

Educating Our Youth for Today and Tomorrow

**Westchester
Public Schools
District 92½**

Volume 9 Number 2

Winter 2010

A Message on District Finances

—by Dr. David Hill, Director of Finance and Operations

The financial future of the Westchester Public Schools, District 92½, appears strong. The District has achieved a certificate of financial recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education for each of the past four years. However, as a result of the economic downturn, the District's revenues declined slightly in 2008-2009. Expenses continue to rise as over 80% of the District's expenses are labor related.

The current economic climate, coupled with the low Consumer Price Index (CPI), will soon impact the District's finances. The .1% CPI in December 2008 will mean the District will receive little to no additional tax revenues for the next tax collection

year. Under the tax cap laws, the CPI largely determines the increase in the District's property tax revenue from one year to the next.

Annually, District 92½ officials develop the budget to align resources to meet the Board of Education goals. This process provides the flexibility to respond to low tax collections by adjusting expenditures. The District also analyzes financial projections to forecast five years into the future. District 92½ teachers and administrators continue to appreciate the work of the District's dedicated parent organizations in supporting "extras" that enhance student learning.

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Westchester Intermediate School

(Grades 3 through 5)
10900 Canterbury Street
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Westchester Middle School

(Grades 6 through 8)
1620 Norfolk Avenue
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"Be Proud, Be Counted"

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States, citizens and non-citizens, and is required by the Constitution to take place every 10 years.

The 2010 Census results will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for important services and are a factor in determining the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Census results will impact every community's finances for the next 10 years.

All personal data received by the Census is confidential, and protected by law. The data cannot be shared with other agencies, such as immigration or child welfare. (The Census results become public information after 72 years.)

The Census will be mailed to homes in March. Be sure to answer the 10 easy questions and return the Census in the postage-paid envelope. This spring, remember to, "Be Proud, Be Counted!"

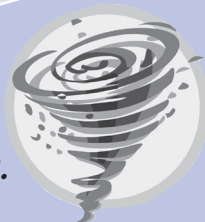
For more information, visit the Census website: 2010.census.gov/.



SPRING CONCERT FOR SENIORS:

A holiday concert for seniors was so successful that the Westchester Middle School's Band and Chorus are presenting a second concert this spring! **All Westchester senior citizens are invited to welcome spring with a FREE concert: Thursday, April 22, 8:30 AM, at the Westchester Middle School.** Enjoy a morning of uplifting music followed by refreshments. Tours of the school are available upon request. Be sure to bring a friend! The school is located at 1620 Norfolk Avenue, Westchester.

**The Tornado Chaser is
Coming to Westchester!
See article on page 2.**





Tornado Chaser Comes to Town!

The diligence and community spirit of two teenagers will soon bring a celebrity to Westchester to share storm safety information, scientific expertise, and tales of exciting adventures, with the community. Cable TV star Reed Timmer, the passionate tornado

chaser, is coming to Westchester in March!

District 92½ graduate and current St. Joseph High School junior Maggie Christopher, daughter of District 92½ Board of Education member Lori Christopher and Joe Christopher, has set her sites on becoming a meteorologist. Toward that end, she thought she would like to bring a community awareness event to the village. Maggie worked with St. Joseph High School senior James Kastrantas to make her dream a reality.

On March 12, Reed Timmer will give three presentations for the community. Two will be for children—the first in the morning at Westchester Middle School at 9:30 AM; the second, after school at St. Joseph High School. The third presentation, for adults and families, will take place at St. Joseph’s at 6:30 PM. All of the shows are presented without charge to attendees.

Students and families are sure to enjoy Reed Timmer’s enthusiastic 75-minute presentation, which will end with a question and answer session. For further information, visit the District 92½ website at www.sd925.org. Learn more about Reed Timmer and tornado chasing at his website: www.tornadovideos.net.

Summer Roofing Projects

Roof replacement work on all three schools will take place over the summer. All of the roofs that will be replaced are over 20 years old. The project will include replacing the entire roof on the Westchester Primary School, 60% of the Westchester Intermediate School roof, and 43% of the Westchester Middle School roof. The middle school work will replace the area that was not re-roofed when the school’s addition was built in 2000.

All roofing projects are based on a total removal of the current roofing system down to the original structural roof decks. The eco-friendly, reflective “Sure White” system will be used along with an insulation system to maximize utility cost savings as well as protect the environment.

Assemblies Help Teach Appropriate Behavior

WIS students are benefiting from weekly 15-minute assemblies that help teach students appropriate behaviors. The assemblies reinforce the school’s Positive Behavior and Supports Program (PBIS), in which students learn to “Be Respectful, Be Responsible and Be

Ready,” and learn what appropriate behaviors look like throughout the school.

Students may watch teachers and/or other students demonstrate—through skits, poems or other means—an example of an incorrect behavior,

then demonstrate the correct behavior. For example, a “Be Ready” skit could indicate the right and wrong ways to get ready to leave a classroom; “Be Safe” may show how students should keep hands and feet to themselves.

Continues on p. 4

Persons of the Year

The District’s four building foreman were named District 92½’s “Persons of the Year” for 2009.

They were honored at the annual Westchester Chamber of Commerce Dinner Dance on January 30, 2010.

The foremen are: **Dave Geisinger**, Britten; **Gary Grandsard**, WIS; **Scott Pope**, WMS/District Office; and **Jim Shotsberger**, WPS.

District 92½ Board President Barbara Stanger stated, “Our Building Foremen exemplify excellence in their work. Their strong commitment to teamwork and support for one another enables them to complete the most challenging jobs in an exceptional and efficient manner. We, as a District, can always be proud of the school buildings that community members and visitors see as they drive through Westchester. Our Building Foremen’s leadership and efforts ensure that our buildings are safe, immaculate, and conducive to learning.”



Snow removal is among the many responsibilities of the 2010 “Persons of the Year,” the District’s building foremen (L to R) Scott Pope, Jim Shotsberger, Gary Grandsard, and Dave Geisinger.

Meet Lori Christopher, Board Member

Lori (Melora) Christopher first became involved with District 92½ when her two daughters were young students at the Westchester Public Schools. She joined the WPTC and soon became a liaison for that organization at Board of Education meetings. She also served on the Referendum Steering Committee. Ms. Christopher, a former teacher and 30-year Westchester resident, became fascinated with the Board and its many responsibilities. She decided to run for the Board of Education. Today, after serving as a Board member for nearly seven years, her fascination has not wavered. "It is great to be a part of another side of education and gain a perspective on how school districts get things done. I have learned a lot as a Board member and keep learning more," Ms. Christopher stated. She is now the Board Secretary.



She believes that the Westchester Schools are very child-centered. "Children come first here. That has never changed, even as Board members have changed," Ms. Christopher commented. "We also benefit greatly from living in a small, close-knit community, where everyone knows each other."

Ms. Christopher cited hiring Superintendent Jean Sophie as one of the Board's biggest accomplishments. "Hiring a superintendent was a new process for me," she explained. "All of the Board members knew the attributes we wanted in a superintendent and we were extremely fortunate to find someone who so closely meets our goals and expectations." She is also proud that Dr. Sophie and the Board have created a Strategic Plan for the District. "The Board and the superintendent worked very hard to formulate the Strategic Plan, which will help guide the District into the future."

"I consider myself very lucky to work with a Board that is dedicated to achieving our common goals. Everyone in the District—teachers, administrators, staff members and parents—is incredibly dedicated and hard working."

Community Leader Readers

Once a month, WPS invites specific leaders in the Westchester community to come to the school and read to the children.

The guests have included parents, grandparents, village leaders, park district and library personnel, police, firefighters, and scout leaders. In February, the guests are leaders in the education profession, including District 92½ Board of Education members, District administrators, support staff and WPS parents and community members who work in education.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to share the importance and joy of reading with a variety of role models. We greatly appreciate our Community Leader Readers," said WPS Principal Akemi Sessler.

A parent committee invites leaders to come to the school and read. Meggan Wagner, parent volunteer, created a beautiful Leader Reader Wall of Fame near the school entrance. It includes photographs and bios of all the Community Leader Readers who have participated in the program.

Superintendent Receives Award

Dr. Jean Sophie, Superintendent of the Westchester Public Schools, was honored with the Jane Addams Award from St. Joseph High School in December. Ms. Donna Kiel, Principal of St. Joseph High School, explained, "It is fitting and appropriate that Dr. Sophie receive this award. As an educational leader, she is committed to a child-centered, traditional and caring school district. Dr. Sophie has a passion for learning and is vigilant about the impact education has on children."

Students Come to Conference

On Thursday, January 28, the Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators (IASPA) held its fourth annual conference at the



Hyatt Hotel in Lisle. Dr. Jean Sophie, Superintendent of the Westchester Public Schools, who is the 2009-2010 IASPA president, introduced the conference. A color guard from Cub Scout Pack 73 Westchester presented the flags and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Led by WMS Band Director Jason Kluge, the Westchester Schools' Jazz Band gave a special performance to a large and appreciative audience of IASPA members from throughout the state.

Pictured above are some of the members of the WMS Jazz Band who performed at the IASPA Conference, where members of Cub Scout Pack 73 Westchester (above right) served as the color guard.

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MISSION STATEMENT

tional experiences for all children. We are committed to promoting academic excellence, creativity, critical thinking, and the environment. We expect that students will develop as lifelong learners able to achieve success in a global world.

The mission of the Westchester Public Schools, District 92½, in partnership with our families and the community, is to provide exemplary instruction with challenging educa-

ing support for each other. Through PBIS, everyone in the school is learning a common vocabulary and expectations for behavior. We are seeing very positive results from the assemblies and from the entire PBIS program."

Assemblies Help Teach Appropriate Behavior *Continued from p. 2*

WIS Principal Lori Durchslag reports that at the assemblies, students who have received special recognition for good behavior, or who have earned other special recognition, are acknowledged for their efforts. She stated, "The students enjoy the assemblies. They like coming together and show-

Discuss and set guidelines/rules for computer use with your children. Post these rules by the computer as a reminder.

- Use the Internet with your children.
- Familiarize yourself with your children's online activities and maintain a dialogue with your child about what applications they are using.

Detective Krok is on a mission to ensure that all parents have access to their child's computer password. In case of a cyber crime emergency, this will allow the police speedy access to information on the child's computer, which could help prevent a crime from occurring.

Resources on cyber crime prevention are posted on the District 92½ website at www.sd925.org/WMS/lesson/CyberSafety.htm. Parents and students are also encouraged to visit the Chicago Police Department's CLEARpath page on Internet Safety at portal.chicagopolice.org/. Type in "Internet safety" in the search box.

On January 6, Detective Alan Krok, of the Chicago Police Department's Special Investigations Unit, gave Cyber Safety presentations to WMS parents and students.

Detective Krok told the audiences that the Internet has expanded to include laptops, cell phones, and gaming devices. Children today have more access to technology, but are often naive about the dangers.

The detective emphasized that students should NEVER make contact with anyone they don't know. Students were cautioned not to post their real names, addresses or phone numbers. They were also advised not to e-mail embarrassing messages, photos or videos to others.

Detective Krok's valuable cyber safety tips for parents include:

- Keep the computer in a central and open location in your home and be aware of other computers your child may be using.

Cyber Safety Education at Westchester Middle School