

# WILDCAT WATCH

Volume 3  
November 3, 2009

## Mr. Hunsinger's Wildcat Wisdom

Hello everyone and welcome to another edition of the *Wildcat Watch*. As has been the case with earlier editions, I have some different topics to share with you.

We will be sending out a letter regarding American Education Week with the visitation times and schedules. As was the case last year Monday is Grandparents Day and visitation for all grades; Tuesday is for grades Pre-K, K, 2, and 4; and Wednesday is for grades 1, 3 and 5.

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There have been ongoing questions regarding food and treats for classroom parties. We had the opportunity to discuss this with the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Tomback, during the county council of PTA meeting a few weeks ago. The decision for Homestead Wakefield is reflective on his remarks, as well as what has been discussed here at HWES. Class parties (Fall Harvest, Winter Break, Spring, Valentine's Day, End-of-Year, etc.), are up to the classroom teacher to decide when they will be held. The classroom teacher will be in contact with the room mothers as to when the party will be held. There are not to be more than three class parties during the school year. Parties should not last more than 90 minutes and should not begin before 9:30 a.m. or continue past 2:45 p.m. due to bus arrivals and departures. Only healthy snacks and treats can be used for a party. Such things as fruit, granola bars, pretzels, and juice boxes can be distributed at the party to the children. Candy treat bags cannot be given out as party favors because there are strict HCPS policies against eating on the bus. Balloons cannot be taken on the bus also due to safety concerns. It is also an ongoing policy that cup cakes, brownies or other baked items are not allowed. We have many students with food allergies and their safety comes first. If your child has a birthday and you want to send in a sticker or nonfood item to share with the class, you must also first check with the classroom teacher. Ice cream treats from the cafeteria can be used for this, provided the classroom teacher has had enough notice to inform the cafeteria staff. Children not attending HWES are not permitted to attend these parties due to liabilities. I understand it seems like there are more restrictions each year on classroom parties and events; however, there are strict county guidelines we must follow.

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Conference time is very important for parents and teachers to meet and discuss the progress made by the children here at HWES. The teachers put a lot of time and effort into these meetings. It takes many hours of preparation by the teachers for this event. It is our hope that together with parents and teachers working together, we will provide the best possible education for all children. If you cannot make your appointment, call the school office (410-638-4175) and we will notify the teacher.

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If you are signing a student in or out at anytime, be sure to go to the office first to let the secretaries know. After checking your identification, we will be more than happy to call to your child's classroom and ask for the teacher to release your child.

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Traffic concerns and patterns are an ongoing concern at both buildings. Please remember that our buses have the right of way as they drop off the students at both buildings. As the colder weather sets in, we have more students driven to school each day causing even more of a traffic concern. Our staff members in front of the Wakefield building are easily identified by their orange vests as they assist children into the building. Please do not get out of your vehicle and walk your child to the building if you are in the drop off lane.

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The Wildcat Walk was wonderful. It was a real treat seeing our students and staff walking around the Wakefield playground to some great music as part of our big PTA fundraiser. The weather was a bit brisk; however, no one seemed to mind as we celebrated HWES. It was very difficult judging the event and selecting the winning class in each group (Wakefield building and Homestead building). The winners were Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Brown. Miss Corbin and Mrs. Hoch had the largest amount contributed. I want to give special thanks to Michelle Hybdzinski for doing such a great job as the chairperson for the event. We are really fortunate to have such a great PTA here at HWES.

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On Tuesday, November 10, we will have picture makeup day. If you are requesting a retake for your child, make sure the picture packet is sent back with your child so the photographer will know what package to retake.

**Alert Now Calls** – You will find a new link on the homepage of hcps.org where parents/guardians can enter their phone number and see a list of all the calls delivered to their number in the previous 15 days. You can also click on the call and listen to it again.

## Music News

**Just a reminder the HWES Winter Concert featuring our fabulous Fifth Grade Band, Orchestra and Chorus will be held on Monday, December 7, starting at 7pm. This year's concert will be held in the new Bel Air High School auditorium!**

**Fourth Grade Chorus is meeting weekly to prepare for our mini-musical "This Old Gingerbread House". This musical will be presented in late January. More info will be sent home soon.**

**All third grade students will begin recorders following the Winter Break. A letter will be sent home shortly explaining this fun program.**

Homestead students will *MIX IT UP* at lunch

Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, students in the Homestead building will take part in a nationwide event. It's called *MIX IT UP* day. Students will be randomly assigned a seat at a table within their regular seating row and within their regular homeroom. The purpose is to encourage students to show acceptance and respect for physical, academic, cultural or perceived differences among peers. We'll break down some of the invisible barriers we often put up that divide us into groups, and get to know our classmates better. Children will have an opportunity to anonymously respond to a survey to let Mrs. Sullivan (and the school) know what they think of the day.

Brenna Sullivan, Homestead school counselor

**They Say It's Your Birthday...** The Homestead-Wakefield Elementary School Media Centers would like to welcome the newest Birthday Book Club Members for the months of September and October. The following people had birthdays recently and their parents purchased books for the libraries in their honor. The books they selected display a special plate with their names on the inside cover. Happy Birthday and a big Birthday Book Club welcome to the following students:

**Grade K:** Brandi A, Allie B, Jack C, Ryan F, Robby M, Claire P, Jonah V

**Grade 1:** Caden M, Regan M, Anna S

**Grade 2:** Daniel B, Scott D, Kristen E, Kevin E, Alyssa M, AJ P, Young P

If your birthday is in November, NOW is your chance to join the Birthday Book Club. May will be the last Birthday Book Club of the 2009-10 school year. Ask your teacher or school librarians (Homestead Building: Mr. Robertson; Wakefield Building: Mrs. Miller) for an application today!