



January 2015

The Tiger Roar

From the Principal's Desk

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"Choose community over chaos" - Mitch Landrieu, 1/19/15

nappings in Nigeria and the attacks in Paris.

children and their families.

This statement was really striking, in light of the unrest that has rippled through our country following the highly publicized deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Gardner.

Sometimes, even good news seems to lead to individuals choosing to act ways that are destructive— look at the rioting that followed Ohio State's win in the first ever national championship playoff.

As we start the new year and new semester, I and other caring adult urge all students to start making choices that place community over chaos. Respect the rights of others to learn in an environment free of distractions, harassment or concerns for safety. Dr. King and other civil rights leaders fought too hard for equality, particularly in the area of education, to toss away this gift heedlessly. Choose to help build each other up in community rather than tear each other up in chaos.

The national news has offered many pictures of demonstrations, both peaceful and not; closer to home, our local news is filled with weeping mothers whose children have been caught in waves of senseless violence over trivial things. On the international scene, we see the kid-

The youngsters at Westbank Community School have made choices that have led to chaos in their own lives. They are taken from their neighborhood schools and placed with us. Sometimes, the chaos leads to unwanted involvement from the juvenile justice system or other agencies with

- Erika Mann, Principal

Special points of interest:

- This year, the Mardi Gras holiday will be a week long. There will be no school on Monday, 2/16/15 through Friday, 2/20/15.
- Interim progress reports will be coming out soon. Please look for them and contact us if you have any questions or concerns.
- WBC welcomes a new school psychologist, Ms. Shannon Lyons.

The Student Support System Program

The Student Support System revolves around the idea that the staff at WBC will know that a child is ready to return to the district school because s/he has shown the ability to make good behavior choices in a sustained, consistent way. We track that progress with point cards filled in hourly. At the end

of the week, each child's progress is reviewed, with a focus on two things: did the child earn the appropriate percentage of the points available and did the child have a critical incident.

In SSS, a student must earn 65% at Level 1, 75% at Level 2, and 85% at Level three over fifteen consecutive school days

in order to be successful. The days must also have no incidents which lead to disciplinary action. An example of this might be a child who earns points all day, but gets into a fistfight at dismissal.

If you have any questions about the SSS, please contact the social worker for more information.



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Academic Supports

.As you know, Westbank Community School has smaller classes and a higher level of support for students both in the classroom and with supportive services. Many students start at WBC behind academically. However, we are taking steps to help students regain ground while they are here. We want them to be able to approach academics and the high-stakes testing with confidence.

On of the programs we have started to use is a computerized reading program called "Achieve 3000". When a student starts at WBC his or her reading level is assessed with a screening, and then a personalized series of les-



sons is given based on the results of that screen. When a student shows mastery of a concept, the program allows him or her to advance at their own pace. Ms. Cooper teaches reading to the lower grades while Ms. Brown teaches in the upper grades.



skill over and over in a variety of settings and subjects.

On a limited basis, we are also

providing some targeted one-on-one tutoring to help students remediate, especially if they are not far off from their target.

Another step we are taking is to provide critical instruction in writing. We are using the iReady program to help students master the skill of writing clear, targeted paragraphs and essays. The teachers are requiring written work in all subjects, so that students are able to practice this

Students have incentives to do well, too! Many students have earned a treat on "Hot-n-Spicy Mondays". Other students have received public recognition for their high scores, not just at WBC, but also across other areas. We hope that you continue to encourage your child to take advantage of these programs, especially with testing drawing near.

Safety First!!

Your child's safety, both at school and in the community, are of primary importance



to us. With Mardi Gras just around the corner, we are reminding students how to stay safe at parades: keep back from truck wheels, always know a meeting point in case they are separated, know who to approach for help.

We will also be reviewing procedures for safety during weather events, particularly tornados,

since springtime is a peak season for them.

We urge you to review safety in your home. Young people should know how to evacuate their home in a fire and where to meet their parents just like they do at school. Go over "STOP-DROP-ROLL" if they are ever on fire, and how to stay close to the ground and touch door-knobs when evacuating from a fire. You should also go over with your family what to

do in a tornado –one touched down in Westwego not that long ago!

Finally, remind your children and demonstrate to them that no plastic carnival toy or beads is worth getting injured. Sometimes, people get caught up in the excitement with tragic results. We care about our kids, and want them to come back to use safely after the holiday.



UNIFORM POLICY—PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

With our recent surge in enrollment, we are taking this opportunity to remind everyone of our uniform policy. We ask that you keep the following guidelines in mind:

- JPPSS policy **forbids** starter jacket or look-alikes to be worn.
- **Hoods** on sweaters, sweatshirts or any covering worn in the school is **strictly prohibited**.
- Any **marking** on clothing that symbolizes, implies or infers affiliation with or membership in gangs, or depicts violence, drugs, weapons, weapons or obscene/sexual activities is **not allowed** at any time. This includes the socks with marijuana leaves that we've been seeing lately.
- Hats or caps of any type **may not** be worn inside the school.
- **Sweatshirts/sweaters** may only be the solid colors of **BLACK, WHITE, GREY** or **NAVY BLUE**.

As a reminder, students must wear a **white, collared knit shirt** to school. The type of shirt is commonly called "Polo Style", but any brand is acceptable as long as it is solid white with no symbols,

words or logos.

Shoes must be black, white, or brown. Any other color is not acceptable. Shoes that are black, white, or brown may have small incidental logos (such as the Nike "swoosh" or Reebok flag) in another color, but the laces, trim and composite sole should be black, white or brown. If you need clarification on this policy, please contact the school **BEFORE** purchasing shoes for your child.

Belts are a required part of the uniform. They may be black, brown, tan, or navy. They **MAY NOT** have studs or metal pieces that might cause injury, and the buckle must be small. Large buckles, which may cause injury to others, are not allowed. Buckles which have any words or symbols related to violence, weapons, drugs, sexual activity or affiliation in gangs are not allowed. The decision as to what is appropriate belongs to the principal.

Bookbags are not allowed. Female students may bring small bags for female sanitary items, but those bags may not be larger than a piece of looseleaf folded over horizontally.

Headbands worn by girls must be **white, black, or navy**, with no additional

objects (like flowers or beading) attached. Males may not wear headbands.

Earrings must be either studs or smaller than a nickel. Nose, cheek, lip, belly or brow rings are **NOT ALLOWED**.

Hair must be clean and cut or otherwise kept in control appropriately. Hair that causes disruption due to style or cut will not be allowed. This includes unusual/unnatural colors or designs or extensions/clip/weave in the hair. The principal has discretion to decide what is disruptive. Please ask for clarification **BEFORE** a hairstyle is obtained if there is any question about any of these conditions.

Clothing must be **CLEAN** and in **GOOD CONDITION**. Clothing that has holes or frayed hems, or that is either too short or too tight, is not permitted. School staff are mandated reporters to Child Protection, and repeated wearing of unsanitary and/or unfit clothing is something that staff is required by law to report.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AS TO THE SUITABILITY OF ANY ITEM OF CLOTHING OR STYLE, PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL BEFORE PURCHASE.

