

THE LINK

T.J. Walker Middle School Parent / Guardian Newsletter

January 2010

REPORT CARDS: First semester report cards are enclosed with this newsletter along with any outstanding bills.

T. J. WALKER RECOGNIZED: The Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA) has awarded T. J. Walker the Middle School of Excellence Award. We were selected from those schools recognized as exemplary middle schools of similar size and poverty rate. Congratulations to all the students, staff, and parents that make T. J. Walker a great school!

8TH GRADE D.C. TRIP PARENTS: *Important notes regarding the Washington D.C. trip:*

- The next \$100 payment is due February 1. The final payment is due March 20, 2010. **Checks should be written to T.J. Walker MS.** Please plan accordingly and take advantage of the many ways to raise money for the trip. The total cost of the trip will be \$750. Group fundraising will reduce that amount by approximately \$200.
- Our fundraising efforts are soon coming to a close. By now each 8th grade family should have received a postcard letting you know how many points you have toward the eight required to benefit from the group fundraising funds. We are still looking for parents and children to sell Younkers Community Day coupons February 6, 13, and 20. We will also need two individuals to distribute pizzas at Sonny's on February 13. These are group point opportunities. Please contact Melissa Haack at 746-5739 to sign up for these events. Don't miss out on these opportunities if you are in need of points! Please check out the website for the latest information on all events. Feel free to contact Sandi Smith 743-2267 or Paula Reichel 746-7659 with any questions.
- Monday, February 1, is the last day to turn in Econo Foods receipts for credit toward this year's DC trip.
- Monday, February 1, is the last day to turn in Sonny's pizza orders and money.

GEOGRAPHY BEE CHAMPION: Cassidy VanGheem (7th grade) won the right to represent T.J. Walker at the next level of the National Geography Bee competition. Cassidy was one of eleven students who qualified for the school contest held on January 5. The other qualifiers by grade were:

Grade 6: Christian Mallien (runner-up), Tommy Safranski, and Andrew Skarvan

Grade 7: Tim Dahl, Mareah Desotelle, Isabeau Hitzman, Riley Sorelle, and Grace Weber

Grade 8: Brandon Sawyer and Scarlett Suhrer

FRESHMEN REGISTRATION: Parents of incoming freshmen for the 2010-2011 school year are invited to attend an informational meeting on Monday, February 8, from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. in the high school commons. Information regarding scheduling, credit requirements, course options, and other items related to one's freshman year will be discussed. Since students will be hearing the same information in school that day, they are not required to attend but are certainly welcome. If you are unable to attend, please contact Mr. Grahl at 746-1827 or "ggrahl@sturbay.k12.wi.us".

CHOIR NEWS: Congratulations to 7th grader Isabeau Hitzman and 8th graders Miranda Roop and Michaella Yant who were selected to represent T.J. Walker Middle School in the State Middle Level Honors Choir. The girls spent two days in Eau Claire, rehearsing music with Mark Johnson, an outstanding conductor from the Twin Cities. The Honors Choir then performed at the Wisconsin Choral Directors Convention. The 6th Grade Choir has been invited to sing at a benefit concert at Bay View Lutheran Church on Sunday, February 14 at 2:00 p.m. They will perform some old favorites and new tunes on the theme of "love". The public is invited to attend. 7th and 8th Grade Choir members are preparing for the district Solo and Ensemble Festival at Southern Door on Saturday, March 20. More information will be sent home with those students who are participating.

PARENTS OF 7TH GRADERS: Just a reminder that the Milwaukee trip form is due by Monday, February 1. Students handing in this form after this date may not be able to participate due to limited seating.

BAKE SALE FOR HAITI: We would like to thank all who participated in the 6th grade Bake Sale to support the Haitian earthquake victims. We were able to donate \$551.00 to the American Red Cross. Thank you for helping us to teach our children the importance of supporting people in need.

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OPEN ENROLLMENT: Under the open enrollment law, February 1 – 19 is the time period during which families must apply for enrollment to a district other than their district of residency for the 2010-2011 school year. Parents may apply online at <https://www2.dpi.state.wi.us/OpenEnrollApp>. Application forms may also be obtained from Kathie Brunette at 746-2807 in the high school office. No applications can be accepted before February 1 or after February 19 at 3:30 p.m. If your child has already been accepted, and is currently attending our school, you do not need to reapply. If you plan on moving out of the Sturgeon Bay District prior to July 1 and would like your child to continue attending Sturgeon Bay Schools, you should complete an application. Please inform friends who may be considering the Sturgeon Bay Schools.

THE CIRCLES OF LIFE CONFERENCE: The Circles of Life Conference held April 29 & 30 in Stevens Point is for families who have children of any age with disabilities or special needs and the professionals who support and provide services for them. The Conference is a unique opportunity to develop new skills, garner the latest information, and form lasting friendships. Please see their web-site at <http://www.wfv.org/circle/> or call CESA 7 parent liaison Sara Nerenhausen at 606-7791 for more information. Scholarships are available.

3-ON-3 SHOOTOUT: The Booster Club will be hosting a 3 on 3 basketball tournament on Saturday, February 27 at the high school and middle school. We're looking for volunteers in the following areas: scorekeepers, concessions, referees (with experience), clean-up crew, and those willing to provide baked goods. If you'd be willing to volunteer for a shift, please contact Pam Seiler at rico4@charter.net or call 743-5851. Both boys and girls divisions in grades 3 through 8 are invited to participate in the tournament. The cost is \$80 per 4 person team and t-shirts are given to each participant. Entry forms and rules are available on the district website at www.sturgeonbayschools.org

PENNIES FOR PATIENTS: It's time to empty that coin jar, clean out those couch cushions and check your pockets for Pennies for Patients! From January 25 to February 5, our school will have a penny war to support The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The winning class in each grade will earn the right to represent their grade in a dodge ball challenge on February 12. The money raised will go toward research and patient services. Our school goal is to raise \$300 and remember, every penny counts! The collection jugs are in the middle school office.

SCHOOL TAXES: By now the 2009 tax bills have arrived. The largest portion of the increase in the property tax is the result of the school tax increase. The question being asked by local property owners is why?

The fact of the matter is the State of Wisconsin's 2009-2011 budget has caused the Sturgeon Bay School District's tax to increase. The state budget took away from the school district over \$700,000 in state aid. The local district went from having 40% to 30% of its budget funded by the state. The result of the loss meant the local taxpayer had to make up the difference. To make matters worse, the state did not make this decision until July of 2009. By law, the district's teaching staff was set by May of 2009. The late decision by the state would not allow for any staff reductions before the beginning of the school year.

Over the past three years, the school district has worked hard to control costs. In July, the support staff union, teacher associate union, and non-represented staff changed insurance companies to save over 12% on insurance costs. The district has not filled teaching positions at the middle school and high school that were no longer needed because of smaller class sizes. Energy saving projects were completed in the high school, Sunset, and Sunrise and will help lower energy costs. Ink jet printers were eliminated from the district budget. These are just a few of the things the district has done and will continue to do to control costs.

The 2009-2010 school district budget has an increase of 2.9% in actual expenditures. The current state school formula causes the district to struggle to make ends meet. The state formula treats the district as if it is land rich and assumes the local taxpayers can afford to pay more for the school. The district also has declining enrollment, so the formula restricts revenue. The school board did not set up the funding formula for schools, nor did it ask the state to lower the state aid to the school district. The school board can only work within the state funding system.

The school district appreciates the support it gets from the entire Sturgeon Bay community. The school district will continue to look for ways to hold down spending while providing a sound education to all of our students.

- Joe Stutting, Superintendent of Schools

DATES TO REMEMBER:	Feb. 1	D.C. Trip Second Payment & Milwaukee Trip Form Due
	Feb. 10	Teacher Inservice Day (1/2 day of school)
	Feb. 14	6th Grade Choir sings at "Love Fest" (2:00 p.m.)
	Feb. 18-19	6th Grade Overnight Science Field Trip
	Feb. 20	7th & 8th Band Solo & Ensemble Festival @ Gibraltar
	Feb. 26	MS Dance (7:00 - 9:00 p.m.)
	Mar. 1-5	Spring Fever Week
	Mar. 4	6th Grade Solo & Ensemble Festival @ SB