

March 5, 2009

Dear Western Parents,

While the economy has tightened a bit, Western will continue to provide the quality education that we have built our reputation on for over 88 years.

During difficult times, we realize the importance of Christian community, family and our children. It is during these potentially challenging times that each of us will decide how valuable Christian education is.

These are challenging times. Tuition may be tighter this year for some of you. However, the excellent teachers, extracurricular programs, opportunities, and great parent/teacher involvement are all part of the rich environment your child and family encounter daily at Western. Therefore, it is vitally important that you continue to partner with us by submitting your 2009-2010 registration so that we may effectively plan our budget. I realize that there are still many unanswered questions for all of us, but as we move forward as a Christian community of faith, your continued financial commitment remains vital to this process, especially in these difficult times.

I trust you will prayerfully continue to partner with us this fall as we help create God's destiny of promise and success in your child's future and the community of Western Christian Schools.

I want to speak candidly with you about some issues. As you may know, there is much misinformation both in and outside our community derived either from blogs, misinformed parent groups, or other concerned sources. Please be very careful to accurately discern information that is uplifting, factual, and encouraging, rather than information that is discouraging, divisive, confusing, and infused with fear.

On behalf of all the **faculty, students and parents who love Western and the Godly environment and Christian education that Western provides**, we ask that if you have any concerns, suggestions, or ideas that you please feel free to call, email, or stop by to discuss the issues directly. We really **value your input and ideas**.

Here are some of the questions or issues that have been brought to our attention:

1. *Please explain the 3% increase in tuition*

WCS is very sensitive to the National economy and the impact it is having on our families. In spite of significant increases in: health insurance (16%), worker's compensation insurance (25%), and the rising cost of technology (12%), scholarships (75%), WCS increased tuition only 3%. Out of the 17 local private schools that were surveyed, 13 raised their tuition as well. WCS has made significant improvements to our campuses over the past two years to benefit the learning environment for our students in both facilities and educational equipment. WCS has spent **\$1,042,788** in facility and equipment so far during 2008-09 school year. We are making every effort to maintain quality programs at a reasonable fee.

2. *Status on the tuition difference in Upland Christian and Western Christian*

The current tuition rates and fees for K-8 are virtually the same except for high school. Upland Christian's tuition rates for the fall were increased 8% while Western Christian's tuition rates were increased 3% in an effort to align the tuition rates from both schools. UCS families are grandfathered in at tuition rates for 2009-2010 for a limited time only. In addition, all new students attending UCS will pay the WCS 2009-2010 tuition rates. It is a common practice in business to "grandfather" in existing prices for a period of time after an acquisition. WCS administration considers this action reasonable as it will allow the UCS families the opportunity to plan in advance for tuition increases. **Western parents are still paying their agreed tuition, with the lowest tuition increase in over 12 years.**

3. *What were some of the other key improvements that were funded this past year?*

- Accreditation of the Claremont Campus
- Expansion of courses:
 - Preschool – new curriculum

- Elementary – high school band was added
 - K-8 - cheerleading
 - Junior High - choir was added
 - 7th and 8th – Rosetta Stone (30 foreign languages available)
 - 8th grade – 7 habits of Highly Effective Teens
 - HS- speech and debate
 - HS – creative writing
 - HS – comparative government
 - HS – music fundamentals
 - HS (in fall) – AP Spanish 4
 - Fine Arts/Theatre arts equipment
 - New library equipment
 - Preparation for permanent home for the high school
 - Master Plan of campus design
 - New modular classrooms for Claremont complete with new equipment
 - Painting and facility improvements on both campuses
 - New football field and bleachers at the high school
 - New student counseling center at the high school
 - New high school library/media center
 - Smart Boards (4th – HS)
 - New computers in several classrooms
 - Expansion of preschool playground and new classrooms
- Some of the improvements that are slated for this summer:
- Sports field for Claremont
 - Removal of old houses

4. Status on Teacher's Aides

Due to lower enrollment this year, we needed to make reductions in our budget since we are tuition driven. This necessitated that we tighten up in some areas. One area that was cut was the teacher's aides. Last year we had 4 aides, and we currently have 2 aides. Since our enrollment is lower our student/teacher ratio in the classroom has not changed dramatically. Western continues to maintain low student to teacher ratios for learning instruction, less than half of most public schools. Some classes had a ratio during some resource instructional times of 1:7 and 1:14. This is not cost effective, but is a benefit of our small school environment at Western. **Western's academics have continued to climb as substantiated in our National SAT scores. 8th grade has scored post high school, 6th grade at the 10.4 grade level, and 3rd grade at the 6.0 grade level.**

5. Status on teachers receiving a salary increase for the '08-'09 school year

All of our faculty and staff received an increase along with the normal step increase. In addition, a new ACSI certification financial incentive was added.

6. Status on the Computer Program

We expanded and added a full set of new computers to the K-8 lab so each child could have a computer. Therefore, the entire class is able to go together to the lab. Last year, we only had half as many computers, so classes went half at a time which is less effective. The new computer schedule also allows the classroom teacher a full prep time during computer, instead of having the class divided.

In addition, this year:

Preschool: Added computer lab (2 hours total per month)

Kindergarten: Attends 10 more minutes every other week (20 more minutes per month)

1st – 5th: Attend 5 more minutes every other week (10 more minutes per month)

6th and 8th: Attend every week as last year

7th: Attend 1 quarter (1,620 minutes of concentrated instruction)

Smart Boards were added in the 4-8th classes and high school's are on order

7. Status on the PS-8 Spanish program

Preschool: Same as last year

K-2: In order to add more time back into the schedule for reading, language arts, and math, an educational decision was made to offer Spanish one less time per month than last year.

3rd- 5th: Same as last year.

6th: One additional quarter than last year (1,620 extra minutes of instruction)

7th and 8th: New this year; may opt to take Rosetta Stone as a language elective.

8. Status on Transportation

Western will provide free transportation to Upland this next year for families who are displaced because they are already traveling a great distance to get to Western's High School, to help with the cost of transportation to Upland for those families who will be burdened by the initial move. On Monday, March 2, 2009, Western brought in Mr. Brent Hull, a school bus transportation consultant. Mr. Brent Hull is the Bus Transportation Director for the Fremont Unified School District. Mr. Hull is a California Highway Patrol Certified Bus Driver Training Instructor and an OSHA Safety Specialist. He is the former transportation director for Redwood Christian School, in Northern California. He currently trains bus drivers for many of the Christian schools in the Bay Area. Mr. Hull spent the entire day with Mary Privett, Western's Transportation Director. He will be developing and recommending a comprehensive transportation plan for the move to Upland that will involve busing before and after school, as well as after school sports and other activities. He will also be helping us develop a voluntary parent carpool program. Western is committed to partnering with our parent community to resolve transportation issues to allow our students to remain with Western.

We are here to make your child's experience at Western Christian the best that it can be. Please email or call us with your thoughts, ideas, suggestions, or questions.

Partners in Christ for our kids,

Karen Winter
Superintendent, Western Christian Schools

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