

February 3, 2010

Dear WMS Parents,

Western Middle School students, staff, and parents have had an exciting few months. Our teachers and students continue to utilize the mainstream curriculum to focus on our **Strategic Improvement Plan** initiatives by incorporating pre-reading strategies into all content areas, guiding students to make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-real world connections to all readings in order to increase comprehension, and supporting social emotional learning through the advisory program, use of the CLASS student expectation rubric, community service activities, and school wide programs. (Please remember that our improvement plan, CLASS rubric, and pre-reading strategies are all posted on the WMS website.) Students have completed five of the six planned school wide practice reading assessments and continue utilizing the Blue Ribbon CMT Prep software program to enhance their preparation for the March **Connecticut Mastery Tests**. The CMT practice exam will be administered on February 26th and additional testing will occur between March 1st and March 11th. A detailed schedule noting exact times will be posted on the website during the month of February.

Community service continues to play a primary role in our students' overall development. Our school responded quickly to support the victims of the earthquakes in Haiti by raising \$1,271.00 in a **Hats on for Haiti** campaign. During the months of January and February we will continue our yearly commitment to the **Pennies for Patients** campaign supporting the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

The **WMS Student Council** sponsored the **Turkey Trot** and the **Jingle Jog** to enhance **school spirit**. We are looking forward to the **Staff vs. Student Basketball Game** on Friday, February 12th and the Snowball Dance on Friday, February 26th. Our grade level **WOWFests** (Western's Outstanding Work) will be scheduled toward the end of February, and parents whose children have earned awards will receive an invitation. The **WMS PTA** sponsored the **Black History Month Assemblies** which featured Maxine Maxwell performing dramatic portrayals of African American women. The **6th grade** attended the **Anti-Defamation League's – World of Difference Assembly**. The **7th grade** had a wonderful experience participating in the **Japanese School Student Exchange Program**. Our **8th grade** will be attending an exhibit entitled "**DaVinci's Workshop**" in February. In addition, the Greenwich Police Department's Youth Officers conducted the following assemblies: Grade 6 – **Internet Safety**, Grade 7 – **Anti-Bullying**, and Grade 8 – **Social Choices and Safety**. Congratulations to all of the students who participated in the **Geography Bee, Spelling Bee, PTA Reflections Contest, and the Greenwich Citizen Writing Contest**. Our **Music Department** gave a highly spirited seasonal performance at the **Stamford Town Center Mall**.

Dr. Freund, Superintendent of Schools, attended the January **PTA Meeting** to discuss upcoming district plans and the WMS proposal to apply to become an **International Baccalaureate (IB) World School**. Please watch for upcoming **WMS Parent Meetings** during which we will share important detailed information regarding this exciting initiative. In closing, if you have not done so yet, please consider sharing your email address with the main office as much of the communication from the school will be using that venue. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Stacey Gross, Ed.D.
Principal