

June 25, 2012

Dear Parents, Students and Staff,

A few years ago, the state eliminated the six-half day professional development opportunities for schools. As a result, our professional development time has either been eliminated or achieved by hiring substitutes for the small groups of teachers involved. While hiring substitutes has been effective, it takes teachers out of the classrooms and does not allow for school-wide professional development.

Professional Development is critical for the continued success and improvement of our students and staff. With the elimination of the professional development time by the state, beginning this fall, Western will build in professional development time for our staff by delaying the start of the student day each Wednesday morning by 30 minutes. This means that buses will run 30 minutes later on Wednesdays and classes will start 30 minutes later than normal. For students that drive or for parents that bring their child or children to school, the buildings will be open 30 minutes later than normal. In the event we would have a weather related delay on a Wednesday, we will eliminate the professional development activity for that day and start the day following the normal 2 hour delay.

The 30 minutes gained each Wednesday morning for professional development will be used for a variety of structured professional development activities. Our principals and teachers know the importance of this time and our principals have worked on a year-long calendar of events to address the professional development needs of our staff.

Activities planned include:

- Implementation, planning and training for the new teacher evaluation process
- Review, development and implementation of school improvement plans
- Vertical & horizontal articulation of curriculum
- Curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Curriculum Mapping & Diary Mapping
- Collaboration and planning for interventions
- Data tracking
- Teacher led training
- Classroom technology integration
- Safety information
- ISTEP+/IREAD/ECA information & test security
- Remediation planning

Our goal is to provide the best educational opportunities for all the students we serve. We believe this time will assist us in reaching our goal. We also understand that this change may create a hardship for parents with the morning supervision of your child or children. In the event this change will create a hardship for you, please [Click Here](#) to complete a form that will notify our office by July 20, 2012, so we can work to accommodate your needs as well. If you have any questions, you may also call me at 883-5930.

Sincerely,

Randy McCracken