



West University Elementary School

Spring Edition, Volume 8
February 23, 2015

The Pony Express



Principal's Place

Our school Spelling Bee Champion, 3rd Grade student Evelyn Carpenter, took 3rd place in the HISD Area Spelling Bee. Evelyn competed against students from 45 elementary and middle schools last week. Way to go, Evelyn!

If you have incoming Kindergarten children or have friends or neighbors within our school zone who have children this age, please attend our Kindergarten Roundup next Thursday, February 26 at 9:30 a.m. in the Cafeteria. We will begin registration for new students for 2015-2016 on Monday, March 2.

Please see a full-page letter from me on Page 3 concerning the HISD proposal to reduce overcrowding in West U, Twain, and Roberts Elementary Schools.

I received a wonderful email message from the Houston Museum of Natural Science concerning the field trip our 4th graders took last Wednesday, February 13. The message reads: "Today, we had your 4th graders visit the Houston Museum of Natural Science. They were wonderful! Yours was the kind of group that keeps us volunteers coming back each day! After the tours, I heard the docents say: knowledgeable, interested, curious, well behaved, excited, etc. All the adjectives you would like to hear! I would like to congratulate the 4th graders! I would also like to congratulate the teachers and staff members of West U Elementary! I know your job is a hard one, but thank you all for working so hard and doing it so well!" Great job, 4th graders!

Have a glorious week!

John T. Threet, Principal

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Mark Your Calendars:

- Spring Pictures
Tuesday, February 26
- Kindergarten Roundup
Thursday, February 26
9:30 a.m.
- Go Texan Day
Friday, February 27
- PTO Meeting
Tuesday, March 10
8:00 a.m., MPR
- Early Dismissal Day
Friday, March 13
12:15 p.m.
- Spring Break
Monday-Friday
March 16-20
School is closed

PTO President's Notes

Please join us for our next PTO Meeting on Tuesday, March 10 at 8:00 a.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room. Mr. Threet will provide an update on the HISD proposal to reduce overcrowding.

We look forward to seeing all of the West U Cowboys and Cowgirls this Friday for Go Texan Day!

Please email me with comments or concerns.

Magnetized to WUES,

Elizabeth Karkowsky, WUES PTO President



PTO Corner

Birthday Book Club



חמשה ימים, Happy Birthday, Maligayang Bati! The following students are celebrating their birthdays this week by donating a book to our school library:

Henry Brenckmann	February 23rd	Ellie Monday	February 27th
Finley Mitchell	February 24th	Jack Monday	February 27th
Eleanora Mitchell	February 24th	Laura Cheng	February 27th
Adriana Secaira	February 24th	Lindsey Levan	February 27th
Charlie Pugh	February 24th	John Sharp	February 27th
Margaret He	February 25th	Sophie Yu	February 28th
Ellie Papp	February 25th	Caroline Buckner	February 28th
Palmer Popov	February 25th	Morgan Lawter	February 28th
Raymond Lu	February 25th	Simran Shroff	February 28th
Daniel Colson	February 26th	Taylor Hord	February 28th
Grant Marshall	February 26th	Olivia Nolen	February 29th
Anand Meht	February 26th	Jess Cadena	March 1st

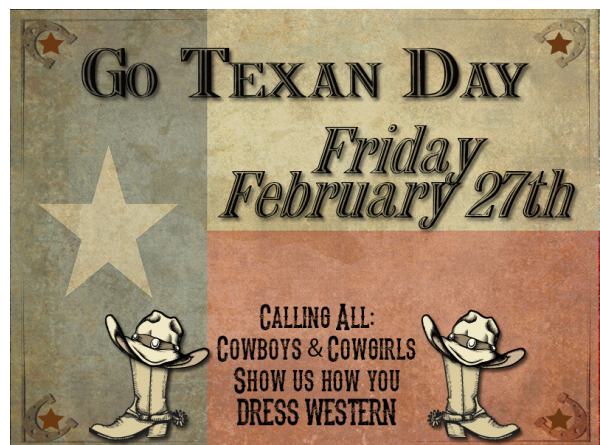
Thank you very much for supporting West U Elementary Library!

If you would like to order a Birthday Book Club membership for your child, log on to www.westupto.org and sign up online or, download a form and leave it with a check in the PTO blue box located at the front office. Please, note that all orders are due NO LATER THAN Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m. to be included in the following week's Pony Express. If you any questions, please contact Tracy Benner (tracymbenner@yahoo.com) or Guadalupe Harper (guadacarlesso@hotmail.com).

Go Texan Day, Friday, February 27

Well, buckaroos, it's time to dust off your cowboy boots and hat and get ready for the opening of the 2015 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. This Friday, February 27, we celebrate an annual tradition in Houston by wearing our western gear to school (no toy guns, please). Students, parents and faculty are encouraged to show their Texas pride by dressing up for this fun day.

If you are a newcomer to Houston or an old hat like some of us, you may enjoy the annual Houston Livestock Show Parade. The Downtown Rodeo Parade will be held Saturday, February 28, at 10:00 a.m. For more info and the parade route, visit <http://rodeohouston.com/Events/DowntownRodeoParade.aspx>.



The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is a Section 501(c)(3) charity that benefits youth, supports education, and facilitates better agricultural practices through exhibitions and presentation. Since its beginning in 1932, the Show has committed approximately \$375 million to the youth of Texas. The 2015 Show runs March 3-22. For tickets and more information, visit www.rodeohouston.com.

PTO Corner

Thanks to our Corporate Sponsor: Chick-fil-A, Buffalo Speedway & Holcombe

The WUES PTO thanks Chick-fil-A at Holcombe and Buffalo Speedway for their support as a Corporate Sponsor this school year. They have fed our staff and students well!

Chick-fil-A at Holcombe and Buffalo Speedway hopes you and your family will come in and say hello. Join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner. We look forward to serving you! Community is important to us. You can learn more about our great restaurant at:

<http://www.cfarestaurant.com/holcombeandbuffalospeedway/home>

We appreciate the support of this excellent corporate partner!



Holcombe & Buffalo
Speedway



Spring Pictures



Spring Pictures will be taken tomorrow, Tuesday, February 26. These are posed photographs. The background for these photographs will be all-white and all children are encouraged to wear solid, bright colors. Smile!

Pershing Informational Coffee

Please join current Pershing Middle School parents and Pershing Middle School Principal, Kim Heckman, at an informational coffee.

When: Friday, March 6 at 8:15 AM

Where: The home of Anne Kayl, 4909 Palmetto Street, Bellaire

Why: Find out why Pershing may be the best choice for your child.

Please contact [Kristen Leach](mailto:kristenleach3@gmail.com) at kristenleach3@gmail.com with questions. Go, Pandas!



Letter to Parents: HISD Capping Proposal

Dear Parents,

Last Thursday, HISD hosted a meeting to share a proposal and take public comment regarding plans to ease overcrowding at Roberts, Twain and West University Elementary Schools. The meeting was designed to present a draft plan to reduce overcrowding in these schools and solicit input from parents, teachers, and community members. *It must be noted that NO final decisions have been made. Until the HISD Board of Trustees votes to approve a plan, nothing is final.*

State law requires schools to request a waiver for each classroom in K-4th grades that exceeds the 22:1 student-to-teacher ratio required by law. The State has notified HISD that we must act now to reduce the number of classrooms that require a waiver.

The current proposal will allow all students currently enrolled and who continue to live within our school attendance zone to return to West U next year. Under the proposal, we will track the date and time of completed registrations for new students enrolling for 2015-2016. When we reach the maximum number at any grade level, students will be placed on a waiting list. Students whom we are not able to enroll next year will receive a capped school transfer to The Rice School. The district will reserve slots at Rice to accommodate the overflow from Roberts, Twain, and West U.

There was much discussion at the meeting about giving preference to the younger siblings of current students who will enter Kindergarten next year ("grandfathering"). At this time the proposal does not call for us to grandfather current families. Student selection will be on a first come, first served basis.

There are several measures we are taking to ensure we are able to accommodate as many zoned students as possible. As we have done for many years, we will require proof of residency from all current students who plan to return. We will verify questionable residency documentation with a home visit. Students who are found to not reside where the family claims they live will be withdrawn from our school. Additionally, we are not accepting any new out-of-zone transfers to West U.

Based on our past experience, we believe the only families impacted by this plan will be those who wait until the summer or when school starts in August to register.

It will be very important for your child to be physically present at school on the first day next year (August 24, 2015). **Any students who are not in attendance on the first day will be dropped from our enrollment and may possibly not be able to re-enroll at West University (based on available space). BE ON TIME THAT DAY! We will go to our waiting list as soon as possible after the start of the school day.** This may impact those families who travel out of the country for the summer or families who plan late summer vacations, and wish to return after the first day of school. **We cannot guarantee a space for your child if your child is not present on the first day of school.**

As I stated in the first paragraph above, no final decisions have been made concerning this plan. As soon as I hear of any other proposed changes to the plan, or hear of any additional meetings for our parents, I will notify you.

Our Board of Trustees Member Mr. Mike Lunceford working to find a good solution to this issue that will have minimal impact on our parents and community. Mike is interested in hearing from you about this issue. You may provide any comments, ideas, or feedback to him at: MLUNCEFO@houstonisd.org.

As always, I am deeply appreciative of the support of the outstanding group of parents we have here at West U Elementary. I am committed to maintaining the high level of academic performance that has made us the standard for school excellence.

Onward!

John Threet



13 Days of Glory

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Elementary School
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We're on the Web!
visit us on the web at:
www.westues.org

John T. Threet
Principal
Tracey L. Wyatt
Magnet Coordinator
Amber Pinchback
Assistant Principal



Today marks the 179th anniversary of the beginning of the Siege of the Alamo, also referred to as the "13 Days of Glory." Colonel William B. Travis, the commander of the Alamo sent couriers carrying pleas for help to communities in Texas. On the eighth day of the siege, a band of 32 volunteers from Gonzales arrived, bringing the number of defenders to nearly two hundred.

During the siege, on March 2, 1836, the provisional Texas government at Washington-on-the-Brazos declared independence from Mexico. Four days later, on March 6, 1836, Santa Anna's army overwhelmed the fort after a fierce ninety-minute battle. None of the defenders of the Alamo survived.

The defense of the Alamo would have appeared to be, from a military perspective, a blunder on Travis's part, yet his insistence upon engaging the overwhelming force of Santa Anna's army and not escaping when he had time gave the new Republic of Texas Army under General Sam Houston time to escape and prepare itself for what would be the final, victorious, battle in the Texas War of Independence at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836.

We remember those 189 brave men who stood their ground 179 years ago and ultimately gave their lives for our freedom.

Vanguard Application & Testing Info – REVISED INFORMATION

Incoming Kindergarten Students

Application Window

H **Monday, March 2 – Friday, April 24** [note: these dates are set by HISD. *There are no exceptions to these deadlines*]

Testing Window

H **Monday-Thursday, May 11-14** [once you have completed your application and enrollment info, you may schedule a testing time within this window]

Current Kindergarten Students

Application Window

H **Monday, February 1 – Monday, March 2** [note: these dates are set by HISD. *There are no exceptions to these deadlines*]

Testing Window

H **To be determined**

Current Students, 1st-4th Grades

Application Window

H **February 1 – Friday, April 17** [note: these dates are set by HISD. *There are no exceptions to these deadlines*]

Testing Window

H **Monday-Friday, May 18-21** CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)

Each grade level will test at a different time. This test is administered online and students will be scheduled into the Computer Lab to take this test during this week.



It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, marital status, religion, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, or any other basis prohibited by law in its educational or employment programs and activities.