

THE LYCOMING VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



A Tradition of Excellence **September 2006** **Welcome Issue**

ECHO Publication

The *ECHO* is the official newsletter of the Lycoming Valley Middle School. It will be published monthly, September through May, and will usually be distributed the first Friday of each month. The *ECHO* includes information concerning dates school events and is intended to inform parents of activities at Lycoming Valley. The students are asked to be sure parents receive it as soon as they arrive home. Please ask your child for the *ECHO* if you have not seen it by the second week of the month. Each year, parents tell us they did not know about important school happenings simply because they did not receive or read the *ECHO*. Parents will hopefully read the publication each month so they can be involved in the TERRIFIC things happening at the "Valley."



WELCOME

We extend a special welcome to all of our new students. If you have any needs or concerns, please contact your teacher, our guidance counselors Miss Skipper, for students with last names that start with A-K, or Miss Hanna for students whose last name starts with L-Z, or one of the principals, Mr. Dougherty or Mr. Williams. We know your first few weeks will be spent meeting new students and staff. Many of you will feel nervous about being in a new school and getting used to middle school. This is typical and you should know you are not alone. Do not be afraid to ask questions. We are here to help you!

We also welcome back our 7th and 8th grade students. We expect you to be the leaders of our school by setting a good example for our new students and helping them. Our simple rules include: keep hands, feet and objects to yourself; practice common sense and common courtesy; and respect the rights of others. We are looking forward to a great year at the "Valley."

New Staff at the Valley

As we begin a new academic year, there are new faces among our administrative and teaching staff. We would like to welcome Mr. William Reed who will be teaching 6th grade mathematics. He is replacing Mrs. Marion Boyd who retired in June. We also welcome Miss Brittnee Engel to the mathematics area, teaching 7th and 8th grade mathematics, replacing Mr. David Lingle who also retired in June.

Mr. James Dougherty is the new principal at Lycoming Valley Middle School. Although new to the building, Mr. Dougherty has been in the Williamsport Area School District for 28 years. He has served in various areas including middle school band director, dean of students, assistant principal and principal of Curtin Middle School. Most recently Mr. Dougherty served as Director of Technology for the WASD.

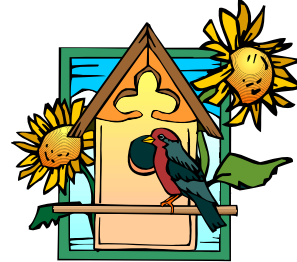
We welcome back Mrs. Sarah Bohnert and Mrs. Sue McCusker from their 2005-2006 sabbatical leaves.

Dress Code Reminder

The weather is usually very warm during the month of September so please help your child to choose proper attire when dressing to come to school. Please read the following reminder concerning the dress code found in the *Student Rights and Responsibility* manual mailed to your home by the student services office. This year's copy of the manual will be mailed to your home in the near future by the student services office.

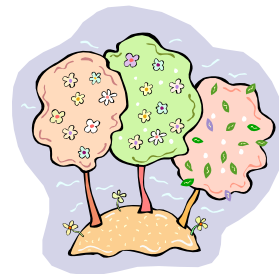
The wearing of clothing that exposes the midriff or buttocks is not permitted. The wearing of pants or shorts below the waist is not permitted. Examples of dress not permitted: flip flops, tank tops, spaghetti strap tops, midriff shirts, muscle shirts, clothing with inappropriate wording and scanty shorts that do not extend beyond the student's fingertips when the hands are held at his or her side. Upon entering the building, hats must be immediately removed. The wearing of clothing/jewelry that exhibits references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, violence, sex, profanity, or gang-related activities is not permitted.

School officials may impose limitations on dress if attire causes a disruption of the educational process or constitutes a health or safety hazard under the guidelines of the policy. ***Only natural looking hair colors are allowed, which excludes pink, bright red, orange, blue, green, purple, etc.***



Picture Day

School picture day will be Wednesday, October 4, 2006. Wenzel Studio from Muncy will be providing the photographers this year. Picture flyers will be sent home 10 days in advance. PLEASE carefully follow the instructions on the flyer and DO NOT send the payment to school before picture day. Your child will hand the envelope with the check or cash to the photographer at the time his or her picture is taken.



Moving or Change of Address

If you have moved or if your home has been assigned a new address, please notify the school office immediately. There are several mailings during the year, including progress reports, for which we need an accurate address. Also please notify the office if your telephone number has changed. The school phone number is 494-1700.

PTO Membership and Officers

The first open PTO meeting was held on Wednesday, August 23 during the 6th grade parent orientation. At this meeting a budget was presented for approval and committees were announced in order to provide service to the school throughout the coming year.

The annual PTO membership drive will begin Monday, September 11 and continue through Friday, September 15. Dues are \$5.00 per person. **Your support is needed and appreciated, as this is the only major fundraiser for the PTO during the year.** All funds generated are utilized for programs and events at Lycoming Valley. A membership flyer will be sent home on Thursday, September 8. Please send your membership payment to school with your child in the envelope provided.

PTO Officers for 2006-2007

President – Jill Confair
Vice President – Bobbie Jo Staver
Secretary – Kelly Sponhouse
Asst. Secretary – Jennifer Gray
Treasurer – Sandy Silburg
Membership – Karen Fischer
Book Fair – Tina Jedrzewski
Hospitality – Tina Peterson
8th Grade Party – Anne Marie Lopatofsky

Thank you to all of the officers and chairpersons for volunteering to serve in their capacity for the betterment of the Lycoming Valley Middle School community.



PTO Meetings

PTO meetings are open to all parents of Lycoming Valley students. Many parents have expressed their concern that the meetings are only open to board members. We invite all parents to attend our meetings and to be involved with what is happening in your child's school life at Lycoming Valley. Our next PTO meeting is Thursday, October 19 at 7:30 p.m. If you have any questions concerning the PTO program, please contact one of our officers listed in the previous column or one of the school principals. Please check out our website at Lycoproto@wasd.org. Our school motto for many years has been "*Working together to do what is best for kids.*"

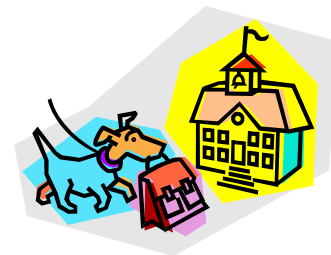


Personal Valuables

The following is a quote from the student handbook found in the front of the student agenda book under "general rules."

"Valuables such as trading card collections, expensive leather jackets and jewelry, electronic games and large sums of money have no place in the school and should be left home."

This statement would include any type of popular trading cards, which are not allowed on the bus or in school. Although portable IPOD, MP3, and CD players are permissible on the *bus only*, the school will not be responsible or liable for theft or loss. ALL students must provide a lock for his or her PE locker. This should be a combination lock and should stay on the PE locker at all times. If a student chooses to use a key padlock on his or her phys. ed. locker, the gym teacher must be provided with an extra key that is kept in the PE office.



Parent/Teacher Orientation and Visitation

The parent/teacher visitation will be held on October 12, 2006 from 7:00-9:00 P.M.

Parents will be asked to follow their child's even day schedule through a series of eight shortened periods. The teachers will provide an overview of the curricular content of their courses as well as their individual and team expectations. We would like to emphasize this visitation is for ***parents only*** in order to eliminate distractions for both parents and teachers during the evening.

Free and Reduced Lunch Applications

The office of student services mailed free and reduced lunch applications and Family Educational Rights information in August. If you did not receive this packet, please contact the school office. The lunch application must be returned to the school or the WASD Food Service Department at the District Service Center if you want to receive free or reduced lunch for your child. The full price for secondary breakfast is \$1.00, reduced price is \$.30 and \$1.75 for full secondary lunch and price for reduced lunch is \$.40. The price for milk is \$.40.

Contacting Teachers

We encourage parents to keep in contact with teachers. All teachers have both e-mail and voice mail accounts. If you would like to speak to a teacher in person, please call 494-1700. If the teacher is with students, you will be connected with his or her voice mail and the teacher will call you back within a 24 hour period. If you would like to contact a teacher via e-mail, please use the teacher or administrator's first initial, followed by the first seven letters of the teacher's last name, all in lower case with no spaces, followed by @wasd.org. (ex. jdougher@wasd.org) You will also find staff e-mail addresses on the district website by clicking on the "employee e-mail" tab.

TRANSITION TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school is a GREAT change from that of elementary school. Parents can help make this transition much easier for their children by being involved in several areas of their child's life. You can be a BIG help to your child by monitoring the following:

--Agenda book: Your student will have this planner/homework book from the first day of school and teachers will instruct him/her on expectations for its use. ***Please ask your child to see it daily and expect that all assignments be written in it, including upcoming tests and projects.*** Teachers and parents are urged to communicate through written notes in the agenda book: checking the book daily can then become an important part of the home/school communication process. It is the student's responsibility to show any parental notes to the teacher.

--Attendance: We are trying to teach students that school is their workplace. Employers check with schools regarding applicants' attendance before hiring. Also, research supports the fact that students with good attendance get better grades and score higher on standardized tests than students with poor attendance.

--Sleep: A middle school student should get a minimum of eight hours of sleep daily.

--Breakfast: Encourage your child to eat fruit, cereal or bread, and milk so (s)he does not run out of energy by mid-morning.

We look forward to meeting and working with you and your child. Please do not hesitate to contact the school or your child's teachers with any concerns.



Have a great school year!

Visit Us on the "Web"

Go to www.wasd.org and click on "schools"

Click on the picture of Lycoming Valley Middle School

A Message to Parents and Guardians

The Williamsport Area School District engages in an on-going review of the methods it uses to keep its students and schools safe. As we do so we believe it is important to keep parents and guardians aware of our safety plans and the impact those plans may have on families and the community.

Some of the school safety measures we use may inconvenience you and, if so, we apologize for any difficulties we may cause. However, maintaining a safe environment for your child in the face of potential problems is our highest priority and we take these actions only in order to ensure that safety.

Please know that we have developed our safety procedures in consultation with national experts on school safety, the Lycoming County Department of Public Safety, and local police agencies. Events have taught us that in some instances of concern it is possible to maintain most of the normal activities of the school day, providing a calm and uninterrupted day for children, while securing the buildings to potential outside risks. To do so, we must use what may be called a perimeter lock-down, which prevents anyone outside from entering and severely limits the opportunity for those inside to leave during this process. Such a procedure will only be used during the time of active concern about something happening in the community and will be lifted as soon as conditions return to normal. This action will, however, prevent anyone, even parents, from entering the building during the time it is in force. If it must be used, there is the potential for inconvenience to parents and others for the sake of our students' safety. Should such an action be necessary we ask that you understand that our intent is to protect your child and that you remain patient until we can reinstitute normal access to the schools.

Thank you,

Mr. James Dougherty,

Mr. Robert Williams

Student ID Cards and Breakfast

Students arriving at school prior to 8:20 A.M. may choose to participate in the traditional breakfast program or the "Grab and Go" breakfast program. Sixth grade and new students are issued temporary ID's without pictures at the beginning of the school year until after his or her picture is taken. All returning students should have turned their cards in at the end of last year or have them in their possession. If the card has been lost, the student will have to pay \$3.00 for a replacement ID. Students may put money in their cafeteria accounts weekly on Monday morning in the dining area prior to homebase. Please put the money in an envelope with your child's name on it. Your child will take the envelope to the cafeteria immediately upon arrival at school and place it in the box provided.

Student ID cards are part of the district's safety and security system and they allow simplified provision of services to students. Students are required to carry this card with them at school and in transit to and from school. Possession of the identification card is critical as it is used as a record of purchase card in the district cafeterias and is necessary to access transportation services. The cards of students who ride district buses include coding which allows access to specific transportation routes.



Excuses for Absence or Tardiness

A *written excuse*, signed by the parent or guardian, is required for **ALL absences**. The written excuse must be presented to a school secretary immediately upon return. An absence is considered unexcused after three days without an excuse. Students who arrive in homebase after 8:30 A.M. are considered to be tardy and must report to the office with a note from the parent or guardian explaining the reason for the tardiness. Students who are excessively tardy may be assigned to Saturday school.

Counselor Assignments Change

There is a change in the way students are assigned to guidance counselors this year. In preparation for the start of the 2006-07 school year, students were assigned to counselors alphabetically by their last name. This will allow students to have the same counselor for their 6th, 7th, and 8th grade years at Lycoming Valley. The counselor assignments are as follows:

- Last name A through K are assigned to Miss Christine Hanna.
- Last name L through Z are assigned to Miss Kate Skipper.

If you have any other questions or concerns, you may contact Miss Hanna or Miss Skipper at 494 – 1700 or at channa@wasd.org and mkipper@wasd.org.



E-Mail Address Alert

It has come to our attention that parents have tried to contact teachers and administrators from their home internet service and have not been able to do so. Our internet blocking service blocks all e-mail addresses that are aol.com or hotmail.com because students are not allowed to enter these particular websites. However, the school district can open up your particular e-mail address so that you can contact school district personnel and they can contact you. Please send your e-mail address to the school office with a request to open that particular address and we will have it opened.

Student Expectations

All students were included in orientation assemblies on the first day of school. Expectations for all students were provided by the principals during this assembly. Our expectations are very simple and we would like to provide them for the parents as well as the students. They are as follows:

Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself at all times.

Act like young ladies and young gentlemen.

Respect others and the rights of others. Follow the teachers' rules.

Be where you are supposed to be on time.

ECHO On Line

You can read the *ECHO* on your computer at www.wasd.org. Select *schools* and then the picture of Lycoming Valley. At the top of our home page, above the school name is the tab for newsletters. Click on the newsletter tab for the *ECHO* and then choose the edition you would like to read by clicking on it. You can see the editions for the entire year and catch up on what you have missed. Visit our school web site for other up to date information at wasd.org.



The Williamsport Area School District does not discriminate in employment or education programs, services, or activities based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, marital status, or non-relevant handicaps and disabilities, in accordance with State and Federal laws, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990. Inquiries should be directed to:

Debra Savage, Director of Personnel
Williamsport Area School District
201 West Third St.
Williamsport, PA 17701 1-570-327-5500