



The Screaming Eagle



SEPT 2009

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Dear Parents,

As we begin this new school year, the excitement and enthusiasm being demonstrated by our students and staff is as strong as ever. Our teachers have been given the charge of positively and effectively engaging our students with instructional activities that are relevant, challenging and interesting. It is my firm belief that students learn best when they can see how what is being taught translates to the “real world” experiences and situations.

I am pleased to announce that West Anchorage High School’s preliminary graduation rate for 2008-09 increased again over the previous school year. I would like to thank our community, entire staff and students for their help in making this possible. One of our goals this year is to continue this trend and to continue to work together to help our students succeed.

Please welcome Mr. Craig Walker and Ms. Nancy Brain to West Anchorage High School. Mr. Walker is our new Staff Services Assistant Principal and Ms. Brain is our new Activities Principal. Both Mr. Walker and Ms. Brain have worked at West Anchorage High School in the past and are excited to be back home at West Anchorage High School. Mr. Walker and Ms. Brain are strong additions to our staff and welcome the opportunity to meet our West families. Please help me welcome them both to the West Anchorage community.

A large thank you goes out to Lo Crawford and Lisa Mounds-Craft for continuing our ninth grade Ignition program. Our incoming ninth graders were introduced to the Ignition program on the first day of school. We saw excitement and positive energy from our new freshman class. First impressions and experiences are critical to success and our freshmen are well on their way to having a positive and productive high school experience.

Finally, I would like to invite all parents to our Open House on Wednesday, September 9th. A general orientation meeting will be held in our Auditorium at 7 pm. At 7:30pm parents will be able to visit their students’ classrooms on an abbreviated six period schedule. We hope to see you here for our Open House.

Rick Stone
Principal





In most classes, the students sit down at the beginning of the period in a grid of desks while the teacher lectures and explains from the front. The students may ask questions of the teacher, or the teacher may assign projects or assignments to the students, but generally, a pattern is kept in which the teacher simply pours information into the students.

Ms. Peterburs' Textiles – Costume Design does not follow this pattern!

Every day during my semester in Textiles class, the students taught themselves and each other how to perform the needed tasks. The room was not one student – teacher unit; it was a sea of self-contained projects, far more active and more engaging than your average classroom. This is not to say Ms. Peterburs just sat back at her desk and sipped hot cocoa. In fact, she appeared busier during her class than most other teachers I've observed. She was constantly jumping from group to group, informing and instructing, sometimes working on a project of her own.

In most classes, students sit down and wait for knowledge to flow from the front of the classroom into their laps. There is no literal purpose. The only task is to listen, practice, and retain the ideas put in front of them. The students may apply the knowledge to their lives, or the teacher may provide a way to produce something using the skills they are provided, but generally, a pattern is kept in which the students simply observe and become aware.

Ms. Peterburs' Textiles class does not follow this pattern!

There were only a few occasions during the semester in which we were simply shown something so we would know it could be done. This class is all about **the doing and discovery.**

Every day we entered the classroom, there was something waiting to be created, destroyed, altered, or adapted. One's progress in the class was not marked out in data memorized as much as in clothing created, costumes built. This is not to say we didn't learn anything in class. In fact, the knowledge we gained in a class like this is arguably the longest retained. I learned so much in this semester about the crafts of thread and yarn to write down in one place, and I know I'll keep the knowledge because I did it! It's one thing to be told how to make a pair of pants out of a sheet of cloth, and another thing entirely to actually make (and wear) those pants.

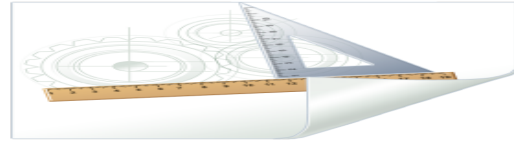
In most classes, the students are an isolated pod. What you do in one class has nothing to do with what happens in another. The students may interact with other students with the same teacher, or the teachers may work together to create a weak connection between two or more classes, but generally, a pattern is kept in which each class is completely cut off from all others.

Ms. Peterburs' Textiles class does not follow this pattern.

Everything the Textiles class creates (save a few personal projects and work going outside the school entirely) is a costume for one of Mr. Block's theatre productions. Mr. Block tells Ms. Peterburs what he needs, the class designs and creates costumes to match his vision, and the school's thespians wear the costumes in the next school play. The two programs are connected in a way entirely unique to the Textiles – Costumes Design class. This is not to say they are the same class. The Textiles class and the theatre program are governed by different teachers and are in different departments. That's what makes their cooperation so unique.

Throughout the duration of this school year, I noticed great change. Not only in the class as a whole, but in every individual. At the beginning of the semester, we didn't quite grasp the concept of sewing and creativity, but as days turned into months the students in this class became more than phenomenal and amazing, we became ARTISTS – creative, hard working, and funny. What started as a quiet class of kids turned into a quilted blanket of personalities, ideas, and awesomeness.

Myrlin Barber
West High Student
Class of 2010



Staff Services

Welcome back to all West Anchorage High School students, parents, staff and community members to the 2009-2010 school year!

I am excited to return to West Anchorage High School after three years of supervising Activities at Service High School. Previously, I was assigned to West Anchorage High School for a period of five years where I supervised Curriculum and then Staff Services departments. I bring with me a total of twenty years of educational service to the Anchorage School District and am a proud parent of a West High graduate.

I have worked closely with many administrators and departments in the Anchorage School District with positive results and will continue to do so. In addition, I know many West staff and will strive to work effectively with them and new staff to continue to enhance the educational environment for our students, parents, and community.

Changes!

You will find a few changes and projects in the works when you return this school year. The front parking lot is more conducive to visitor and staff parking as administrator parking has been eliminated. In addition, you will observe new signage at the exit to the front parking lot as a measure to enhance student safety and traffic flow during peak drop off and pick up times.

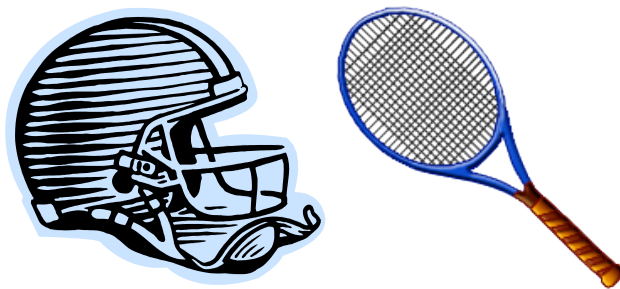
The front foyer will be home to the new Credit Union 1 branch which will now be an integral part of our Business Departments curriculum program. This excellent opportunity establishes practical applications for our students. In addition, the old photo lab has been renovated to accommodate instructional needs of Intensive Need students. This renovation incorporates rooms 36 and 38 as a comprehensive I.N. area.

If you are enjoying your summer, then take a stroll past our football field. We are thankful for A.S.D. Grounds and Maintenance crews who nurtured our football field through the mid summer dry spell. After looking down at the green grass, take a peek at the newly installed scoreboard which is operational and ready for action. What a sight!

Speaking of changes, Staff Services assistant principal Jamie Jones accepted a middle school principal position in Mississippi. Congratulations to Jamie and best wishes!

Craig T. Walker
Assistant Principal, Staff Services

Activities Corner



In would like to take this opportunity to introduce my self, I am Ms Brain the new Activities Assistant Principal at West Anchorage High. I am proud and pleased to be here at West. I have been with the Anchorage School District for over 20 years. For the past 2 years I have been an Activities Assistant Principal so when I moved into my office at West I hit the ground running.

We started out the year with a big win for our Football team. We defeated the Soldotna Stars, their first loss after a 29 game winning streak! Go Eagles!!

I am looking forward to watching our Flag Football team play on the West High field complete with a new scoreboard.

It is apparent that West High has great community support and we would like to thank Dr.Levine and the Alaska Spine Institute for the generous donation of a scoreboard for our field. I can't wait to see the new score board light up with many points scored by the West High Eagles.

Our homecoming is on September 12th at AFS, the student government has been working hard to make sure this event is both fun and memorable.

There are many opportunities to support your West High Eagles, so come to an event and show the students your support.