

# HILLTOP SCHOOL NEWS

Published By The Westmont Hilltop School District

Fall 2003

## Westmont Hilltop Endowment Fund

The establishment of a permanent Endowment Fund has given the school a new resource to support the needs of students and the school community. The Endowment is funded by tax-deductible donations that are invested to earn interest. Gifts may be designated by alumni, community members, and faculty for specific purposes or causes that are dear to them; or the gifts may be undesignated so that they will be available for use as needs arise in the future.

The Class of 2003 was the first to contribute as a class to the Endowment, donating a gift that will extend the



resources of Westmont Hilltop School District in perpetuity. We thank the Class of 2003 for its generous contribution.

The Westmont Hilltop School District Endowment Fund is being held at the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. Donations can be addressed to the Westmont Hilltop School District Endowment Fund at 216 Franklin Street, Suite 606, Johnstown, PA 15901 or placed on line at [www.cfalleghenies.org](http://www.cfalleghenies.org). For more information, call 536-7741 or follow the link to the Endowment from the District's Web Page at <http://westy.jtwn.k12.pa.us>.

## No Child Left Behind

The Federal Legislation known as the No Child Left Behind Act requires policy changes and multiple notifications to all parents annually as well as when special circumstances arise. One way in which we are working to ensure that no child is left behind is through the establishment of strong ties with families that encourage partnerships with the school and parental involvement in all aspects of students' educational preparation. Parental involvement policies are being developed and revised to provide forums for parental input in building level and district level decision-making. Parents will be advised of the legislation and new policy through annual notifications that are required by the Act.

In one such notification, parents and

community will receive annual notices of the academic progress of a variety of different subgroups of our population relative to adequate yearly progress goals.

**For Example: To make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2003, each school's spring 2003 PSSA scores must indicate:**

Minimum of 45% of all students

demonstrating a proficient performance or better in Reading;

**AND**

Minimum of 45% of students in all defined subgroups with 75 students or more demonstrating a proficient performance or better in Reading;

**AND**

Minimum of 35% of all students

*continued on page 2*

### School Cancellations Posted on the Web

Visit <http://www.cancellations.com> for school closings, delays, and related announcements on the Internet. This information is also available compliments of WJAC TV at <http://www.wjactv.com/closings/> and through local media resources. The W.I.N. phone line is no longer active for school closings.

## No Child Left Behind

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demonstrating a proficient performance or better in Mathematics;

**AND**

Minimum of 35% of students in all defined subgroups of 75 students or more demonstrating a proficient performance or better in Mathematics;

**AND**

PSSA/PASA participation rate of 95% or higher as a whole and in all defined subgroups.


Districts and schools who fail to meet

the above criteria can still make Adequate Yearly Progress if they achieve safe harbor. This is achieved by reducing the percent of non-proficient students by at least 10% and meeting the threshold for the other indicators.

Spring 2002 PSSA and Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) scores are the baseline measure.

All districts and schools will be held accountable for reaching state-specified levels of "Percent of Proficient or Better

Performances" on the specified assessments to meet Adequate Yearly Progress.

Districts and schools whose baseline already meets or exceeds the 2003 AYP goal must work toward the subsequent years' goals so that all students reach the proficient level in reading and mathematics by 2014. The district has met or exceeded all target goals for No Child Left Behind for 2003-2004. 

## Westmont Hilltop Students Excel Academically

All students in Pennsylvania in grades 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 participated in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) during the 2002-2003 school year. This test is used on a statewide basis to ensure that our students are making progress in meeting the academic standards in reading, mathematics, and writing. As the chart reveals, we have every reason to be proud of the academic accomplishments of our students. In all areas and in every grade level tested, Westmont Hilltop students have exceeded state averages in mathematics, reading, and writing. Whereas in past years, district students' scores were compared to state averages and the averages of schools considered as similar in community type and socio-economic background, resulting in a range of scores, referred to as the "Similar Schools Band," the focus of the analysis has changed as a result of No Child Left Behind legislation. This year, all districts are asked to analyze their data relative to the established annual goals. Students are categorized into one of four categories: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. The ultimate goal specified in No Child Left Behind is that

"ALL STUDENTS" will reach proficiency by the year 2014. Benchmarks have been established on a yearly basis. The goal for 2003 is to have 45% of all students achieve at the proficient or advanced

levels in reading and 35% of all students score at the advanced levels in mathematics. In every grade level tested, our students have exceeded the initial goals as shown in the chart below.


### 2003 PSSA/NCLB Goals Compared to WHSD Students' Achievement

Pennsylvania's Advanced and Proficiency Goals for Reading in 2003	Reading Achievement Grade 5	Reading Achievement Grade 8	Reading Achievement Grade 11
Goal = 45%	64.4%	79.5%	69.0%

Pennsylvania's Proficiency Goals for Math in 2003	Mathematics Achievement Grade 5	Mathematics Achievement Grade 8	Mathematics Achievement Grade 11
Goal = 35%	67.3%	72.1%	62.9%

### The Class of 2003 and the SAT I

It is noteworthy that 92% of the Class of 2003 took at least one SAT examination. This is a much higher

percentage than most districts experience—evidence of the high value students in our district place on their post-high school aspirations. 

	District	PA	National
SAT I Verbal	508	500	507
SAT I Math	523	502	519



# New Faculty Introductions

## Introducing Mrs. Jennifer Kresak



Mrs. Jennifer Kresak

Mrs. Jennifer Kresak is a new addition to the faculty of our district, although she is not new to the district or community. Mrs. Kresak received her certification from Salisbury State University where, in 1993, she was selected as "most outstanding Elementary Education major." She was a long-term substitute in our district, teaching in grade 4 as well as in the learning support classes at the elementary and high schools. Before that, she earned five years' teaching experience in Maryland. She is currently pursuing her master's degree.

When asked whether she had a message of introduction to send to the Westmont Hilltop Community, Mrs. Kresak replied, *"I am excited and proud to be a part of the Westmont Hilltop faculty. When I first moved to this area, I chose to live in the Westmont Hilltop School District for my own children. The faculty, administration, and programs are excellent, and I will strive to maintain this excellence with my students."*

## Introducing Mrs. Suzanne Updyke



Mrs. Suzanne Updyke

We have new IDEA funding (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) that has allowed us to acquire a special education teacher at the high school at no cost to the district. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act will completely cover the salary and benefits of a learning support teacher for the district. Through the transfer of entity agreement we have with the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center, Mrs. Updyke has joined our faculty.

Mrs. Updyke holds a Master's in Education of the Exceptional Child, earned in December of 1992 from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is certified in Special Education K-12 and is certified to teach hearing impaired students as well. She had been a learning support teacher at GJCTC from 1993 to 2003. Prior to that, she worked for Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation in Johnstown for one year. In the past, she has served as ski club advisor and has led mentoring program activities.

Mrs. Updyke sends the following message of introduction to the Westmont Hilltop Community: *"I have had quite a positive experience during my first two months at Westmont. In particular, I have been impressed by the overall attitudes of the students in terms of their desire to learn."*

## Introducing Mr. John T. Wood



Mr. John T. Wood

Mr. Wood is the new chemistry teacher at the high school. Mr. Wood has earned two master's degrees, one in Secondary Science Education (2002) and the other in

Computational Physical Chemistry (2001), both from the University of Pittsburgh. He earned his bachelor's with honors and high distinction from Penn State in May of 1996.

Mr. Wood won the High Performance Computing Award of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois in 1997 and the President's Freshman Award from Penn State in 1993. He is certified in high school chemistry in both Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The Scholastic Quiz Team is benefiting this year from Mr. Wood's willingness to become involved in student extra-curricular life from his first day on the job. He brings experience in coaching academic teams, as he has served as academic team advisor and NASA science project team consultant in his previous teaching experience in Smithsburg, Maryland.

When asked whether he had a special message for the community of Westmont Hilltop, Mr. Wood said, *"Moving into WESTY territory has been an overall great experience! Thanks to all the faculty and staff for a smooth transition and an even bigger 'THANK YOU' to my students for the warm welcome and for keeping me soooooooo busy!"*

## Sources of Funding

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the Westmont Hilltop School District will receive funding from federal sources as follows:

Title I, Part A	\$92,449
Title II, Part A, Class Size Reduction	\$44,534
Title II, Part D, Technology	\$ 2,175
Title V, Part A, Innovative Programs	\$ 6,755
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Grant	\$ 5,126

**Title I, Part A** provides our kindergarten Title I program. **Title II, Part A** Class Size Reduction provides a portion of an extra teacher's salary in the elementary school.

**Title II, Part D** contributes toward technology in-service training for faculty. **Title V, Part A** allows us to acquire technology hardware for classroom use.

**The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Grant** contributes toward the salaries of aides and compensation for tutoring services.

We will receive funding through the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** in the amount of \$170,761. A portion of the IDEA funds allowed the district to acquire a new special education teacher.



# Leadership Team Update

The Leadership Team of the Westmont Hilltop School District is at work on several important initiatives that will comprise the focus of the 2003-2004 school year. These are as follows:

**Strategic Planning Progression**—In January and February of this school year, representatives from the original subcommittees of the Strategic Plan will be invited to a mid-year review. The subcommittees comprised the five task force groups promoting the primary goals of the plan in the areas of 1) curriculum, 2) community partnerships, 3) technology, 4) staff development, and 5) safety. As many of the original planners as possible, including parents, board members, district employees, and business community representatives, will be called together to review the planning progression. A progress update will then be provided to the Pennsylvania Department of Education indicating our progress and including new mid-point requirements that have arisen as a result of No Child Left Behind legislation.

The plan serves as an overall guide to priorities and procedures that extend through the year 2006. Each member of the Leadership Team provides oversight for a subcommittee of the Strategic Planning process in order to ensure that all of the subordinate "Action Plans" of the Strategic Plan are carried out.

**Differentiated Supervision**—Teachers are involved in staff development according to their level of professional development and their adult learning needs. Obviously, new teachers need learning experiences that are different from those needed by staff members who have acquired greater levels of expertise and experience in their respective fields. The rationale for our differentiated supervision process is as follows:

*"We recognize that adult learners are in need of a process that will address their learning needs in ways that are appropriate and consistent with their developmental levels in the professional arena. Our goal is to establish a process of supervision that is diversified enough to meet the needs of each member of the*

*faculty. Our proposal is intended to address professional development with the intensity and priority that it deserves, with our ultimate goal, as always, the improvement of instruction and learning of students."*

Following a completion of a project designed to align the grades 8-12 music program, Ms. Beth Good, while still on sabbatical leave, presented the differentiated supervision project that she completed with Mrs. Kristen Santos to a group of teachers in Chicago. Three of our elementary teachers - Mrs. Denise Roberts, Mrs. Linda Orlosky, and Mrs. Lori Weeks - were asked to present their work on multiple intelligences to the faculty of the Southern Fulton School District. Through these brief examples that occurred within the first two months of this school year, and in many other significant ways, various differentiated supervision projects have extended beyond the walls of the WHSD each year since the pilot project was initiated in 2000.

**Staff Development Planning**—In-service for teachers will include work related to state standards in every academic area. Teachers will refine their planned courses so that a coherent K-12 curriculum is defined, with standards embedded at every grade level in developmentally appropriate phases. In-

service experiences will also involve training for teachers in CPR/AED utilization, PSSA preparation, peer collaboration, technology, legal issues in education, and strategies for adapting curriculum to meet the needs of various learners.

**Bullying Prevention**—The successful program developed at the middle and elementary schools in partnership with the Child and Adolescent Health and Wellness Council will now be extended to the high school under the title, "Positive Peer Interaction." Mr. William Marshall, our new high school principal, will spearhead this endeavor.

**Policy Development**—Approximately 40 district policies are under scrutiny and revision to reflect the new requirements of No Child Left Behind. Board members and administration are engaged in an intensive process of policy review. These policies will also be reflected in the Red and Gray as well as the student and faculty handbooks of the middle and elementary schools.

**PSSA Preparation and Review**—At all levels of the district, school board members and administrators are working to ensure that curriculum development is based on assessment of students' needs and longitudinal review of data. Core

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## Positive Peer Interaction Program Initiated at the High School

Positive Peer Interaction is a new program that is being introduced at the high school. This program is an extension of the Bullying Prevention program that has been conducted at the elementary and middle schools for the past three years. The program focuses on all social aspects of a student's day while at the high school.

The high school environment is one in which many social interactions occur daily. Students are faced with making difficult choices, stress levels are increased, and peer pressure is at a

maximum. Students need to be aware of how their words and actions impact others. The Positive Peer Interaction Program emphasizes these points specifically. Students are asked to respect others. They are asked to respect others' property and feelings. They are also held accountable for their words and actions.

The goal of the program is to promote a positive atmosphere within the building in an atmosphere where students can express differing opinions and attitudes - and feel comfortable in doing so. 🍌



## Leadership Team Update

Continued from page 4

competencies are under review as teachers work to ensure that each grade level builds upon the knowledge and skills presented in previous levels. District and building level "report cards" are under development, through which progress will be regularly reported to the community.

### Health, Safety, and Welfare—

Westmont Hilltop, along with the other Cambria County school districts, is participating in a "Lockdown" exercise during the first two weeks of November. A Lockdown is an emergency situation which would be implemented in the event school officials have reason to believe that there is the potential for immediate danger to one or more of the district schools from some external source. The protocol for the Lockdown, which will be followed in this exercise, as defined in the start-of-school packet mailed to parents/guardians of district students, is presented below:

**Lockdown** – If a Lockdown is announced via local media sources, no one with the exception of district administrators and law enforcement/emergency response personnel may enter or leave the building. Parents are encouraged to trust the school district staff as they provide a safe environment for the students and are discouraged from attempting to retrieve students from the schools. An influx of traffic on the campuses of the three buildings may inhibit access by emergency response personnel. A Lockdown situation is generally a short-term (30 minutes or less) condition and one which will normally be downgraded to **Shelter-in-Place** once all information is gathered in the buildings. The **Shelter-in-Place** protocol allows parents to enter the schools to determine if their children should be released into their custody.

Another county-wide Lockdown exercise will be conducted later in the school year, as will a "Shelter-in-Place" exercise. The Shelter-in-Place exercise will be conducted in conjunction with the annual March Weather Preparedness Drill. Teachers will discuss the procedures for both Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place prior to the scheduled exercises.

## Leadership Skills Enhanced at Outdoor Odyssey

Mr. Marshall, Mrs. Callahan, and ten members of WHHS Student Council attended Outdoor Odyssey Camp on Tuesday, August 12, and Wednesday, August 13, 2003. The goal of the team was to develop positive leadership bonds and attitudes before the start of the school year.

The group participated in several activities that were designed to break down barriers and develop success as part of a team. The activities included: leadership seminars, high and low ropes, reaction course, climbing and repelling tower, caving, and group initiatives. Each

individual activity involved and developed teamwork. The students were asked to complete several tasks which required not only physical intensity but also mental intensity. Throughout the entire experience the camp leaders stressed with the group the qualities of effective leadership.

Student Council members attending: Erik Bonini, Teri Carney, Jamie Harris, Kieran Layton, Amanda Lindberg, Elyse Mendelson, Jill Nadorlik, Katelyn Polantz, Grant Rozich, and Sarah Sahlaney.

## Influenza Vaccine

Dr. Matthew Masiello, Vice President of the Department of Community Health, Memorial Medical Center (and "Westy" parent of fourth grader Matthew Michael Masiello), has provided information for us regarding the influenza season and flu vaccines.

Enclosed are two documents explaining what community members need to know about the advantages of vaccination and the two types of vaccines that are now available. We thank Dr. Masiello for providing this community service.

## Senior Residents Have V.I.P. Status

V.I.P. passes are one way we acknowledge the contributions and support of senior residents. Residents who are 62 years and older enjoy "Very Important Person" (V.I.P.) status. The passes entitle eligible residents to free admission to all school-related athletic

events with the exception of hockey games played at the Cambria County War Memorial and the annual musical. If you are a senior resident, you are eligible for a V.I.P. pass. To obtain one, please contact the district office at 255-6751.

## Thanks and Thanksgiving for Senior Citizens

The Eighth Annual Appreciation Luncheon for senior citizens has been scheduled for Friday, November 21, at 11:15 a.m., beginning in the high school auditorium. Jointly sponsored by the Westmont Hilltop Education Association and the Westmont Hilltop School District, this event is scheduled annually as a token of gratitude and appreciation for the many contributions our senior

citizens have made to our community and for their support of our schools. If you are 58 years of age or older, and a resident of the Westmont Hilltop School District, you are cordially invited to attend. Reservations are required. The date and phone number to call for reservations will be posted on the back page of the Tribune-Democrat early in November.

JOIN US THIS  
**THANKSGIVING**



# Middle School Students Show Westy Pride

The students in Mrs. Carpenter's R.E.S.P.E.C.T. period have initiated an "Adopt a Hallway Program." The idea came about after discussing various ways of demonstrating respect throughout the school. Taking pride in their school appealed to all of Mrs. Carpenter's students.

The students asked other homeroom teachers if they would adopt different areas of the building. Through this adoption, students agreed to keep the hallways clean during the school day. Students signed the agreement, and their names were posted throughout the building. The students also requested additional garbage containers that would be strategically placed around the building to help in their efforts. The idea seems to be working because the hallways look great!

The students expanded on their original idea by adopting an environmental theme in an effort to collect cans during lunch periods. The money raised from these recycling efforts will go toward perennial flowers and trees to further beautify the middle school campus. The students should be very proud of their commitment to the school and to the environment. 🍷



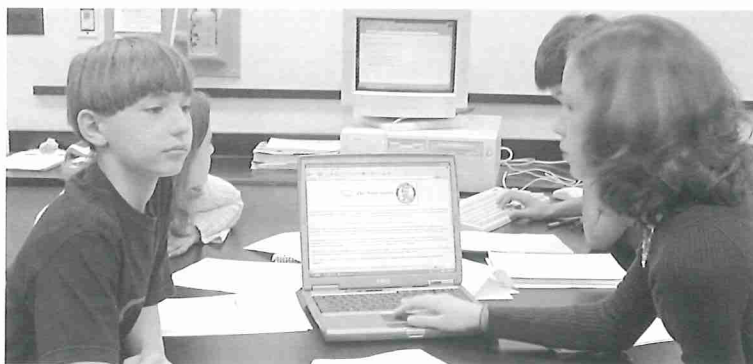
Row 1 (L-R) Brett Marshall, Nathan Omasta, Dustin Jordan, Joe Ward

Row 2 (L-R) Brandi Logsdon, Bryan Marshall, Nathan Kamler, Mike Saverino, Jordan Lober, Kirsten Meenan, Melissa Hunt Absent: Nicole Tomlyanovich

# Middle School Goes Wireless

Students and teachers are giving the new Dell Wireless Lab rave reviews. The Dell Wireless Lab was made possible through the Pennsylvania School Performance Incentive Achievement Award Program for the 2002 testing year. An eighty point increase in the combined reading and math scores on the PSSA for this year's tenth graders when they were in 8th grade resulted in a performance award of \$18,972.

The lab is available to all teachers at the middle school with laptops that can



Robbie Cernetich and Alexa Eplett in Mrs. Treece's Science Classroom

be moved from classroom to classroom, thus eliminating the need for teachers to move out of the regular classroom into a computer lab. The lab provides high-

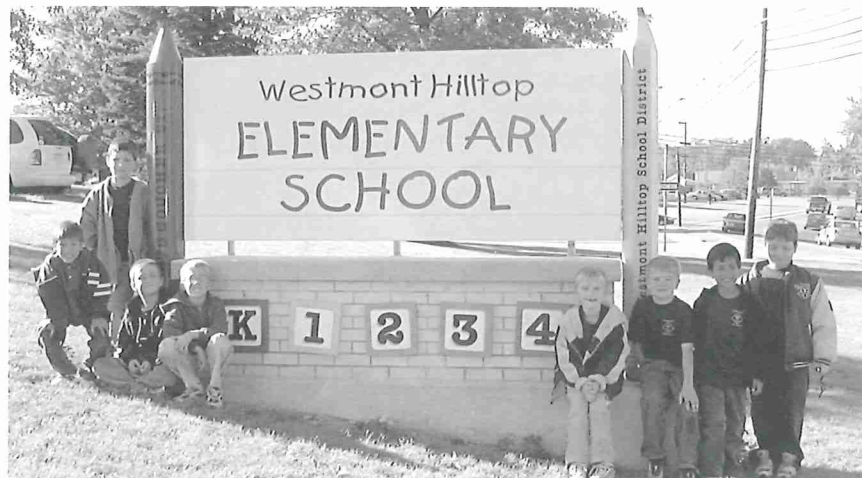
speed wireless network access and the ability to recharge the notebook computers. The lab's compact size and locking doors make it easy to store.

The new Dell Wireless Lab combines all the computers and technology needed to outfit an entire classroom. With the Dell Wireless Lab, students have access to the

technology they need to collaborate on assignments, create multimedia presentations, and access information on the Internet. 🍷

## Westmont Hilltop Elementary School is Proud of Our New Sign

If you have driven past the elementary school since July, you have probably noticed the new school sign. It was designed by Bob Hovanec. Countless compliments about the sign have been received since its installation this past summer. The elementary school's PTO funded the entire project. In early October, local Cub Scouts enhanced the sign by planting some beautiful mums around it. 🌸



Left to right: James Miller, Lawrence Cernansky, Robbie Elston, Andy Miller, Bradon Lovenduski, Braden Junker, Alonzo Hillario and Gavin Eash

## Parent Teacher Organization Sponsors Third Family Fun Night



On Wednesday evening, November 12, the Elementary School's Parent Teacher Organization will sponsor the third annual Family Fun Night. This

event is held in conjunction with the Fall Book Fair, which will be open during the evening event. The evening provides the opportunity for families to socialize with each other and start shopping for the holidays! Entertainment for the evening will be provided by Juggling Joe Juggleseeds, an experienced and entertaining juggler and magician. His 45-minute fast-paced show will begin at 7:00 p.m. and is guaranteed to include lots of audience

participation! Refreshments will be available throughout the evening, courtesy of the Goucher Street Giant Eagle. Julie Katz is the chairperson of this event. Julie Goldblatt and Anne Miller are the co-chairs.

The Fall Book Fair features weekend hours this year. It will be open on Saturday, November 15, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and on Sunday, November 16, from noon until 4:00 p.m. The community is welcome to stop by and participate in all of the Fall Book Fair activities. 📖



## National Education Week

On Tuesday evening, November 18, approximately ten elementary teachers will host a series of workshops geared to our parent audience. The presentations will focus on several aspects of the elementary school's curriculum. The science curriculum in the primary grades will be explained in one session. Another session will highlight parent involvement in the math program. Fourth grade parents will have the opportunity to learn more about the PSSA, which the third graders participated in during April, 2003. Other workshops will focus on guided reading, strategies to reinforce reading concepts at home, and the Chapter 14 (gifted education) specifications. Guidance Counselor Anne Paratore is coordinating this event. 📖



**Westmont Hilltop School District Board of Education**

Mrs. Karen M. Azer: President

Mr. Joseph R. Goodwin: Vice-President

Dr. Robert W. Zellers: Treasurer

Mr. Mitchell G. Azar, Mr. Ronald P. Carnevali, Sr., Mr. John M. Khuri,

Dr. Daniel R. Meenan, Mr. Scott D. Watson, Mr. George P. Wolfe,

Mr. Gregory T. Sanford: Secretary (non-member)

**District Administrative Staff 2003-2004**

Dr. Susan J. Anderson, *Superintendent*

Mr. Steven D. McGee, *Director of Education*

Mr. Gregory T. Sanford, *Business Manager*

**Building Administrative Staff 2003-2004**

Mr. William Marshall, *High School Principal*

Mrs. Margaret McDonald, *Elementary Principal*

Mr. Darren McLaurin, *Middle School Principal*

Mr. Matthew Thomas, *High School Dean of Students*

**Administrative Offices**

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**Mission Statement**

The mission of the WHSD, in partnership with our community, is to prepare each student to be an informed, ethical, responsible adult in a changing and competitive global society through high expectations and a challenging educational program offering knowledge and skills within a safe, nurturing environment.

**Civil Rights Statement**

The Westmont Hilltop School District, an equal opportunity employer, will not discriminate in employment, educational programs or activities, based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, ancestry, or disability. Publication of this policy in this document is in accordance with state and federal laws including: The Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title IV, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 & 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

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Happy Thanksgiving!



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