



West Broward High School Opening Brand New Doors!

By Margot Lyons Simons

West Broward High School in Pembroke Pines is complete and will be opening new doors, new classrooms and new educational opportunities to their students in August. With construction complete and the boundaries for the school established, the school administration, faculty and incoming students are getting ready to unify and build new and everlasting traditions and school spirit! More importantly, they will be revolutionizing the educational curriculum offered in South Florida high schools. After touring West Broward High School (WBHS) and interviewing the Principal Dan Traeger, “impressive” is the best word to describe not only the campus, but the vision and impending implementation of each and every student's education. Yes, the “new” and the “unknown” can be a little scary for incoming 1,900 students and their families. However, with the “new” comes an abundance of possibilities and the “unknown” can make all the difference!

What is not new or unknown is the WBHS Principal. Dan Traeger is a seasoned and highly respected educator and administrator in Broward County. He was a Principal at Stoneman Douglas in North Broward for five years. Under his leadership, the school was ranked one of the best high schools in Florida. He subsequently moved up to District Coordinator for Broward County Schools and was then named Principal for WBHS in January of this year. Principal Traeger is very enthusiastic about his role at the new school where he can be

most influential in establishing a forward thinking “learn by doing” curriculum utilizing the incredible resources the school has been given. “This school will provide a rich, educational experience to every student that comes through these doors,” said Traeger at the walk through and tour of the campus. “I am honored to open West Broward High School! I am here to serve the students and the community,” he added.

The school was built to educate 3,100 students and, as the school will open without a senior class, they are anticipating a first day attendance of approximately 1,900 freshman through junior students. About 1,200 sophomores and juniors have been rezoned to WBHS from Cypress Bay and Everglades High Schools, and the remaining students will be incoming freshman from Silver Trail, Falcon Cove and Glades Middle Schools.

Every incoming student will benefit tremendously from the 21st Century technology that has been built into the school. LCDs, DVDs, sound systems, stand alone cameras, iPods, computers and streaming video capabilities are in every “live and interactive” classroom, allowing students to tap into the wealth of educational resources all over the country such as live iTunes University podcasts. In addition, WBHS has an insulated music room, engineering labs complete with lathes, drills and machines, science labs with gas and water fitted stations and acid-resistant work tops, technology labs with the latest in computers, programs, graphics and animation



capabilities, a huge gymnasium, rubberized floor weight rooms, and personal training rooms with electric stimulation technology. Designers and planners have thought of everything, including making this school one of the safest buildings in Broward County. The school will act as the Westside Hurricane Control Center and community shelter during threatening storms. From roof to windows and generators to water and sewage storage tanks, the school will be completely functioning and safe in an emergency. With all of that said, the most exciting educational aspect of the school's curriculum will be the opportunity for students to focus on major areas of interest.

Culinary Arts and Hospitality is just one of the areas students will be able to explore in a hand-on program. WBHS has partnered with the FIU School of Hospitality and Tourism to give those students interested in the field the best "real world" education and experience possible. Complete with an enormous functioning kitchen, prep area and cafeteria, students will put their acquired knowledge into action by performing all aspects of culinary arts and hospitality. They will learn ordering, inventory, food safety practices, cooking and serving. They will feed and serve the entire student body, as well as host multiple community gatherings at the school. Two hundred students have already chosen this tasty program as their major area of interest!

Equally impressive is their hands-on Pre Veterinarian program which encompasses a full range of animal services from grooming, obedience training, and general health care to minor medical procedures and surgical assistance. Live animal housing including massive aquariums, labs and surgical room are all on premises. The goal will be to place all Pre-Vet students into internships at local veterinarian offices. Upon completion of the requirements of the program, these students will graduate high school with a veterinarian assistant certificate allowing them to obtain employment as a veterinarian assistant/technician.

Rounding out the "learn by doing" curriculum is the Early Childhood Education program. For students looking to pursue the field of education as their career, WBHS was built with a childcare and pre-school on their campus. High School students will be able to take the knowledge they acquire in the classroom right to the children in the enrolled in their childcare facility. Applying their knowledge in an interactive, cooperative experience will compliment and reinforce all that they have

been taught. Students who complete the requirement of the program will graduate with an early childhood teaching certificate, allowing them to obtain employment in the field of education immediately.

"In order to truly learn, a student needs to apply the knowledge in a project-based environment, not just simply acquire knowledge in a classroom," said Principal Traeger. He also highlighted the other major areas of interest programs such as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - First Responder, Business-Marketing-Finance, Journalism, Technology & Graphics, and coming in 2009 - Court Stenography. By the time these students complete levels 4 & 5 in their major area of interest and graduate high school, they will have amassed anywhere from 9-12 college credit hours and potentially a Bright Futures College Scholarship.

Principal Traeger, along with his faculty and staff, are building a "learning community" where as a team, students and adults will work together. His philosophy may be summarized like this, "They will listen, learn, trust, become empowered and grow by continually evaluating, assessing, monitoring and affecting change for the better." The combination of his skills, vision, experience and high expectations coupled with the vast support and resources he is acquiring from the community and the School Board, is the foundation for this newly constructed high school.

Now comes the really fun part...establishing tradition at West Broward High School! Their mascot is the Bobcat. Their colors are Carolina blue and silver. The incoming junior class will become the first graduating class at WBHS in 2010. Their sports teams (JV and Varsity) are starting from scratch with no seniors, no history, and no rivals...YET! There are no cliques or "it" kids in a new school. Student Government positions are wide open and the potential for new clubs and organizations is limitless. Homecoming, prom, grad night, and graduation traditions will all begin this year and every incoming student will forever impact the future of West Broward High School. With each year that passes after their doors open in August, the "new" will fade away and what is now "unknown" will make all the difference at West Broward High School!

