

WES PRINCIPAL NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 5, 2016

What is happening at WES?

It has been a busy start to the summer at Wells Elementary. I cannot thank our staff enough for their commitment and dedication to the success of our school. This longstanding idea that teachers “have summers off” could not be further from the truth. Teachers tutor, teach summer schools, take professional coursework to seek out advanced degrees or simply because this profession requires coursework for continuing education hours. Also, given a new math initiative, teachers have attended and continue to attend professional development in the summer relative to the Eureka Math program. What I know is I have met with at least 30 staff members thus far this summer, seeking feedback into what has worked well and what areas we could improve upon. The conversations have been highly productive, positive, and centered around what is best for kids. I have been in many schools and cannot recall being as impressed at the onset of my tenure with staff as I am here. This includes front office staff, ed techs, custodial staff, as well as teachers. Why – Because we are a team! If this trend continues, we will truly become the best school in the state. In my experience, enthusiasm, work ethic, and a love for this profession cannot be taught. Teachers do what they do because they believe all students will be successful and it is incumbent upon them to inspire students achieve beyond what they once thought was possible!

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (P.B.I.S.)

Why is this necessary?

Please read below:

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we
teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we...
...teach? ...punish?”

(Herner, PBIS)

As adults, we cannot assume that all students know all of our expectations at all times. We often take this for granted. That is why expectations must be taught. We must explicitly teach expectations, rules, procedures, and routines in a way that is developmentally appropriate for respective grade levels. I have found that all students want to do their best to behave but sometimes do not completely understand expectations within a school. A structured environment is not only helpful it is essential. When students know what is expected of them, there is a sense of pride taken in their accomplishments. When classes all know what is expected of them, they achieve collaborative success as a team. When schools all know what is expected of them, the expectations become standard operation procedure. However, we must not ever think that the process is intuitive. Students thrive in structured learning environments

and it is our job to ensure that all students know what is expected of them in all areas throughout the school so that they become confident and know that we are helping them achieve great success. It is the mission of the staff to catch students doing great things and subsequently rewarding such behaviors. This could be helping a friend, cleaning up a tray that fell in cafeteria, picking up paper that fell on the ground, and any and all instances of demonstrating great citizenship that exemplify the core values of WES.

Updates on P.B.I.S.

We already have over 20 staff members who have volunteered to be on this committee! (I only asked for volunteers 2 days ago.) This is impressive!

What will this committee do over the summer?

PBIS Committee:

- 1) Devising Lesson Plans for teaching expectations to students
- 2) Reviewing staff feedback on schoolwide expectations on various slides to develop revise/edit expectations to ensure all rules are developmentally appropriate and concise.
- 2) Developing the campus currency - (on card stock) creating logo on business card size laminated cut outs to be provided to each staff member. 30 per staff member, put rubber band on each set and place in mailboxes. (These will be called Owl Dollars or something else and will be the official WES currency for incentives.)
- 3) Devising a comprehensive list of all possible incentives for students.
- 4) Preparing a survey for students at the beginning of the year to gain their insights into what are incentives that would be best to provide for the Owl Dollars they earn. Ultimately it is for the students and their input here is the most important.
- 5) Devise a list of monthly hour long incentives to celebrate positive behavior for the month. (these are school-wide activities only offered if a student does not have a discipline referral)
- 6) After all slides are finalized, we will need to laminate and cut out posters to post around the school for our campus wide expectations in all common areas.
- 7) Partnering with our parents and community via newsletters, PBIS slideshows, and working to make this the best possible program this can be when school starts.

There is also much more to accomplish when school starts!

Meeting with Ledgemere Bus Company:

Ken Spinney and I met with representatives from Ledgemere Bus Company to collaborate on best practices, bus expectations, and to collaboratively develop a plan for incentivizing positive behavior. We will meet again on August 23rd with all bus drivers! This meeting is crucial to the success of the program, and I am confident we will see exemplary bus behavior this year.

Each bus is now equipped with four disks on a binder ring – the back of the ring reflects the student's bus number.

Bus drivers will have the opportunity to recognize, report, and REWARD great bus behavior by handing out **up to four** of these disks, **each morning** to your WES riders.

- Behaviors on the bus ride home the preceding day should be reflected in the number of disks awarded in the morning
- 4 disks should reflect that the bus behavior was exceptional.

Students will turn them into the office as they enter the school.

- Driver will vary students who are tasked with bringing the disks to the office so that all will have turns and everyone feels like they are a valued component of their bus' team.
- A counter bead or marble will be placed in their "Bus Jar", located in the Office for each disk awarded. Busses will be recognized for leading the race in beads by the WES Staff and Mr. Roche as well as Mr. Spinney, using a variety of incentives.
- The disks will be returned to each bus in the afternoon, to be redistributed again if warranted.

There will be an incentive, a pizza party or other reward, provided to the bus that works collaboratively as a team to display positive behavior routinely and fills their bus jar up first! Then we will reset the incentive program and have round 2. This will transform bus behavior!

Next Newsletter will Include:

- **an update from our PTSA from the PTSA President**
- **A Preliminary Meeting Date for the Parent Advisory Council**
- **Beginning of the Year Events and Important dates**
- **Updates on Current Initiatives**
- **Dates for Principal Parent Forums (offered once per month in the evening)**

Have a great weekend!