

# Parent Matters

WCPSS PARENT NEWSLETTER



## Superintendent's Column

Student learning is at the center of everything we do in the Wake County Public School System. This focus has become even more important as we join families, businesses and other agencies in managing the ongoing economic uncertainty. Even as schools and volunteers are rallying together to provide help for students whose families have fallen on hard times, we are also prioritizing WCPSS's funding to maintain excellence in our schools. This is a huge challenge, but our teachers, principals and support staff are up to the task.

At the time this newsletter is being published, school funding continues to be uncertain in state and local budgets. Roughly two thirds of our budget comes from state government. Governor Perdue's budget proposal has gone to the North Carolina legislature, which will make its own changes. Federal stimulus money is expected to meet some of the gap,

*(continued on page 7)*

## Preparing for End of Year Tests

The months of May and June are busy and exciting times of the year for students in the Wake County Public School System. Students are busy finishing projects, completing their studies and seniors are eagerly awaiting commencement exercises.

It is also a time when students take end of the year tests. Parents are reminded that between May 6 – June 26, our 3-8 graders will be taking End-of-Grade (EOG) tests, and between May 15 – June 10, high school students will be taking End-of-Course (EOC) tests. Please use the testing calendar below for the specific dates of your child's testing window.

TEST SCHEDULE			
Middle Schools	Traditional	May 13 – May 21	End-of-Grade
	Track 1 of Year-Round	May 6 – May 14	End-of-Grade
	Tracks 2-4 of Year-Round	June 3 – June 11	End-of-Grade
	Modified	April 29 – May 7	End-of-Grade
High Schools	Block	June 4 – June 10	End-of-Course
	Wake Early College	May 15 – May 21	End-of-Course
	Traditional	May 28 – June 10	End-of-Course
	Modified	May 20 – May 25	End-of-Course

There are plenty of great testing resources available on [www.wcpss.net](http://www.wcpss.net) and on the NC Department of Public Instruction website.

The NC Department of Public Instruction website provides information for the End-of-Grade testing for students in grades 3-8. You can click for information on End-of-Grade testing in reading comprehension, mathematics, and science. By clicking on the testing area, you will find practice test items and related information. You can easily find this resource at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog/>.

On the school system website you can visit the Success Series Resource Center at <http://www.wcpss.net/success-series/>, where you can find online video resources prepared by classroom teachers with lessons for Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, US History, Civics and Economics, Advanced Placement courses in Calculus and Statistics and English Grammar/Conventions. With more than 100 different lessons and study guides provided, students can focus on the area of instruction they need to review.

## Board Schedules Time to Support Teacher Collaboration

Research has shown that students achieve more when teachers work together as a team rather than apart. With that focus, a WCPSS committee studied how time throughout the school year could be used to help teacher teams meet and best figure out ways to help their students.

"In most professions, people have a chance to get together with their colleagues and talk about how to make whatever their job is better and how to serve whoever they're serving better," said Jennifer Lanane, president of the Wake County Association of Educators. "The best examples are physicians. Physicians get together and talk about cases and how to best solve or cure their patients."

At the March 31 meeting, the Board of Education approved a new bell schedule that builds time into the school day to support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or learning teams.

The new school schedule adds 10 minutes to the school day and provides one hour early dismissal on Wednesdays. On six of those Wednesdays, school will release 2.5 hours early.

This adjustment will provide time for teachers to meet for an hour on Wednesdays in learning teams. In these

teams, teachers meet across grade level or subject area to review instruction and look at ways to better meet the needs of individual students. Schools will continue to use the six 2.5 hour sessions for school-wide faculty professional development.



"Teachers need time to look at the data and to look at where students are academically and what strategies they can use to keep students engaged in learning," said James Overman, president of the Wake County Division of Principals and Assistant Principals and principal of East Garner Elementary.

Representatives of a 40-member Time Committee that included school administrators, principals, teachers and parents told the school board's Student Achievement Committee that they've been studying the issue for two years as schools

have worked individually to figure out ways to create time for teacher learning teams to meet. Schools are at different stages in putting learning teams to use across grade levels and across subject areas. The adoption of common early release days will help bring uniformity across the system; and year-round and traditional teachers will have equal amounts of time to collectively look at their student's needs.

## 2009-10 Bell Schedule

The Board of Education approved the bell schedule for 2009-10:

- adding three new elementary schools to the schedule,
- adding ten minutes to the school day to provide weekly early dismissal on Wednesdays and
- moving a later start time for East Wake high schools and earlier schedule for Wendell and Zebulon elementary schools.

Three new multi-track, year-round elementary schools — Banks Road, Herbert Akins and Lake Myra — open for 2009-10. The bell schedule for all three will be 9:05 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

### 2009-10 Common Early Release Days

There are six early release days for traditional, modified calendar and multi-track, year-round calendar schools. All early release days occur on Wednesdays.

All schools shall comply with G.S. 115C-84.2 which requires a minimum of 180 days and 1,000 hours of instruction. Implementation of early release days are based on monitoring of this time requirement.

Traditional	Year-Round	Tracks	Modified
	July 22	1, 2, 3	
	August 12	1, 2, 4	August 12
	September 2	1, 3, 4	September 2
September 23			
October 21	October 21	1, 2, 4	October 21
December 2	December 2	2, 3, 4	December 2
February 3			February 3
	February 17	1, 3, 4	
March 10	March 10	2, 3, 4	
April 21	April 21	1, 2, 3	April 21

### Board Makes Changes to Three-Year Student Assignment Plan

In addition to filling 10 new schools that will open over the next three years, a three-year student assignment plan approved by the Board of Education in February includes some school calendar and magnet changes:

1. To convert **Leesville Middle** to a multi-track year-round calendar in 2009-10.
2. To phase-out the magnet program at **Daniels Middle** over two years beginning in 2009-10.
3. To change the calendar at **Baucom Elementary** to traditional in 2009-10.
4. To approve transfer requests for families to remain at **Turner Creek Elementary** for 2009-10, if their child was an application student to **Turner Creek Elementary** prior to Baucom becoming year-round in 2007.
5. To change the calendar at **Green Hope Elementary** to traditional beginning the same year that Alston Ridge Elementary is expected to open in 2010-11.
6. To establish an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) Magnet School at **Smith Elementary**.
7. To establish an Engineering Magnet School Program at **Brentwood Elementary**.
8. To phase-out the IB Middle Years and Diploma Programmes at **Broughton High** over five years beginning in 2009-10.
9. To implement the IB Middle Years and Diploma Programmes at **Millbrook High** beginning with the Middle Years program in 2010.
10. To change the calendar at **Knightdale Elementary** to traditional in 2009-10.

### Where Will My Child Go To School Next Year?

Each year, the official notification of school assignment is sent home with students on May 15th. For pre-registered students who are not currently attending a WCPSS school, the assignments will be sent through the mail. To make sure that assignments are accurate and that you are properly notified, please make sure your contact information and home address are up to date and on file at your child's current school or at your base school if your child is pre-registered.

### Three New Elementary Schools Open Next School Year

Three new elementary schools will open on July 7 for the start of the 2009-10 year-round calendar school year (traditional schools begin Aug. 25). The three schools are Herbert Akins Road Elementary, Lake Myra Elementary, and Banks Road Elementary.

This brings the total number of Wake County public schools to 159. In the last two years, 10 schools were built as a result of Wake County's growth. With increased enrollments particularly of elementary school-age children, many of those new schools have opened as year-round elementary schools to serve more students. While the downturn in the national economy is expected to impact enrollment growth next year when 2,300 new students are expected, the new schools will help to alleviate overcrowding of several existing schools, add future capacity in anticipation for more growth, and create a healthy and balanced learning environment for students.

In 2010, five new schools are scheduled to open. The new school openings will include one elementary, two middle and two high schools.

#### 2009-10 New School Information

##### Banks Road Elementary

Principal: **Dr. Franklin Creech**  
10225 Chambers Road, Raleigh, NC 27603  
(919) 890-7333  
Bell Schedule: 9:05 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.  
<http://banksroades.wcpss.net>

##### Herbert Akins Road Elementary

Principal: **Kathy Warren**  
2255 Herbert Akins Road, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526  
(919) 890-7979  
Bell Schedule: 9:05 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.  
<http://herbertakinsroades.wcpss.net/>

##### Lake Myra Elementary

Principal: **James Argent**  
1300 Elk Falls Drive, Wendell, NC 27591  
(919) 217-7160  
Bell Schedule: 9:05 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.  
<http://lakemyraes.wcpss.net/>

Please cut this portion off and return to school with your child.

How would you rate the helpfulness of this newsletter? (please circle one)

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not helpful

What topic(s) would you like to see covered in a future issue of Parent Matters? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Directions for schools: Please send this via courier to: Ashley Smith/Communications Department. Thank you!

## Transition Time! Tips to Help your Child Survive the Middle to High School Transition

by Julia V. Taylor

Do you recall just a few short years ago — when your child was transitioning from elementary to middle school? There may have been an overwhelming panic about getting lost, changing classes, and the dreaded locker. The social and academic pressures soon to be faced by rising freshmen often cause that familiar feeling of anxiety. While transition time is never easy, the high school transition presents a new array of both physical and emotional challenges.

The major challenges include the physical building, academic rigor, and social adjustment. The high school will have more students, sports, activities, and rules. Your child will have to adjust to new teachers, administrators, and counselors. The bell system is different, classes are generally longer (if on a block schedule), and most schools have a no nonsense approach to discipline. In addition, high school classes are more academically challenging. Students are expected to arrive with proper study, organizational, and time management skills. Some classes may be combined with upperclassmen and the courses are competitive. Lastly, your child will have additional responsibilities and will be expected to quickly find a school/home/social life/sport/work balance.

There are plenty of ways that parents can help to ease the middle to high school transition. Most importantly, be enthusiastic about this exciting time. While at times it may seem daunting, with a winning attitude it will be a lot smoother for you and your child. Below are some easy tips to help your child begin the road to their future.

### Involvement

- Attend open house nights at the high school.
- Bookmark the high school website and check it often for updates.
- Go to Back to School night and meet your child's teach

- Encourage your child to accept responsibility for their actions. Inevitability — they will make a mistake. Allow them to learn from their mistakes and avoid rescuing behavior.
- Get to know your child's school counselor. They are a vital part of your child's future.
- Join the school Parent/Teacher Association (PTA.)

### Academic

- Keep up with the academic calendar and know when your child receives a progress reports and report cards. Expect them. If your child says they did not get a report card, they are pulling a fast one on you. Talk to your child about their grades, constantly.
- There is a college for everybody — but college is not for everybody. However, most parents want their children to graduate with the grades, behavior, attendance, and good character to be prepared for a successful future. Success is purely individual. Stress the importance

school by classes, not by days. If your child misses ten days, they could fail. Stress the importance of daily attendance. Also, don't schedule family vacations during the school year. Calendars are posted on [www.wcpss.net](http://www.wcpss.net) two years in advance.

- D's and F's do not look great on a college or job application. If your child receives a D/F, schedule a conference with the teachers.

### Social

- Encourage your child to get involved in a sport or club. Not only does it look fabulous on a college/job application, but numerous research states that school involvement leads to improved academic performance and school satisfaction.
- Invite your child's friends over for dinner. Get to know them and their families.
- Be your child's "out." Meaning if they are in a situation they are not comfortable with, allow them to call you, no matter what. A 2

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of the aforementioned on a regular basis.

- Your child will have homework most nights for the next four years. If your child says “no homework today” more than once a week — it might be time to do further investigating.
- Most freshmen take Healthful Living, a.k.a — P.E. Failing this course due to not participating or dressing out is unacceptable. Remind your child of that if this becomes an issue.
- Attendance is counted in high

a.m. phone call from a child you thought was asleep in their room is better than a 2 a.m. phone call from the police or hospital. Talk to your child about this.

- Always make yourself available to talk to your child.
- Encourage your child do be involved with things they enjoy. Relax. Take a deep breath. And remember, one day you will cherish this time.

## Wake County PTA Council

by Sarah Martin

As we approach the end of our school year, parents can take heart that their students have had fabulous opportunities throughout the year to learn, to grow, and to reach new achievement levels. Wake County PTA Council would like to thank all PTA units at schools throughout the County for their efforts in supporting the children and youth at their schools. Without committed family volunteers, PTAs could not be successful. Thank you one and all for your efforts throughout the year.

At many schools throughout the County, new PTA officers have been elected into leadership positions and will be working to support their schools in 2009-2010. The Wake PTA Council will be holding a series of leadership training sessions this spring and summer. Certain events are geared

towards PTA officers, but the Wake PTA Council Summer Leadership Training Conference on Saturday, July 18th, 2009, is for any PTA member with interest in leadership opportunities. See your PTA president for more information about the many opportunities offered for you to develop your leadership skills at this annual conference. An RSVP is required



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to hold your spot at the conference.

Also, Wake PTA Council is proud to be a co-sponsor of the WCPSS Title I Summer Institute Family Involvement

Day event at the NCSU McKimmon Center on Thursday, June 18, 2009, from 8:30am until 3:30pm. We're particularly excited that Byron Garrett, CEO of the National PTA, will be a keynote speaker in the morning session from 8:30 a.m. until 10 a.m.! Additionally, Dr. Karen Mapp, a nationally-recognized speaker on the subject of family involvement, will be speaking and conducting workshops. This event is free and open to parents, staff, and administrators from schools throughout the County, but an RSVP is required for this event. Seating is limited. If you are interested in attending, please contact [rmoffitt@wcpss.net](mailto:rmoffitt@wcpss.net) no later than May 1, 2009.

## Free Breakfast on EOG Testing Days

This year once again Child Nutrition Services will provide free breakfast for students on two of the EOG testing days. All students in grades 3-8 are eligible to get a free breakfast on those two days of EOG tests. Research shows that children who eat breakfast have improved memory, problem solving skills, verbal fluency, and creative abilities. Eating school breakfast can help improve math, reading, and standardized test scores by nourishing the minds of students. School Breakfast provides — the recommended amounts of brain fuel in terms of carbohydrates, protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, and vitamin C for the day. Contact your school cafeteria manager for more information.



## Test-Taking Tips For Parents

From *TestTakingTips.com*

- Make sure that your child does all their homework and reading assignments which will help make sure your child is prepared for the test.
- Encourage your child to space out their studying and homework assignments so that they won't be forced to cram on the night before the test.
- If you are anxious about your child's test it's ok, but try to keep cool around your child, you don't want them to get anxious about their test.
- Encourage your child to do well, but don't pressure him/her; you may stress him/her out. It is important for your child to stay relaxed on the day of the test.
- Keep a positive attitude about tests.
- Provide a quiet, well-lighted area with little distractions to help your child study efficiently and effectively.
- Mark down test days on your calendar so you and your child are both aware of tests dates.
- Make sure that your child gets enough sleep the night before the test.
- Ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast and avoids heavy foods that may make him/her groggy. Avoid high-sugar foods that make him/her hyper.
- Make sure that your child gets up early enough so that he/she will be on time to school.
- Let your child relax for a few hours before bedtime. It can be stressful for a child to study all night.
- Talking about the test with your child can relieve stress about test taking.
- If your child is struggling on his tests, talk to him about it and meet with the teacher to find out the best way to help.
- Praise/reward your child when they do well on a test or for their hard work preparing for a test.
- Encourage them to do better if they don't do well.
- Review the test with your child after they have taken it and go over any mistakes they have made and make sure that they understand what they did wrong and how they can improve for the next test.

## Adjusting to a New School — Three Tension-Taming Tips

The anticipation of starting a new school can be an exciting time for students. But it can also be filled with uncertainty. Schools work hard to help make the transition a positive and safe experience for students coming into a new learning environment.

Whether your child is transitioning to middle or high or changing schools due to other reasons, there are several things parents can do to help their student adjust.

1. **Stay positive.** Students can pick up on their parent's own anxiety or

even negativity and this can have an impact on how they will feel about the first day. Keep a positive attitude by focusing on the excitement that a new school brings including the possibility to meet new friends and learn new things.

2. **Plan to visit.** Many schools will host open houses before the first day for parents and students to tour the school. Use this opportunity to find out locations for classes, locker assignments, the cafeteria and bathrooms. If you don't have a chance to

visit over the break, consider driving your student to school on the first day or having lunch with them in the cafeteria.

3. **Prepare the night before.** Make sure to provide your student with the school supplies he or she will need. Review class schedules together. Discuss arrangements for lunch and plan for a good breakfast in the morning to start their day off right.

With positive support from home and school, students will have confidence in their ability to adapt to changes.

# 2009 GRADUATION SCHEDULE

<b>Raleigh Convention Center</b> 500 South Salisbury Street	Southeast Raleigh	Wednesday, May 28	8 PM
	Leesville Road	Wednesday, June 10	5 PM
	Garner	Wednesday, June 10	8 PM
	Millbrook	Thursday, June 11	11 AM
	Wakefield	Thursday, June 11	2 PM
	Cary	Thursday, June 11	5 PM
	Green Hope	Friday, June 12	11 AM
	Middle Creek	Friday, June 12	2 PM
	Athens	Friday, June 12	5 PM
	Wake Forest/Rolesville	Friday, June 12	8 PM
	Enloe	Saturday, June 13	8 AM
	Fuquay-Varina	Saturday, June 13	11 AM
	Knightdale	Saturday, June 13	2 PM
	Sanderson	Saturday, June 13	5 PM
	East Wake	Saturday, June 13	8 PM
	Holly Springs	Sunday, June 14	1 PM
Apex	Sunday, June 14	4 PM	
Panther Creek	Sunday, June 14	7 PM	
<b>Holliday Gymnasium Broughton High School</b> 723 Saint Mary's Street	Broughton	Thursday, June 11	10 AM
	Longview	Wednesday, June 10	5:30 PM
	Phillips	Wednesday, June 10	7 PM

## Superintendent (cont'd from front page)



but we don't know how that funding would be applied. Wake County government is working on their budget as well, which will impact local funding for WCPSS.

We are taking some difficult but prudent steps to minimize the economic

downturn's impact on student learning. The choices are hard, and in some cases painful, but they face the reality that education funding will be tight for the foreseeable future. The choices also recognize that in a tough economy, student learning is *more important than ever*. The cliché is true: we must do more with less, because our students must be well prepared to compete in a constantly-changing, competitive global economy.

Our goal and vision do not change with bad economic news. It is still our intent for every child to graduate on time, prepared for the future and achieving great things. WCPSS's first priority remains *learning* for all of our students. We must simply work within the resources we are provided to make that happen.

## Board Approves New Policy on Sex Offenders

In February, the Board of Education adopted a new policy on sex offenders to align with the federal Jessica Lunsford Act which went into effect on Dec. 1, 2008. It also complies with a new state law.

The Board of Education's goal is to provide a safe environment for all students and staff of the district. In keeping with this goal, the board adopted *Policy 6434* at their February 17 meeting. The new policy will help keep registered sex offenders off school property by keeping school administrators more informed and providing strict guidelines for any student, parent or guardian convicted of a sexual offense.

The policy states that principals must sign up to receive e-mail notifications when a registered sex offender moves within a one-mile radius of their school. WCPSS

Security has worked with all principals to ensure they are receiving these alerts.

The policy also requires any parent or guardian who is a registered sex offender get permission from the superintendent before coming on campus for visits limited to the welfare of

tion at all times.

The board policy extends to all school buildings, including school campuses, school system property and school-sponsored events. To read the full details of *Policy 6434*, visit the board of education website at <http://www.wcpss.net/Board/>.

In addition to this recently adopted policy, our school system requires criminal history checks of all individuals requesting to volunteer at schools. Many schools are capable of performing background checks immediately on-site during the visitor sign-in process.

<http://www.wcpss.net/Board/>

their child. The parent or guardian must notify the principal of their visit in advance and will be under direct supervi-

### Did You Know...

You can search for virtually *any* school board policy online? Board policy is organized into eight series. Each series covers a different aspect of the Wake County Public School System. Quick searches can be performed on policies adopted within the last 30, 60 or 90 days, by policy number or by keyword! Visit: <http://www.wcpss.net/Board/> and click the link *Board Policy*.

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## ParentMatters



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The WCPSS Communications Department produces Parent Matters. Contact the editor at [asmithy@wcpss.net](mailto:asmithy@wcpss.net).