

## **W.I.L.D. about West ISD**

By David Truitt, Superintendent

Wow, it's hard to believe, but the first day of school is just one week away. The West Middle/High School cross country teams have already started running, and the volleyball teams have been holding tryouts and scrimmages. The Pride of West Marching Band started drills, and football practice is in full swing. The first day of school is set for Wednesday, August 14, 2019, and the anticipation is high for another outstanding start to the new school year. Our school district is closing in on 1,400 students with 588 students projected at West Elementary, 315 students projected at West Middle School and Brookhaven, and 485 students projected at West High School and Brookhaven. Over the past several months, the West ISD district leadership team has been working hard to help ensure this is the best first day in the history of our acclaimed school district.

The district-wide theme for the 2019-2020 school year is "W.I.L.D. about West ISD". WILD stands for We Ignite Learning Daily. Each school year, West ISD strives to incorporate a teaching and learning theme into the excitement of the start of the school year. This new theme is based on two premises. First, we believe that the school year is a journey not a destination. The WILD theme is set on a jungle safari, and all that goes into the journey to ensure it's a success. Along the way, there is much to see, just like there is each day in every classroom across West ISD. Second, all of our staff members hope for the best for our students, and that we will do everything we can to get them excited about learning. Italian writer, Dante, once wrote, "A mighty flame follows a tiny spark." This quote represents the spark we will strive to ignite in the hearts and minds of each student this school year. I hope you are ready to see loads of jungle safari-themed decorations, newsletters, events, and fun!

West ISD has much to be proud of over the past school year. First, we are building on a strong state accountability foundation from the 2018-2019 school year where we saw all schools and the district positively rise in the new state numerical grading system. West Elementary School even gained twelve scale points and is no longer on improvement required status. West High School rose to an 89, just missing the letter grade of an A by one point, and the district will once again be top five for 3A to 6A districts in central Texas. Next, we have several, new leaders coming home to West for the new school year. Mrs. Carrie Kazda is the new Principal at West Elementary School, Mr. Chuck Klander is the new Principal at West Middle and High School, and Dr. Whitney Dudik is the new West Elementary School Assistant Principal. Third, our state legislators passed House Bill 3 which has provided more money for our classrooms, increased teacher compensation, and cut local property taxes for taxpayers. I believe House Bill 3 is one of the most transformative Texas education bills in recent history. As Mr. Mikeska and his team reviews the required calculations within House Bill 3, our staff and community will see quite the positive change in our compensation packages for our wonderful staff members. Finally, our Board of Trustees and I still believe we, as a community, can do more for our youngest learners. The needs at West Elementary we presented back in 2017-2018 have not changed, so we still need to see the vision fulfilled at a future date. Our West Elementary School students and staff deserve the safest and best learning environment possible. To date, we have hosted three community planning sessions and discussed the possibility of calling a new Bond in the near future. My hope is for the community to come together and discuss a potential new bond timeline, all concerns from the May 2018 Election, and a final plan for how we envision educating our Prekindergarten through Grade 5 Trojans in West.

With the start of school comes many important dates and opportunities for our students and parents to meet their new teachers and other staff members. "Meet the Teacher and Bring your School Supplies Night" is set for Monday, August 12, 2019, at two different times. Prekindergarten through Grade 2 will attend from 5:30-6:15 PM, and Grades 3 through 5 from 6:15-7:00 PM. I will be in the library throughout the night to answer any questions about the potential new Bond Project for a new West Elementary School. Following this event, West Middle School is hosting its "Schedule Pick-up and Meet the Teacher Night" from 7:00-8:15 PM on this same night. From 7:00-7:30 PM, a short parent orientation is scheduled in the auditorium. West High School has set Thursday, August 8, 2019, for FISH Camp for all incoming Grade 9 students from 12:00-2:00 PM. "Schedule Pick-Up and Meet the Teacher Night" is on this same day from 7:00-8:15 PM. From 7:00-7:30 PM, a short parent orientation is scheduled in the auditorium. On Saturday, August 10, 2019, the Athletic Booster Club has scheduled the "Meet the Trojans and Lady Trojans Community-wide Pep Rally". The fall sport participating athletes will be introduced at 6:00 PM, followed by a scrimmage at 6:30 PM. Both events will be at Trojan Field. Free hot dogs are on the menu.

As you can see, we have many exciting events coming up over the next two weeks. My hope is that you will come out to support our amazing students and staff members. We are truly blessed in West to have so many fabulous reasons to showcase our students, staff, campuses, and work. I believe the 2019-2020 school year is going to be the greatest in the history of West.