

# WAYLEE RAP-UP



**DEAR PARENTS AND STUDENTS:**

**TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2008-2009:**

A great deal of time will be devoted to the formation of classes for next fall. Our goal, as we make the classroom assignments, is to place each child in a learning environment that encourages the best possible growth academically, socially and emotionally. The teachers and I work carefully to develop balanced class lists considering such factors as academic strengths, personalities and behavior.

For the past 2 months placement request forms were available in the office. We asked that a specific request not be made unless there are extenuating or special circumstances which would not normally apply to other children. All requests had to be completed and returned to Waylee by Thursday, February 28th. This was a firm deadline.

Once class assignments have been completed, no changes will be made. We do our BEST to plan a successful placement for all our children. This is a trust we don't take lightly and hope we maintain your faith in us as professionals in this placement process.

Waylee Elementary School  
8106 Waylee Street  
Portage, Michigan 49002  
269-323-6500  
269-323-6590

We would also like to remind those families who live in another attendance area in Portage but attend Waylee because they have a babysitter in our area, that this is a special permission decision. You will need to put your request for the 2008-2009 school year in writing as soon as possible. Once you get permission, you don't have to reapply unless your schedule changes during the time your child attends elementary school.

Mr. Ron Jones Principal  
**April 2008**

**ARE YOU PLANNING TO MOVE?** If you will be moving out of the Waylee attendance area before school starts in the fall, please call the Waylee Office or send us a brief note. This helps us so much as we begin to plan our classes for 2008-2009.

**IS YOUR FAMILY PLAN IN PLACE FOR AN EMERGENCY DISMISSAL?**

1. Does your child have a house key or know where to find one?
2. Does your child have a neighbor to go to in case you are not at home?
3. Have you discussed several possibilities so your child knows what to do?  
If not, please **do it now!**

Local radio stations will give the most up-to-date information on school closings. Spring often brings storms and tornado warnings/watches. When the weather is threatening...stay tuned!

**WHAT TO DO WHEN A TORNADO  
THREATENS:**

--Stay away from doors, windows and outside walls. Protect your head.

--In homes and small buildings, go to the basement or to an interior part on the lowest level. Get under something sturdy.

--In schools, hospitals, and public places, move to designated shelter areas. Interior hallways on the lowest floors are best.

--In mobile homes or vehicles, leave them and go to the nearest shelter. If there isn't shelter close by, lie in the nearest ditch and shield your head with your arms.

**NEWS ABOUT BIKE RIDING**

A signed permit is required before students are allowed to ride their bikes to school. We do not encourage (but we do allow) students to ride bikes to school if they are in 3rd, 4th or 5th grades ONLY. Parental discretion is recommended with this decision to ride to school due to individual situations and neighborhood safety factors. Any child not following the safety rules will lose their permission to ride their bike to school. (There is no way we can ensure the safety of the bikes from vandalism.)

## **BUS RIDERS WHO WALK**

Bus riders must have a parent note if they want to walk home from school. Parents are to send a note to the teacher granting permission for their child to walk home, and the notes must be initialed in the office between 8:35-8:43 a.m. We do not allow phone calls except in cases of emergency.

## **TARDINESS & POOR ATTENDANCE SPELL** **T-R-O-U-B-L-E**

When your child is absent from school, he misses more than the day's lessons. Class discussions can be just as valuable.

If your child is truly sick, he/she should stay home, of course. But missing school for any other reason can become a bad habit. Studies show that kids who have poor attendance in the elementary years are much more likely to drop out of high school later.

You can show your child how important you think good attendance is. Schedule doctors' appointments, haircuts, shopping, and family vacations after school hours.

If your child must stay home due to illness, ask the teacher if assignments can be sent home. Keeping up with schoolwork will make things easier when he returns.

***Finally....remind your child that going to school is their number one job!***

## **HONORS ASSEMBLY**

Our Honors Assembly is still in the planning stage. Watch for a special notice later in the year with date and time. Parents are welcome to attend this assembly which honors some of our 4th & 5th graders.

## **YEARBOOK**



The yearbook will be sent to the publisher shortly and we should receive our copies in late May. Thank you to all of you who ordered a yearbook and/or ad. When they come in, we will have a limited amount of extra copies available for purchase if you did not pre-order. These copies will be \$13.00 AND they will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact Christina DeHaan at 329-0284 if you would like to order one or have any questions. Thanks!

## **Attention: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents**

Just a reminder. It is a state law that all children must have three Hepatitis B shots to enter Michigan Schools. Since your child is going to be moving into another school (Middle School) they must have these shots. Also, it is State Law that your child must have the Varicella immunization or proof of chickenpox disease. If your child was born in Michigan you should be fine because they started giving these at birth, but if you have come from another state you might want to check on your child's immunization record. Thank-you Parents!



## **ANNOUNCING THE WAYLEE TALENT SHOW & AUDITIONS**

Planning for the Waylee Talent Show is progressing, and we are excited about this year's event! All 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders have been given an opportunity to audition with their 2 minute act. Auditions take place Feb. 26 and 28 before school: at either 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. each day.

We will have two practices for this year's talent show. Both practices will be held after school on Tuesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 13 from 3:45 to 5:30. If your child is participating, they must be at **BOTH** rehearsals for the entire time.

The final performance will be held at the Portage Central High School auditorium on Tuesday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m. Come and join us!

Questions about the Talent Show can be directed to Jean Galia 323-6518 or Bill Klinesteker 323-6525.

## **INTERNET SAFETY**

Here are two important tips to keep your children safe on the Internet. Tell them to open e-mails only from people they know. Also, they should never give out information about themselves on the Web. *Examples:* their school, age, or address; friends' or family members' names.



## PRETTY LAKE VACATION CAMP

Parents of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Graders: Pretty Lake Vacation Camp forms went home February 28, 2008. If your child is planning to attend camp this summer, you must fill out and sign the form then **return it to school ASAP**. A Pretty Lake representative will then pick up all the forms to be considered. Thank you!

### WAYLEE OFFICE HOURS: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

With the warmer weather we are noticing students being dropped off earlier and earlier and getting picked up later and later. Students are not allowed in the building until 8:35 a.m. unless they are going down to the cafeteria to buy breakfast, at which time they can come in at 8:15 a.m. School dismisses at 3:42 p.m. We appreciate prompt pick up of students as there is no supervision before or after school. Thank you for your help with this matter.

### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What do you have to pay when you go to school?



**A:** Attention!

### GIRL SCOUTS

Right now, girls in our community are waiting to become involved in Girl Scouts. In order to get Girl Scout troops up and running for these girls, we need adults to team up and become troop leaders or to be part of a troop committee! We're looking for volunteers who represent the diversity of the world we live in – women, men, senior citizens, younger adults, etc. – anyone who wants to help make a difference in the lives of girls. For more information on becoming a mentor for girls, please contact the Girls Scouts of Glowing Embers Council at (269) 343-1516 or stop in at 1011 W. Maple St., Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

***Girl Scouts. Where Girls Grow Strong.***

### Sister Kindergarten

Portage Public Schools encourage parents to have their children enrolled for kindergarten in the spring prior to their first year of school. We then try hard to create balanced class sizes for all students. This year in order to help us accomplish this goal, we will continue to implement sister school concept when necessary. As students enroll they will be placed in a school where the numbers can best accommodate additional students. Transportation will be provided if the district places a child at a sister school. Contact your home school for enrollment information.

# LIFE SKILLS

*Our life skills spell*  
**R-E-S-P-E-C-T**

**Responsibility**  
**Effort**  
**Solving problems**  
**Perseverance**  
**Empathy**  
**Confidence**  
**Teamwork**

## Play It Smart School Tips

1. Learning is your child's job and you're the manager.
2. Show a continued interest in their schoolwork.
3. Set time aside each evening to complete homework.
4. Give praise and encouragement.
5. Set up goals and reward system.
6. Make sure your child eats a wholesome breakfast and has a lunch filled with good foods and snacks.
7. Set and enforce a regular bedtime.
8. Identify any problems your child may have, discuss ways to address them.
9. Schedule educational extracurricular activities like visiting a museum.

## TEAMWORK

### WHAT TEAMWORK MEANS...

**TEAMWORK**, according to the Webster dictionary, is "to work together as a team to achieve a goal"

#### **Teamwork:**

Is working with others on a common goal.

Is sharing and pitching in to help.

Is not always getting your own way.

Is knowing when to work with others and knowing when to work alone.

We see teamwork on T.V. in sports, we use Teamwork to play games at school, but sometimes we forget families use Teamwork too!

When there is a BIG job to do...

- Like fixing a meal
- Like cleaning the house
- Like planting the garden

Do you ask, "What's my share? What should I do?"

“Snowflakes are one of Nature’s most fragile things, but just look at what they can do when they stick together.”



## PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PREP PROGRAM



When: Friday, March 21, 2008 between 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Where: In room 116, Portage Community Ed. Center, 1010 W. Milham

Why: You will have a chance to meet the teachers, see the classroom, have questions answered and pick up an application.

Your child is welcome to accompany you.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR 2008/2009 AVAILABLE March 21**

- \* A State-funded preschool program for children residing in the Portage Public School District. FREE to families enrolled.
- \* Child must be four (4) years old, by December 1, 2008 or turning five (5) years old after December 1, 2008.
- \* Space is limited. Families must apply and be accepted into the program.
- \* Students attend October – mid May (30 weeks).
- \* Classes run Monday – Thursday, A.M. or P.M. (approximately 2 hr. 45min each day).
- \* The program will run provided funds are available from the Michigan Department of Education.

For more information and an application please call the P.R.E.P. classroom, 323-6711 ask for Georgia or Heather.

**No New Taxes:  
Countywide Millage Placed on May 6 Ballot  
Is a Renewal to Continue Instructional Funding**

Residents of Portage Schools, along with all other citizens throughout the county, will be voting on a 1.5 countywide millage renewal in the May 6 election. Portage Schools receives almost \$3 million a year from this operational millage, which covers instructional expenses (as opposed to the November bond that voters approved, which is for construction and remodeling). The millage was originally passed in May 2005.

At its February 18 meeting, the Board of Education discussed the challenging position it will be in without the millage renewal and voted unanimously to place the renewal on the ballot. Without the \$3 million annually that this millage provides, students will face reductions in programs and services, such as:

- Cuts in teaching staff that will:
  - reduce up to 40 teaching positions
  - resulting in an increase of class sizes to 30+ students per class in elementary schools
  - reduce course offerings for high school students
  
- Cuts in media specialists, counselors and other support staff
  
- Cuts in programs that give our students an edge:
  - International Baccalaureate and AP fees and support
  - Education for Employment intern programs
  - Kalamazoo Area Math & Science Center courses
  - Gifted & Talented Services
  - Reading Support Services
  
- Cuts in:
  - athletic programs
  - music and theatre programs
  - textbook purchases and other instructional materials
  - busing, resulting in fewer bus stops and more walkers

According to Board President Shirley Johnson, even with the revenues from this countywide millage for the past three years, the District has had to make about \$1.3 million in cuts to balance the budget. She explained at the February 18 meeting that even with the countywide millage being renewed, more budget cuts would be likely – and therefore failure of the renewal would result in an even greater shortfall. Since the 2002-03 school year, the District has made \$3.8 million in cuts.

If you are not a registered voter, you have until April 7 to visit your city or township clerk or a Secretary of State license bureau.

## **Two Board of Education Seats Also on the Ballot**

District residents also have two Board of Education seats to fill. Trustee, and past Board president, Tom Eddy is retiring from the Board, and current Board Vice President Jennifer Whistler is running for re-election. In addition to Ms. Whistler, candidates running for the two four-year seats include Kurt Kuppler, Russell "Rusty" Rathburn, and Joanne S. Willson.

Visit our Board of Education page (click on Administration link on the homepage) for meeting schedule, minutes, and Action Briefs (summaries of the meetings released the day after, since minutes are not posted until approved at the next regular meeting).



### **HELP WANTED:**

Would you like some extra money? Maybe Portage Schools can help. We are looking for noontime Cafeteria and Playground Supervisors who can work approximately three hours a day at our elementary schools. For details about these permanent and substitute positions, just call Human Resources at 323-5174.

### **HOMEWORK HELP**

Do your children expect your help with their homework? Let them know you're around if they need you --- but their homework is their job. The benefit? They'll learn how to find the answers themselves, as well as boost their skills.

### **APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**

Autism is a complex brain disorder that inhibits a person's ability to communicate and develop social relationships, and is often accompanied by extreme behavioral challenges. Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in one in 166 children, affecting four times as many boys as girls. The diagnosis of autism has increased tenfold

in the last decade. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have called autism a national public health crisis whose cause and cure remain unknown.

People on the Autism Spectrum may exhibit, one, several, all or none of these characteristics:

- Not understand what you say
- Appear to be deaf
- Be unable to speak or speak with difficulty
- Engage in repetitive behaviors
- Act upset for no apparent reason
- Appear insensitive to pain
- Appear anxious or nervous
- Dart away from you unexpectedly
- Engage in self-stimulating behaviors (hand flapping or rocking)

Helpful hints for interacting with someone who has autism:

- Speak slowly and use simple language
- Use concrete terms – AVOID SLANG
- Repeat simple questions
- Allow time for responses
- Give lots of praise
- Do not attempt to physically block self-stimulating behavior
- Remember that each individual with Autism is unique and may act differently than others

The PET (Preprimary Evaluation Team) program provides developmental assessment and planning for children ages 0-6 who reside within one of the following school districts: Climax-Scotts, Comstock, Galesburg-Augusta, Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, Parchment, Portage, Schoolcraft, or Vicksburg. Any interested parent or care provider may refer their preschool age child suspected of significant developmental delays in the following areas: physical, mental, vision, hearing, speech and language and Autism Spectrum Disorder. For more information contact [Felicia Burnette](mailto:Felicia.Burnette@portageps.org) by email or phone 269-373-3263. You can contact KRESA at (269) 385-1500 for additional information on Autism Classrooms for Elementary, Middle and High School aged children.

The Waylee Elementary Resource Room has recently received the donation of several books about the Autism Spectrum and Asbergers. The books vary in subject from simple informational stories that teach K-6 about what Autism and Asbergers is to detailed guidelines for parents and administrators. The books are available for parents to check out. If you are interested, please contact Mary Jensen ( [Mjensen@portageps.org](mailto:Mjensen@portageps.org) or 323-6521) or Michele Morrison ( [MMorrison@portageps.org](mailto:MMorrison@portageps.org) or 323-6522).

### **Walk About Talk About Autism**

**April 26, 2008**

**Walk About Talk About Autism**, sponsored by the Autism Society of Kalamazoo/Battle Creek, will take place on April 26, 2008 at the Celery Flats in Portage. Please join us for a fun family event to help us celebrate Autism Awareness in our community. There will be a 1.5 mile walk, followed by lunch, door prizes and goody bags. There will also be fun activities for children. The cost is \$15.00 per person 11 years and older. A t-shirt of your size choice is included in that price. Children 10 and under may walk for free. Any additional t-shirts can be ordered for 10 dollars each. Registration begins at 10am with the walk

promptly starting at 11 am. If you would like more information please send your e-mails to: [twood@asa-kal.org](mailto:twood@asa-kal.org) or call 269-372-1509.



**SAVE THE DATE...**

Waylee Girls and Their Male Guest are invited to join us for:

*“An Enchanted Evening Under the Sea”*

*Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>*

*In the Central Middle School Cafeteria*

*From 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.*

*More Information will be sent home next week.*

