



West's Weekly

FEBRUARY 15, 2017

Wednesday Newsletter

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Black History Month

We are excited to continue to celebrate this month! Carter Woodson began Negro History Week in 1926, designating a week in February, because that month held birthdays for Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. The week-long celebration became Negro History Month and then Black History Month, designated as February each year by presidential proclamation.

Reminders: On **Thursday, February 16**, students may come to school dressed as a famous/prominent African American. Students should be prepared to share something about the life and significance of that person. And, on **Friday, February 24**, students may come to school dressed in clothing inspired by African heritage and culture. **(Note: Students who do not participate in our dress-up themes must wear their regular school uniform.)** Also, families are invited to join us at the assembly culminating our celebration of Black History Month on **Friday, February 24** at **2:15 PM**.



Class Highlight: Second Grade

An update from Ms. Fishman...

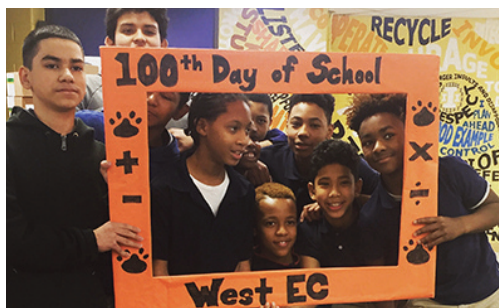
It already has been a busy February for our Second Grade classes. We had a successful field trip to the Kennedy Center, where our second graders enjoyed learning about instruments and what goes into making a symphony sound so beautiful. Not only did our scholars appreciate the National Symphony Orchestra, they also loved visiting the Kennedy Center. A big thanks to all of our chaperones!

Over the next few weeks in math we will continue to add and subtract using place value but now with three-digit numbers. In English Language Arts, we will be learning about activism.

We're 100 Days Smarter!

Staff and students alike enjoyed celebrating our 100th day of school.

View more photos at www.westschool.org/news-and-events.



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Five Tips for Academic Success

Recommendations from Principal Vroman for supporting academic growth...

- 1. Drop everything and read.** Forget the chores, errands and paperwork for a few minutes and have everyone in the family sit down for some uninterrupted reading time.
- 2. Ask book-related questions.** What is the main idea of your book? Who are the characters? Can you summarize the story? (Use text evidence to support responses.)
- 3. Work on math facts: addition, subtraction and multiplication.** This will help build mental math skills in your scholars.
- 4. Count the things around you.** Maybe it's the number of peas left on your plate at dinner or the number of blue cars you pass on the walk home. For students in First through Third Grade, have them count money, both coins and bills.
- 5. Use free online resources at home.** **ST Math** (web.stmath.com) uses interactive games for understanding math concepts. **Starfall** (www.starfall.com) offers phonics and reading support. **Newsela** (newsela.com) offers current events articles at various reading levels. (Your scholar should know his or her log-in: usually student ID number and date of birth.)

In addition, here are three tips to make homework time more productive:

- **Have a regular place for your child to do homework.**
Use a desk or table in a quiet room. Be sure there's plenty of light.
- **Quiet is best.** During homework time, turn off the TV and radio.
- **Do the most difficult homework first.**
Save "easy" subjects for when your child is tired.

Reminder about Attendance

We only are able to excuse absences from school for illness and bereavement; any other absence is considered unexcused. All parent notes to excuse illness must be submitted within seven days of the absence. Attendance notes (early dismissal or absence) may be sent by email to Bryan.Pinkard@dc.gov and Megan.Vroman@dc.gov or brought directly to the Main Office. If a scholar accumulates **five unexcused absences**, then we will schedule an attendance conference to review attendance policies and to see if we can support attendance challenges in any way.

Also, all scholars should arrive to school between 8:30 AM and 8:45 AM (unless they are registered for Before Care.) **Any scholar arriving to school after 8:45 AM will be required to sign in and receive a tardy slip before reporting to class.** We look forward to greeting scholars at 8:30 AM every morning.

Thank you for supporting regular school attendance. Every minute at school counts!

Meet the Chancellor!

Thursday, February 16 • 6 PM

West is pleased to welcome **DCPS Chancellor Antwan Wilson** to our school. All families are invited to join us as Chancellor Wilson shares his vision for our district. The evening will include a brief student performance and refreshments. Childcare will be provided. To accommodate this special event, the **West PSCO meeting** will be held at **9 AM** on **February 16**, instead of in the evening.

Gym Update and Dismissal

We are excited to share that our gym once again is fully operational! Thank you for your patience and understanding as the gym flooring was completed.

Over the past six weeks, because of the work in the gym, we have run dismissal from our classes. While this was meant to be a temporary procedure, we noticed that it allowed for families to have meaningful discussion with their teachers and to double check for homework before leaving. We also noticed that it saved more than 10 minutes of transition time—which extends learning time by 50 minutes a week! Both families and staff have expressed positive feedback during this period, and because it has provided a more peaceful and efficient way to end the day, we will continue with this dismissal procedure.

Please contact Principal Vroman with any questions. As always, we appreciate your support as we continually work to improve and maximize time with our scholars.

School Closures

There will no classes for students this **Friday (February 17)** because of a Professional Development Day. School also will be closed on **Monday, February 20** for Presidents Day. Enjoy the long weekend!