

---

---

Westfield PTSA  
Minority Achievement Committee Newsletter

# THE MAC

---

**6th Edition October 2006**

---

## **WELCOME!**

By: Celeste Peterson

*Welcome Back Bulldogs, and a special welcome to our newest addition, the Class of 2010*

Those were the first few words from our MAC newsletter last year, except we welcomed the class of 2009. Those words were written by my daughter Erin, who now is a freshmen student at Virginia Tech. With my experience from last year and prior years here at Westfield I encourage you to get involved. Being involved with the school benefited my daughter and our family in many ways. Your involvement can be with one or many events at the school or volunteering in the school once a month. Whatever your level of involvement, get involved and stay it's to your child's benefit.

### **The Chairman's Corner**

**Mark Richardson, MAC CHAIR**

On behalf of the Minority Achievement Committee, I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all of our new and returning Westfield parents and students. I hope that each of you have enjoyed a safe and relaxing summer.

For our new parents who may be unfamiliar with the MAC, let me take a few moments to provide a brief description of the MAC. The MAC was formed to address the County-wide disparate achievement levels between minority and majority students. The primary mission of the MAC is to increase the academic

achievement levels of minority students at Westfield High School to eliminate this achievement gap.

The MAC accomplishes its mission by working in partnership with the school administration and staff, parents, and the community. This partnership allows for better identification of sources and causes of under achievement of minority students. Moreover, it permits pointed development of programs and solutions to address these causes, thereby increasing the achievement level of minority students.

The committee meets on a regular basis throughout the school year (normally on the third Tuesday of each month) to discuss new ways to increase parental involvement, which is a key component to closing the minority achievement gap. We also host parent coffees to share information with minority parents.

The theme for this year is developing new processes for increasing parent involvement and student participation in school extra curricula activities and clubs. Our Fall Parent Coffee is scheduled for Wednesday October 25, 2006 at 7:00 pm. in the school Lecture Hall. Please come out and meet the committee members and share your ideas for closing the achievement gap.

I encourage you to consider joining the MAC and become an advocate for academic excellence for ALL students. Please contact me if you are interest in joining the committee or have any questions related to our committee. I can be reached most efficiently by email at

maramr@cox.net. I can also be reached by telephone at (703) 793-4947. You may also join our committee on line or obtain up to date committee information and happenings on our web-site. Just go to the PTSA web-site and click on the Minority Achievement link under committees.

**MAC FALL  
Parent Coffee  
October 25  
7:00p.m.  
Lecture Hall**

### **Welcome Back!**

**Tim Thomas, PRINCIPAL**

Dear Parents,

Welcome Back! We have already begun what promises to be another exciting year at Westfield High School. Our theme this year is "Proud of our Past, Focused on our Future". A preliminary review of our data reveals that we have made gains in some areas of minority achievement, however; it also clear that there remain areas where improvement must be made. Closing the minority student achievement gap at Westfield continues to be a major area of focus at Westfield High School. The Minority Student Achievement Committee is a vital element to the current and future operation of Westfield High School. I encourage you to become involved in as many ways as possible. We are planning a variety of activities to increase awareness and to develop strategies that address

minority student achievement. Your participation and support is important in making consistent and measurable progress toward closing the minority student achievement gap at Westfield. I look forward to meeting with you at our first MSA Parent Coffee on Wednesday, October 25, 2006.

Estimados padres,

El Comité Minoritario del Logro del Estudiante es un elemento esencial a la corriente y la operación futura del colegio Westfield. Yo le aliento a liarse en como muchas maneras como posible. Planeamos una variedad de actividades para aumentar el conocimiento y para desarrollar las estrategias que dirigen el logro minoritario de estudiante. Su participación y el apoyo son importantes en haciendo el progreso coherente y mensurable hacia cerrar el espacio minoritario del logro de estudiante en Westfield. Espero la reunión con usted en nuestro primer Café de Padre de MSA el miércoles, el 25 de octubre de 2006.

**Westfield High PTSA**  
**Jennifer Campbell, President**

Welcome to a new school year! By now, hopefully your student has adjusted to his or her academic and social schedule and to a school with a student population of over 3,200 students! Under the leadership of our new principal, Tim Thomas, who was promoted from lead assistant principal, the school administration, faculty, and programs will have the continuity it needs. Tim has made it clear that he is committed to having a positive school experience for *all* students.

The PTSA applauds the efforts over the past 6 years of Mark Richardson, who has been recognized as Volunteer of the Year Award from the PTSA, for

his leadership with the Minority Achievement Committee (MAC), which is a program under the auspice of the PTSA. Over the years Mark has been quantifying results gained by of working more closely with minority students at Westfield. Lessening and hopefully, eliminating the achievement gap is an attainable goal, but efforts need to be ongoing and cannot be done without your help.

I encourage you to join the Minority Student Achievement Committee as well as the PTSA. Parental involvement is critical to closing the achievement gap. It is the most visible way that you can show your child that you value their education. It is also a way to seek out others with similar ambitions and make a big school smaller. You can join both groups on line by accessing <http://ptsa/westfieldhs.org> and click on membership for the Minority Achievement under committees. A calendar of events is also on line for MAC and the PTSA, including the monthly coffees and meetings. PTSA meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month in the library. We welcome your input and look forward to working with you for the benefit of our children. Contact me at [JCcampbellPTA@aol.com](mailto:JCcampbellPTA@aol.com), or 703-266-1742 if you have any questions.



## Get a Head Start with BITS

**Carol Jasper, BITS Program Coordinator**

Welcome back to a new school year! Don't wait till your grades start slipping get involved with BITS (Bulldog Instructional

Tutoring for Students) a free program for students from grades 3-12. BITS meets three to four Saturdays a month from October thru June with the first session beginning October 14th at 8:45 to 11:00a.m. in WHS Library. Registration for BITS can be done online on the WHS webpage @ [http://www.fcps.edu/WestfieldHS/guidance/bits/bits\\_info.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/WestfieldHS/guidance/bits/bits_info.htm)) or see your counselor. Registration packets are also available from the subschools. For additional information, please see the PTSA Minority Achievement Committee website, with the link "BITS", or contact Carol Jasper, BITS Coordinator [carol.jasper@fcps.edu](mailto:carol.jasper@fcps.edu) or call 703 488-6363 ext 7167. Your school counselor is also available if additional information is required.

Statistical data will be done every quarter to see the progress of our students along with some incentives to assist them in their progress. We are seeking more volunteers from our sponsors to help with our continued endeavor; to help students reach their academic goals and to close the achievement gap. I am looking forward to a wonderful school year.

## Register For Keep in Touch



Register now for Keep in Touch, a service that allows employees, parents and others interested in emergency messages and other information about the school system to receive updates via e-mail. Participants set up individualized profiles and receive the most up-to-date information as soon as it is available. To sign up, visit the FCPS web site at

[www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) and choose 'Keep in Touch' on the left hand side. Or, visit direct:

<http://fcps.medianext.com/fcps/signup.html>

### MINORITY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT HANDBOOK

Westfield High School (WHS) proudly completed and distributed the first for high schools in Fairfax County the Minority Student Achievement Handbook (MSA). It is available again this year for faculty, staff and parents. WHS as shown progress in closing the achievement gap, but we can not count it a success until there is no achievement gap. The continued help of dedicated parents, faculty members, members of the administrative team and the community is needed to see that WHS becomes the first high school in the county with no achievement gap; that's the goal. The MAC will continue to provide detail test data illustrating issues that needed to be specifically addressed in the classroom and with teachers at Westfield. The handbook is full of helpful, useful and realistic strategies that our faculty and staff can use to address minority achievement in the classroom. With this handbook and the active participation from faculty, staff and parents we can and will close the gap. Need a copy? See your child's counselor or contact the school office. Want more details?, come to the first MSA Parent Coffee on October 25, 2006.

**M a k e t h e  
C o l l e g e  
C o n n e c t i o n  
a t t h e 31s t  
A n n u a l  
C o l l e g e  
F a i r a n d**

### C o l l e g e N i g h t P r o g r a m s

Fairfax County Public Schools high school students and their families are encouraged to attend the following two events to explore post graduation educational opportunities:

- College Fair 2006 at Fair Oaks Mall, Sunday, October 15, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
- College Night 2006 at Hayfield Secondary, Monday, October 16, 7-9 p.m.

Both events provide opportunities for college-bound students and their parents to gather information from a variety of schools. About 400 colleges and universities are represented, including two-year and four-year colleges and business, technical, and nursing schools. In addition, College Night will offer workshops related to college admissions.

Pertinent updated information can be found by visiting the FCPS web site at <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/collegefairnight/>, or by contacting the FCPS College Fair liaison, Beth Westbrook, at [elizabeth.westbrook@fcps.edu](mailto:elizabeth.westbrook@fcps.edu).

### **Telephone Parent Information Line Available in Korean and Spanish**

Parents who speak Korean or Spanish have a new resource—a telephone information line—available to help them learn general information about FCPS and to receive support if they are having difficulty communicating with their child's school due to a language barrier.

The Parent Information Line numbers are:

- Spanish—703-764-7361
- Korean—703-764-7363

A parent may call at any time, leave a message in his or her language, and receive a return phone call in that language from an FCPS staff member within 24 hours.

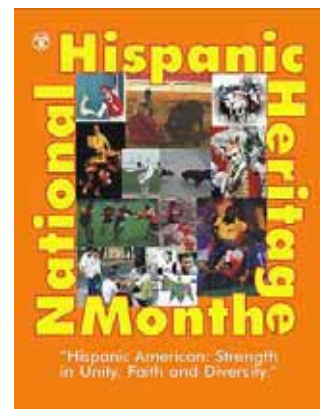
**THE  
WESTFIELD STEP  
TEAM  
HAS A Sponsor!  
STAY TUNED FOR  
DETAILS**



### **MAC Fact**

**Definition:** a historical insight about a person of color or an event concerning persons of color designed to help shape and uplift pride in the heritage of our minority youth

### **Hispanic Heritage Month**



**September 15 – October 15**

Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16 and Chile on September 18. The term Hispanic, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race.



**Ana Castillo, Writer, Poet, Educator**

Ana Castillo is, according to Elsa Saeta writing in *Melus*, "One of the most articulate, powerful voices in contemporary Chicana literature," a poet, essayist, editor, and novelist whose "work has long questioned, subverted, and challenged the status quo." Writing in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Ibis Gomez-Vega commented that Castillo is "one of a few Mexican American writers who have attracted the attention of the mainstream reading public." Gomez-Vega further noted: "From her earliest writing [Castillo] has tried to unite those segments of the American population often separated by class, economics, gender, and sexual orientation. Her success is a tribute to her self-discipline, her courage, and her considerable literary ability."

Born in Chicago, Illinois in 1953, Castillo is the daughter of working-class parents Raymond and Raquel Castillo. Castillo credits the rich storytelling tradition of her Mexican heritage as the foundation for her writing,

though outside of the family she found little initial encouragement.

Out of college, Castillo first earned her living as an instructor in ethnic studies and history, and as poet-in-residence at various universities. Her first published volumes of verse--*Otro Canto*, *The Invitation*, and *Women Are Not Roses* — "examine the themes of sadness and loneliness in the female experience," according to *Dictionary of Literary Biography* contributor Patricia De la Fuente. "[They speak] for all women who have at one time or another felt the unfairness of female existence in a world designed by men primarily for men."

Castillo received her formal education from Northern Illinois University, where she received a B.A., 1975. She continued her education at the University of Chicago, M.A., 1979 and the University of Bremen, Ph.D., 1991.

Gomez-Vega summed up in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*: "Castillo's novels, short stories, and poetry all emerge from a working-class Latina sensibility; yet her work has crossed social and ethnic lines to examine issues common to all people regardless of their cultural backgrounds or ethnicity. Her detailed descriptions of a specifically Latino culture are the backdrop for a body of literature that speaks to people of all cultures."

For more information go to Thomson Gale Free Resources at: [http://www.gale.com/free\\_resources/chh/bio/](http://www.gale.com/free_resources/chh/bio/)

**I T ' S T H E  
M A C  
A T T A C K**

- Did you attend Back to School night?
- Did you see and review your child's first quarter interim reports?

- Is your child struggling in any subject?

**E - M A I L o n e  
K E Y T O  
Y O U R  
S T U D E N T ' S  
S U C C E S S**

So you went to back to school night and collected all those teacher e-mail addresses and now you are wondering what to do with them? **E-mail the teachers!** From the science teacher to the gym teacher they would love to hear from you. Don't know what to say? Follow these simple tips:

- Introduce or re-introduce yourself and identify your by name.
- Offer the teacher help at home with any problems identified that your child may be having at school. This will let the teacher know that you are their partner at home.
- Identify what the best way to get in contact with you.
- Complement the teacher.
- Ask your child if there is anything that he/she would like you to ask the teacher.
- Quickly and clearly identify problems that may have come up and ask for and offer solutions.

Finally, don't make e-mailing a one time thing. Try to e-mail the teacher at least once a quarter, however once a month is better!

**Be pro-active  
THINK ABOUT IT!**

---

Do you have a question, or an issue you would like us to write about? Would you like to submit an article? We want to hear from you; contact;

- MAC Chair: Mark Richardson  
703 793-4947
  - MAC Editor: Celeste Peterson  
703 830-3795
  - BITS Coordinator: Carol  
Jasper  
703 488-6363 ext 7167
-