 14 - 16 - Exams

June 16 - Senior Graduation Practice

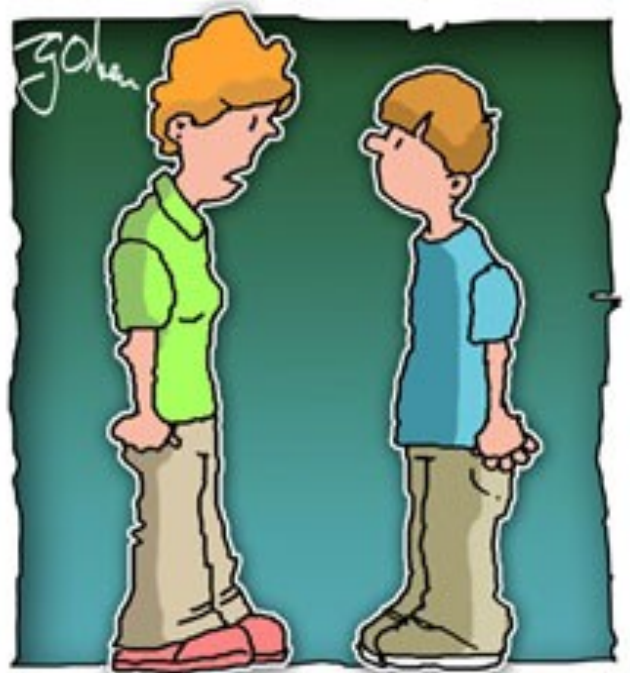
June 18 - Graduation 2011

June 19 - Father's Day

June 22 - Final Report Cards issued

Bruin Café

Dear Western Branch High School parents, students, faculty, and administrators,
This is my last year as Bruin Café Chairperson and I want to thank all of the wonderful volunteers. I must give a special thank you to **Jim Staepel** who has been my buyer and put up with me for all 4 years. Also thank you to **Louise Sullivan** who has been there most Thursdays and Fridays over the last several months. Thank you to **Julia Walters** and **Larry Coleman** for being there just about every Friday to support the Chick-Fil-A sales. I also want to thank all of the **National Honor Society** students who have gotten up early to come in and volunteer. A big thank you to my son, **Bradie**, who for 2 years got up early and to pick up the Chick-fil-a biscuits. I am proud to have been able to raise so much money for the school and will miss everyone greatly. Finally, I want to wish Louise Sullivan success as she takes over the Bruin Cafe.



"Let's not think of it as a summer job. Think about it as going from dependent to dependable."

Gary Olsen, Dubuque Schools, <http://www.garyolsen.com/cartoons/dependent225.jpg>

Summer Vacation



Community-Based Bullying Prevention: Tips for Community Members

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Often, it is repeated over time and can take many forms. Bullying is a common occurrence in the lives of children. Nearly every child will experience bullying at some time. Students report consistently high rates of frequent bullying in studies representative of urban, suburban, small-town, and rural schools. Between 15–25 percent of students are bullied and 15–20 percent report bullying others (Melton et al., 1998; Nansel et al., 2001).

Serious effects and school disruptions from bullying

Students and school staff know how destructive bullying can be within schools that do not consciously address the problem.

- Teasing and bullying were first on the minds of most children when asked what threatens their safety and emotional well-being (Kaiser Family Foundation & Children Now, 2001; Schoenberg et al., 2003).
- Victims of bullying have higher rates of anxiety and depression, and lower self-esteem even as adults.
- Bullying has been linked with serious school violence, shootings, and hazing incidents (Nansel et al., 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1998).
- Bullying behavior can be a sign of antisocial or violent tendencies that may lead to delinquent and criminal behaviors.

Adults are responsible for creating safe learning environments. When bullying is overlooked by adults, children and youth are less likely to report it because they expect nothing will be done.

Why bullying prevention needs to be community wide

Bullying, a common and harmful experience in many children's social development, is largely preventable. Community wide strategies can help to identify and support children who are bullied; redirect the behavior of children who bully; and change the attitudes of adults and youth who tolerate bullying behaviors in peer groups, schools, and communities.

Some of the benefits of a community wide approach are:

- Adults often fail to notice bullying. Children and youth report that bullying typically happens in unsupervised areas. The more adults who are watching for bullying, the better.
- Although much bullying happens at school, bullying doesn't stop at the schoolhouse door. It also occurs in the community—wherever children and youth gather.
- School-based bullying prevention programs benefit from input and support from the community. The commitment of parents and community members is vital to developing good programs and sustaining them over time.
- Bullying prevention messages are likely to be more effective if they come from many adults in a community—not just from educators and parents.

These and other materials are available online at: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

Community wide strategies to stop bullying

1. Involve youth, parents, professionals, and volunteers in promoting bullying prevention

- Engage a diverse group of parents, youth, and caring adults to explore how residents perceive the problem and what solutions they recommend.
- Be certain to involve youth at every stage in planning, implementing, and evaluating your bullying prevention efforts. That's the best way to tap into their world and know what will work.

- * Knowledge and resources already exist within your community. Seek out interested partners from a variety of sources: educators and guidance counselors, health and mental health professionals, child development and family centers, social service agencies, local police and law enforcement, neighborhood associations, high school students, colleges and universities, service organizations, faith-based organizations, volunteer groups, and businesses.
- * Keep in mind, that more than 70 public and private sector health and safety, mental health, education, faith-based, law enforcement, and youth-serving organizations are partners in the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign. They signed on to spread the message and promote community based coalitions. Consider contacting local chapters, members, and staff of the national associations and service organizations who are Campaign Partners (see Campaign Web site).

2. Assess strengths and needs in your community

- Study the problem locally to make informed decisions on prevention and intervention strategies.
- To coordinate the “right mix” of bullying intervention and prevention, you’ll need to describe the nature and extent of bullying in your community. Who is most affected? What kinds of bullying are most prevalent? Where does bullying occur? How responsive are children, youth, and adults to bullying that they observe?
- You’ll also want to assess what already is being done in your community to address bullying.
- Consider assessing your community and school needs using opinion surveys, interviews, focus groups, and open forums (i.e., convene meetings with community leaders, businesses, parent teacher associations, and churches).

3. Raise community awareness

Bullying is a complex problem that is often misunderstood. Don’t expect the entire community to be well-informed. Some believe the myth that bullying is a normal part of growing up. It is critical to raise community awareness about bullying and dispel common myths. The groundwork for a local awareness campaign is already done. The Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) National Bullying Prevention Campaign gives you information and dynamic, multimedia resources to bring attention to the impact of bullying on young peoples’ lives,

“what works” in bullying prevention, and how to reinforce the Campaign’s message to “Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!” Everything you need to create a local media campaign is easily accessible and online in the Communications Kit at

www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov.

- Distribute printed materials. Reprint brochures and fact sheets; create newsletters; and add the Stop Bullying Now! logo to your own written materials and distribute them throughout your community.
- Encourage local radio stations, TV broadcasters, and newspapers to release the Campaign’s public service announcements during prime viewing times.

These and other materials are available online at: **www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov**

- Introduce tweens, 9- through 13-year-old youth, to the Campaign in schools, after-school programs, and community groups. Send them to the Web site to learn about bullying in games, polls, and the webisodes (animated comics), and solicit their ideas and reactions to the real-life tales of bullying.

4. Develop a comprehensive community strategy to address bullying

- Use the assessment results to define bullying, set goals, describe how the schools and broader community will prevent bullying, and respond to bullying incidents that occur.
- Advocate for appropriate anti-bullying and harassment policies in schools and other institutions.
- * Continually assess the effectiveness of your community’s efforts.

References and Resources

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Nansel, T., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simmons-Morton, B. & Schmidt, P. (2001). *Bullying behaviors among US youth*. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 285, 2094-2100.

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These and other materials are available online at: **www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov**



"This ceremony is not all about you.
It actually celebrates our teachers
who managed to teach you something
in spite of yourselves."

Gary Olsen, Dubuque Schools, www.dubuque.k12.ia.us



**Graphic Communications Class
And
Technology Student Associations**

The students in Ms. Leone's Graphic Communications class and the Technology Student Association screen printed over 200 shirts for the after prom party. The shirts were designed by Rachel Herlihy and Ashley Young. Jonathan Richardson led the production team working 20+ hours to complete this huge task. The shirts were very popular, as was the After Prom Party.



Request from the Media Center Staff

Due to budget cuts, we do not have funds to purchase as many magazines as we would like to have available for students and staff. Therefore, we would be happy to have any magazines that you have read and are ready to pass along. You or your child may drop them off during school hours.

Thank you!

GUIDANCE NOTES

RESOURCES:

Need a Lift? 2011, College Financial Aid Handbook sponsored by the American Legion
Also available on line by visiting: www.legion.org/needalift For more information call (888) 453-4466.

COLLEGE RESOURCES: TUITION ASSISTANCE:

www.collegeboard.com www.collegeboard.com
www.collegeanswer.com www.collegeanswer.com
www.princetonreview.com www.studentaid.ed.gov
www.VaWizard.org www.collegesavings.org
www.explorevirginiacolleges.com www.fastweb.com
www.virginiamentor.org www.finaid.org www.gocollege.com www.meritaid.com
Take a virtual tour of many colleges across the country by visiting: www.campustours.com

SUMMER PROGRAMS:

See Mrs. E. Bell in the Guidance Department for more information.

OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST:

ALL Students: Exchange program. Become an AFS Exchange Student. Contact www.studyabroadafs.org or call 1-800-AFS-INFO for more information.

ALL Students: Exchange Program. ASSE International Student Exchange Program. Contact asseusaeast@asse.com or call 1-800-677-2773 for more information.



Guidance Info

The Guidance Bulletin contains the following information regarding scholarships currently being advertised as well as other valuable information for parents and students. You can view the entire Guidance Bulletin on the WBHS website under Guidance.

Scholarships Currently Being Advertised:

Mail by:

June 10 F. Ludwig Diehn Chorus Scholarship. Student must attend TCC and take MUS137/237, GPA 2.5, merit based, audition.

June 18 Abbott and Fenner Scholarship Program. Essay, apply on line at <http://www.abbottandfenner.com/scholarships.htm>.

No Deadlines or various deadlines listed for:

Navy NROTC Scholarships www.nrotc.navy.com or call 1-800-NAV-ROTC

Old Dominion University Army ROTC. www.odu.edu/armyrotc or 683-3671 for more information.



Texting While Driving: Parents' Role in Prevention

By Randy Craig, Editorial Manager

Distracted driving has become such a safety threat that the U.S. Department of Transportation called a summit to address the issue September 30. One of the results was a DOT promise to work with Congress to:

Permanently restrict the use of cell phones and other electronic devices in rail operations

Ban text messaging and restrict use of cell phones by truck drivers and interstate bus operators

Ban school bus drivers convicted of texting while driving from holding commercial driver's licenses.

Federal action won't solve the problem overnight. But drivers and parents of drivers can act now to reduce the dangers of distracted driving, especially **texting while driving**.

The problem of texting while driving is especially critical among teen drivers. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data show that the age group with the greatest proportion of distracted drivers was the under-20 age group.

David Melton, director of transportation consulting services for the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety, said the first thing parents can do is discuss texting with their

kids. Do they know just how much their kids text now? Melton said parents should look at the phone bill and bring the issue of texting while driving to their teens' attention.

The most important thing parents can do—which not many parents are doing, apparently—is setting a good example for safe driving, Melton said. A Liberty Mutual Insurance survey showed that 69 percent of parents of teen drivers practice at least two dangerous or distracting behaviors while driving. Nearly half perform at least three distracting behaviors such as texting. Dads are especially guilty, as 75 percent of fathers surveyed admitted they were guilty of at least two distracting behaviors while driving.

“Young kids have seen us exhibit bad behaviors,” Melton said. “No matter what we tell them about safe driving how can they believe we're serious about it? We must become good examples. Teens get safe driving examples from many sources but no one more than mom or dad.”

Parents can also encourage driving safety by making cell phone use practical, Melton said. Some tips on **safe driving and cell phone use**:

When you know your teen might be driving, don't just call to visit.

Before starting the content of a call, ask the teen if she is driving. If she is, tell her to pull over and call her back.

If you need to talk to your teen, make the call short. Don't have emotional conversations or make critical decisions over the cell phone.

Tools are available for parents to promote safe driving. The Students Against Destructive Decisions group offers a **safe driving contract** that parents and their children can sign to encourage safe driving.

Melton encourages parents to perform a “**commentary drive**,” an exercise with their teen drivers to reinforce the dangers of texting while driving. The parent should drive with the teen in the passenger seat and take an unfamiliar route. The teen should start texting and, at the same time, describe two things:

- what he or she sees
- how he or she would respond.

Parents should pay attention to the potential hazards the child is missing—a hidden driveway, children playing near the street, etc.—and point them out to the teen.

“Everybody thinks they can multitask. Research proves we're not as adept as we think,” Melton said.

PTAs can encourage driving safety by linking parents with these tips and safe driving tools, Melton said. They can also advocate “intolerance” for texting while driving and other distracted driving behaviors exhibited by school bus drivers or other employees on school business.

“Most experts agree make that you make more decisions while driving than at any other time of the day. To slow down, to speed up involves multiple decisions and you make hundreds and hundreds of decisions every mile,” Melton said. “If any of those decisions are made or not made while distracted they can indeed lead to an emergency where you may get out of it or you may not.”

What about driver education and training? Melton said there really isn't much more education that can be done, as safe driving training is fairly prevalent and readily available. The key is making safe driving a habit and an expectation.

“I really believe that people know how to drive safely but they choose not to,” he said. “If they choose not to you don't have a training problem you have management problem. And in a family guess who the managers are? Mom and dad.”