



What's Happening in Wilson County Schools

Wilson County Schools
Monthly Newsletter

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James M. (Mike) Davis
Wilson County Director of
Schools

A Message from the Director of Schools

As we begin a new year with resolutions to meet future goals, we need to take a moment to reflect on the past year with a sense of accomplishment for those goals we met in 2007. Completing the building projects at Watertown Elementary, Rutland Elementary, Stoner Creek Elementary, and Wilson Central High School; bringing the transportation department back in house, and purchasing property for the construction of a new Lebanon High School are a few of the goals achieved last year. Our schools continued to meet their attendance and academic achievement goals during 2007 and are already laying the foundation for a successful 2008-2009 school year. Yes, we did have a successful year in 2007 and now we must turn our focus to even greater success in 2008.

The rapid growth in student population will continue to be a driving force that will shape our priorities for several years to come. Growth presents the Wilson County School District with several challenges that can become opportunities to improve our schools. We must remain committed to academic excellence as we strive to improve our facilities and expand our building program. We must also commit to improving teacher pay and the salaries of our non-certified personnel to ensure that they are competitive with our neighboring school systems in order to retain our best and most experience staff members. We will need to work even harder to develop a more rigorous curriculum to meet the new and higher achievement goals required by No Child Left

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Seven Ways to Reinvigorate Your Teaching Midyear

The beginning of the school year is behind us. This is a good time to stop for a moment and think about our teaching. Are we in a rut with too much routine and not enough energy? Are there any practices that we need to review and improve? And how about our students? Do they need to be reenergized and reengaged for the second half of the year? Will we be working with a new group? If so, what adjustments will we need to make? As you start the second part of the year, here are seven strategies you will want to consider, whether you have all new students or will continue with the same group of groups.

REARRANGE THE CLASSROOM—new traffic patterns, new visual perspectives

Patterns, new visual perspectives, and new spatial relationships can nurture new perspectives and new patterns of behavior for you and your students.

TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT YOUR STUDENTS—focus on students' differences, strengths, interests, and potential. Pledge to leave behind the experiences and conflicts of the past.

SELECT A NEW APPROACH OR TEACHING STRATEGY TO HELP YOU DEVELOP COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE—search particularly for techniques and strategies that help you better reach and relate to the types of students with whom



You have struggled or those who have struggled with you and learning.

TAKE A SPECIFIC ACTION TO LIFT YOUR SPIRITS AND INCREASE YOUR REPERTOIRE OF PROFESSIONAL SKILLS—you're likely to find new energy and a new sense of mission as you learn with colleagues, reflect on shared experiences, and analyze problems together.

FIND SOME TIME TO OBSERVE IN THE CLASSROOM OF A RESPECTED AND SKILLED TEACHING COLLEAGUE—get together afterward to learn more about the ideas, techniques, and strategies you observed and would like to adopt or adapt for your own use.

DEVELOP THE HABIT OF SAYING SOMETHING POSITIVE TO AT LEAST ONE STUDENT EVERY DAY ABOUT HIS OR HER LEARNING, CLASS CONTRIBUTION, ATTITUDE, OR ACTIONS—you will be surprised at the way students' reactions will motivate you and them—and how the climate in your room will improve.

FIND SOMEONE TO HELP OR MENTOR—maybe a new teacher who is struggling to find his or her professional stride or a student who is interested in the teaching profession.

The effective teacher knows that every educator needs to renew and reinvigorate his or her teaching. Doing so will involve self-reflection—a good thing!



Wilson County School Notes



Director's January Message (continued)

Behind (NCLB) and the State Department of Education. We will continue to build on the work that has already been initiated with Middle Schools and High Schools That Work. A renewed commitment to improve and update our technology is needed in order to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum. As we undertake these challenges, we must resolve that we will accept no less than the best from our students, our colleagues and ourselves.

With the aforementioned comments in mind, I would like to ask each of you to join with me in making this our best year ever as we continue to build partnerships throughout our community and provide a world class education for the boys and girls of Wilson County.

Wilson County Art Exhibit at Cumberland University

Cumberland University will sponsor the fourth annual In Process: Wilson County High School Art Exhibition Feb. 19-March 14. In Process will feature the works of students attending high schools in Wilson County, and will be on display in the Edward E. and Gemma Gause Adams Gallery located in the June and Bill Heydel Fine Arts Center on the University campus in Lebanon. There will be a reception for the student artists on Tuesday, Feb. 26 from 5:30-7:30 pm with awards being given during this time.

Third grade class works to aid Humane Association



Jennifer Sloan's 3rd grade Mt. Juliet Elementary class collected wish list items for the Wilson County Humane Association as part of their December learning project.

Sloan and her students met at the Providence PetSmart to deliver their donated items on adoption day at the store. One of her students and family adopted "Elvis" while there.

Lebanon High's FCCLA off to running start with projects

Lebanon High School FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) started off the school year running. Over \$1000 was made in fundraising activities for the many trips and service projects planned. Several members attended the state meeting centering on "Synergy" at the Nashville Convention in August. The students took away several important ideas such as effective leadership, membership building and others. Money raised also enabled eight club members

to attend the National FCCLA Cluster Meeting in Atlanta.

Before the Christmas break, several students created and delivered Christmas stockings to 52 patients at Quality Health Care.

In February, several club members will compete in the District STARS events at Tennessee Tech University. Students will also be attending the State Leadership Meeting at the Opryland Hotel. This will be a wonderful opportunity to see Parliamentary Procedure in action.

FCCLA is the only student organization with "family" as its central focus. National membership numbers well over 100,000 students.

Wilson Central's FFA making great strides



The Wilson Central High School chapter of the FFA has been chartering many successes so far this 2007-08 school year.

Some of their accomplishments include:

The Agriculture Issue's Team placed 5th in the nation in October at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis.

The Soil Judging Team placed 5th in the region and will compete in Oklahoma at the National Land Judging Contest in May.

The Horse Judging Team placed 3rd in the state.

Ten students at WCHS will receive their state FFA degree in the spring, which is the highest degree that can be bestowed on an FFA member at the state level.



Wilson Central will have five American Degree recipients which is the highest degree that can be bestowed on an FFA member at the national level. Less than 3% of all FFA members across the nation receive the American degree.

Twenty Wilson Central students will apply for proficiency awards this spring and will also compete in several career development events.



Wilson Central's FFA is also making strides to overcome illiteracy by participating in PLOW (Passing Literacy Onward), a national program designed to help FFA chapters make a difference in their local communities in the area of reading.



Spotlight This Month: Watertown High School



Watertown Elementary stages egg drop



Jeff Luttrell
Principal



Terry Thompson
Assistant Principal

A potentially messy experiment captivated students on Thursday, November 29. Mrs. Mitzi Smith's 6th grade science classes put on an Egg Drop demonstration from the top of the upper grade building as they dropped wrapped and padded eggs onto the ground 30 ft. below.

Students were required to construct containers no bigger than a shoe box. They then packed the egg in different materials so that it would hopefully not break. Students were awarded points for speed and smaller containers.

Zach Edwards used paper towels and toilet paper bound with rubber bands to successfully cushion his egg. Alice Wilkerson's container of two egg carton bottoms and cotton padding didn't work. "The students have been learning about energy conversions and the law of conservation of energy," Smith said.

The principle behind the Egg Drop is that all moving objects have kinetic energy. The faster an object moves, the more kinetic energy it has. When an object hits the ground, the law of conservation of energy requires that energy be transferred to another object or changed into another form of energy.



WATERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Address: 515 West Main Street

Principal: Jeff Luttrell

Assistant Principal: Terry Thompson

Number of teachers: 28

Number of students: 495

Grade levels: 9-12

Mascot: Purple Tiger

School colors: Purple and white

Watertown High School is located in a rural area of eastern Wilson County. It is named after the community of Watertown, the municipal where the school is located. The school's history dates back to 1909, when the two communities of Watertown and Cherry Valley joined and built a school at the present site of Watertown High School. When the school officially opened in 1911, there were 325 pupils from primary grades through high school. A special school district was created in 1921, which separated Watertown from the rest of the Wilson County School System. In the late 1970's, the Watertown Special School District merged with the Wilson County School System.

The educational programs of WHS are based on the philosophy that the school's primary purpose is to provide the environment and the learning experiences that will assist all students in physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth. It is the school's responsibility to join with parents, students, and community in determining appropriate goals to meet the needs of individual student, while helping to build the foundations for production and a satisfying life in our democratic society.

MISSION STATEMENT: Believing that well educated citizens, responsible, independent, and aware of basic values in a free and democratic society are essential, the school dedicates itself to developing these citizens by motivating students to reach goals that enables personal fulfillment and worthwhile contribution to society, furthermore it is the responsibility of the school to teach the basic concepts of the role of democracy in a world community and to impress upon every student the responsibilities and privileges of the individual in the global society.



Ways of Handling #*%@%\$ Make-up Work

Whenever possible put directions for assignments, projects, or homework in writing, being as explicit in your directions as possible. You might also notify parents that this is the practice as well. This avoids possible misunderstandings as well as saving you time in giving directions to absent students. Be sure to save a copy for next year.

Every teacher faces the challenge of getting students who were absent caught up with missed assignments. Over the course of the year this task can consume huge amounts of time that might be better allocated to other duties. Here are some ideas teachers have found helping in dealing with this problem:

- ◆ For each subject or class you teach, attach a clipboard to the wall. Each day hang copies of the next day's assignments on the clipboard. Absent students (or students who lose theirs) can pick them up as needed.
- ◆ For projects in which a product is to be produced, first demonstrate what is to be done, then post directions along with a sample. Save some of the best projects to use next year as models. This helps clarify your expectations and gives students an idea of what level is expected.
- ◆ At the beginning of the year assign each student a partner. Have them exchange phone numbers. If one is absent, the other is responsible for gathering assignments, handouts,

or materials and helping the partner catch up when he or she returns. Ninety percent of your students will successfully handle this. You may still have to help the other 10% get caught up, but this saves you a huge amount of time dealing with others.

- ◆ Make a large calendar with numbers 1 to 31 for the days of the month. Laminate it so it can be reused. Each day write the day's assignments. Absent students can check missed assignments quickly.
- ◆ As you give oral directions to the class, tape record them. Pencil the day's date and class on the tape and file in a box. Students who are absent that day listen to the taped directions when they return.
- ◆ If there are handouts involved for make-up work, put the date on them and the student's name. Then, on a designated spot on the bulletin board, tack the handouts and/or any assignment for each student absent that day.
- ◆ Develop a homework form to record the exact assignments for absent students. The student's partner or another responsible student should fill out the form with the missing assignments.
- ◆ Keep a homework notebook. Have a separate section for each class. Each day record what work was done in class

and any homework assignment with an special directions. Also, include copies of any handouts needed. When students return after being absent, they are responsible for checking the homework notebook.

- ◆ Tape five small cardboard boxes together to

make a large mailbox with five compartments. Label the dividers with the days of the school week. As you give out each day's assignment, place any leftover photocopies into that day's slot. When students return from being absent, they are responsible for gathering the necessary materials from the mailbox.

Local Schools Making News

West Elementary donates food to Big Brothers



West Elementary conducted a food drive prior to Christmas break. The school collected 4,875 non-perishable food items. Over 297 families were helped through their donations to the Wilson County Big Brothers. Below are pictured some of the students participating in the food drive.

Mt. Juliet Middle School to celebrate History Day

History Day will be celebrated at Mt. Juliet Middle School tomorrow. Eighth grade students will have exhibits, documentaries, performances, research papers, and websites in com-

Regional History Day at MTSU in March, and Tennessee story Day in May at the University of Memphis.

Reading Partners at Carroll Oakland Elementary



At Carroll Oakland Elementary, Mary Singleton's kindergarten class and Lisa Henderson's 5th grade class have become reading partners. Once a week Henderson's students pair up with Singleton's kindergartners to help them read or look for words in the stories. It has become a special shared time for both grades.



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Newsletter in conjunction with
The New Teacher Support Program
Terry Edwards, Program Coordinator



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WWW.WCSCHOOLS.COM

... people say "mind your p's and q's" when they want you to be careful?

There are two equally plausible explanations for this saying. The first deals with the problems children have with the alphabet.

When children write letters, they sometimes get their lowercase *p*'s and *q*'s mixed up and write words like cu-qboard and puit instead of cupboard and quit. To help them avoid such mistakes, teachers of old used to admonish them to "mind their *p*'s and *q*'s".

The second explanation traces the origin back to old English pubs where the number of pints and quarts of ale consumed by a patron were kept on a chalkboard under the heading *p*'s and *q*'s. When a patron had accumulated a high number of marks, he was reminded by the barkeeper to "mind his *p*'s and *q*'s."

For a Laugh: You might be a teacher if....

- you have no time for a life from August to June.
- you want to slap the next person who says, "Must be nice to work from 8 to 3 and have your summers free!"
- when out in public you feel the urge to talk to strange children and correct their behavior.
- you refer to adults as "boys and girls."
- you encourage your spouse by telling them they are a "good helper."
- you've ever had your profession slammed by someone who would never dream of doing your job.
- meeting a child's parents instantly answers the question, "Why is this kid like this?"
- you believe "extremely annoying" should have its own box on the report card.
- you know a hundred good reasons for being late.

