

MadWest Class of '61 update

*This is a "WOW". As of today our Madison West Class of '61 Educational Foundation has raised \$24,350—three very sizable gifts—two in memory of Jerry Smith – several matching grant challenges and many small, medium and large gifts. Another donation has been promised in memory of Mary Doyle. About 10% of our class has contributed this Fall.

We are hoping to raise enough money to ensure that the Respect Retreat can continue for the next few years without needing a lot of grant or school money. So it would seem the more that we raise the better.

The Respect Retreat is the project that our Class has helped to sponsor over the years. This year we will probably donate about \$12,000 to cover the program. This is only about 75% of the total cost. Another \$4,000 will be needed for the 600+ lunches provided over the 4 days.

*This year the Respect Retreat will be Dec 12-15th. Each day a different group of 9th graders will attend. The best part of the day is from about 2-3pm at the "camp fire" when the kids can talk about how the day affected them and perhaps changed their behavior. Please come if you can! We are welcome!

Donna McDowell Beestman, Jeff Bartell and I have now met several times with the new principal, Karen Boran. She is a keeper. What energy! This year's goal was to reduce cell phone use in school—3 "bads" in class—your phone is gone and a parent will have to go school to retrieve it. The kids agreed to this as part of a larger agreement regarding their respectful behavior in class. Letters were sent out to the parents. The teachers are thrilled with the results. Next year's goal—no more wandering in the halls during class. She is also trying to give the teachers back a little power and self worth.

Each day about 25,000 people enter West. 22,000 kids and then teachers, staff, etc. Karen Boran tells us that these are "good kids" and she wants them to have a good education. She feels that we can't wait – we need to "meet their needs today – now".

The science budget was cut by the state 60% this year, the budget for the math dept is \$900 for the year. A software program for calculus problems needs to be renewed this year at a cost of \$1500+, all the 9th graders and others who take algebra need calculators, a teachers wanted to use a \$75 book rather than their choice of the \$25 book, money is needed for pizza or taco's just to entice kids to meetings. i.e. a leadership club for fellows of color.....and the list goes on and on.

In working with the last principal, Beth Thompson, and a representation of the Foundation for the Madison Public Schools, various funds were created to try and cover costs for projects/materials the school needs.....now and in the future. You will probably get a letter from the Foundation near the end of the year detailing this. **Eventually we will roll our Class of '61 Educational Foundation Fund into their fund for Student Excellence and Leadership.**

This year for each of the 6 Funds, I think they will list their focus projects.

I know they need to replace the rigging on the stage, computers for the design lab, and furniture for some of the class rooms. Karen is going to get a “wish list” from the department heads to help direct where the money in these funds will be used next year.....or later this year if the fund raising goes well. If every alumni of West was as generous as those in our class, West could go long way in funding many of their needs.

So if the Respect Retreat does not interest you. There will be several others areas that you can support at West.

If you decide that you want to contribute now, here are some options....

Denis White tells us you can use PayPal – go to: fmps.org

Or just send a check to:
Foundation for Madison’s Public Schools
101 Nob Hill Rd Ste 300
Madison, WI 53713-3969
Notation: Madison West Class of '61 Educational Foundation

Even if you decide not to donate to this cause, remember you are part of an exceptional group – and I know most of you have helped to make our world a better place. I think we grew up in the golden age of childhood – and we had a class of really nice kids. We were and are very fortunate.

*Will keep you posted as to how the Retreat goes.

Robin Allin
Peggy Ahlgren
Jeff Bartell