

# Western Reserve Hi-Lights

## September 2011

### **From the Principal- Mrs. Mahoney**

School is off to a great start! It is hard to believe that summer is almost gone but the cool weather reminds us that fall is just around the corner. We are grateful that our very caring bus drivers have already completed Bus Safety classes with K-3 students. Bus drivers have also practiced evacuation drills with students should the need arise to exit the bus rapidly.

A number of safety drills are required for the safety of our students. We have already had two fire drills and a tornado drill. Students should know what to do no matter where they are in the building. We will be having a "lock down" drill shortly in which students practice what to do if an intruder enters the building.

Teachers are busy teaching reading, writing and math. The basics are here to stay but we also have several other subjects to teach. The 2011- 2012 school year has brought an increase in the technology available to classrooms. WRE teachers decided last year that instead of adopting new science books for a curriculum that was changing, we could put available monies to better use by purchasing much needed technology. As a result, all classrooms from grades 3-6 have either a Smart Board or a Polyvision board in the room. There are three Smart Boards for second grade and one for first grade. Kindergarten students have access to a Smart Cube which has amazing activities for young children. Teachers are in the process of learning to use or increasing their technology skills to increase learning. Students enjoy being actively involved in instruction with the Smart Boards of Polyvision Boards.

The state of Ohio has adopted Common Core standards which will change some of the content for each grade level. The Common Core standards are shared with most of the other 50 states. On the September 12 Professional Development day teachers began examining the differences in the two set of standards. As we become familiar with the new standards, we will be able to select future textbooks and materials that are aligned with the new set of standards.

Teachers and staff are also busy planning field trips and cultural activities for students to enhance their academic instruction. Many special activities including Once Upon a Time Day and Celebrate the Arts Day are planned for October

### **The Early Intervention Center**

Sometimes it seems that our youngest learners are expected to learn what used to be first grade content. Changing curriculum standards do indeed place high expectations on our youngest students. This year WRE is piloting an intervention program based on developmental needs. Seven or eight kindergarten students rotate through centers every thirty minutes which are based on skills needed to be successful in school but give students the opportunity to be children. Fine motor stations may include cutting straight lines on paper or making objects with clay or play dough to strengthen muscles. Other students may be sorting alphabet letters so they can learn to classify objects. Other students may be placing magnetic letters on a magnetic board in the correct sequence. All of the students enjoy

building with the magna tiles. While this activity is fun for them they are increasing their visual spatial awareness, a skill needed for many academic tasks. Students working on puzzles are practicing their visual perception skills.

Kindergarten students will also have the opportunity to work with a “Smart Cube” table which will be loaded with early childhood activities. The children don’t have to be seated for these activities. Many enjoy standing at the tables and using their gross motor skills to complete some tasks. There will be many various centers throughout the year. All will target necessary skills in a developmentally appropriate manner.

## **October Professional Development**

A quick check of the October calendar will indicate that there are two days when students do not have school: October 10 & 14. Teachers will have Professional Development on those days. On October 10, teachers will go to Norwalk to learn about the effects of poverty on learning and what teachers can do to help children who are struggling with the effects of poverty. Western Reserve Elementary has an almost 50 % poverty rate which is considered to be medium to high poverty. As a professional staff, we need to understand the effects of poverty in order to help our students. October 14 will be used to examine the new CORE standards that Ohio has adopted. We join most of the other states in a common curriculum. Teachers will be analyzing changes and deciding how to best implement the new standards.

## **Thank You to a Caring Community**

The beginning of a new school year can be an exciting time. It can also be a very stressful time for parents/ guardians because of all of the expense involved in sending children back to school and buying supplies. The Western Reserve community has once again stepped up to the plate with many donations of school supplies to the school. Churches, organizations and several individual families have donated greatly needed school supplies. One local church donated school supplies and book bags. Many delighted students received book bags filled with school supplies. WRE has always benefited from the kindness and generosity of the community. Teachers and staff are fortunate to work in such a caring community. Thank you !

## **A Few Reminders**

- The breakfast program has started. Students may have breakfast beginning at 8:45 a.m. for \$1.25.
- Car riders should not be dropped off before 8:45 a.m. Supervision in the classrooms is not available until then. School starts at 9:00 a.m.
- Please call the school by 9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent. The school is mandated to call your home and/or place of work to notify parents of an absence if we have not been notified.
- Please make sure that all contacts are updated and current. Calls from the school are placed through the One Call service and use the contact numbers provided on the Emergency form.
- Students who qualify for free lunch will not have to pay book fees.
- Most forms parents need are available on the school web-site including Free and Reduced lunch forms.

**September Students of the Month**  
**Congratulations and thank you for making our school a better place to learn.**

Kamryn Lierenz  
Amber Greco  
Matt Jarrett  
Ava Tweto  
Lizzie Jackson  
Katie Layport  
Kelsie Saylor

