

## West 40 Provides Services through NCLB Grant

**W**est 40 is the administrator of the region's Federal NCLB grant. This grant gives West 40 additional resources to provide intensive school improvement services to Academic Watch status schools in West Cook County. The grant enables West 40 to provide many services to these schools at no charge. The grant is supplied by Federal Title I and Title II funds, and state funds that are allocated for school improvement.

West 40 works closely with schools on Academic Watch status by providing school improvement services in the following areas:

1. **Data Analysis**
2. **Professional Development**
3. **Family, Student and Community Support and Service, and**
4. **Standards-aligned Curriculum Instruction and Assessment.**

### Data Analysis

West 40 works with school personnel to gather and analyze data to determine specific improvement areas. Data may even include a climate survey for teachers. "We look at all kinds of data to determine why students are not performing,"

said Dr. Douglas Dirks, West 40 staff consultant. "Until we can identify the problems, we cannot help find the solutions."

Professional Development Once improvement areas are determined, West 40 provides specialized professional development opportunities targeted to strengthen educators' skills in these areas.

Family, Student and Community Support, and Community Services Because this area is vital for student success, West 40 works with schools to find innovative ways to involve

parents. Community outreach is also developed, and systems for community support strengthened.

West 40 is a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools, an organization that helps develop ways to create and maintain effective partnership programs. West 40 staff consultants Douglas Dirks, Gertrude Johnson, and Kay Poyner Brown attended NNPS training in Baltimore last fall.

Standards-aligned Curriculum Instruction and Assessment West 40 helps schools

align curriculum and teaching with the Illinois Learning Standards and the Illinois Assessment Frameworks.

"As we move forward in our work with Watch Status schools, we are finding our approach to their school improvement efforts can be applied to all schools, at every level of achievement," Dr. Dirks explained.

For information on services West 40 can provide through the NCLB grant, please contact **Douglas Dirks** at **708/482-4350**. ■

## Summer Professional Development Courses

West 40's Summer Professional Development catalog was mailed to schools in April and is filled with enriching courses for teachers and administrators. Earn CEUs for professional development, and/or Administrator Certificate Renewal with West 40. The catalog is also available on West 40's website: [www.west40.k12.il.us](http://www.west40.k12.il.us). For more information, including registration deadlines and costs, call West 40 at **708/482-4350**.

West 40 continues to offer classes and othersupport for school improvement, including **Ensuring a Quality School Improvement Plan Using the ISBE System of Support Rubric**, May 27, and **Understanding and Using Student Test Score Data from ISAT**, August 12. Additionally, West 40 can also provide on-site programs tailored to schools' specific needs.

New classes include:

**Four Blocks Workshop for Primary Grades, June 23 and 24. CEUs: 1.2**

Explore the Four Blocks framework for beginning reading as presented by Eve Hayes, Georgetown, North Carolina Reading/Writing Consultant. *Continued on p. 4...*

## West 40 Administers Reading First! Grant

West 40 is the administrator of the Reading First! Federal grant for West Cook County. A part of the NCLB Act, Reading First! is a focused nationwide effort to increase the number of students who learn to read proficiently by establishing high quality, comprehensive reading instruction in grades K through 3. Low-achieving schools may also apply for subgrants. These subgrants pay for professional development classes and even purchase many new books for the school's library.

Building on a solid foundation of research, Reading First! is designed to select, implement and provide professional

development services for teachers using scientifically based reading programs, and to insure accountability through ongoing and reliable screening, diagnostic and classroom-based assessment.

Reading First! states that primary students will learn these reading skills:

1. **Phonemic awareness**
2. **Phonics**
3. **Fluency**
4. **Vocabulary**
5. **Test comprehension.**

Gertrude Johnson is West 40's Reading First! coordinator. She reports that West 40 has a number of unique professional development programs for all school districts to help their youngest students build reading skills. In fact, she believes the training that teachers have received to date through West 40's Reading First! programs will make a dramatic improve-

## In Appreciation...

*West 40 extends its appreciation to the administrators and personnel from the school districts that hosted this year's gifted talented searches. They helped make West 40's first year in its new offices a huge success.*

*A special thank you to Mannheim Middle School, District 83, for hosting the SCOTY Awards; Elmwood Park High School, District 401, for hosting the Speech and Drama Festival; Forest Park Middle School, District 91, for hosting the Math Olympiad, and Westchester Middle School, District 92½, for hosting the Writing Talent Search Awards Ceremony.*

ment in today's kindergarten and first grade students' ISAT scores by the time these students are in third grade.

One of the ways West 40 is working with low-achieving schools is training reading coaches. Thirty coaches have been trained to date, and each coach will then train other teachers in his/her school.

Teachers from Reading First! grant districts can attend West 40's Reading

First! Academy this summer at no charge. This professional development opportunity builds teaching strategies in the five reading skills areas, teaches how to use various types of assessments to plan and guide instruction based on students' needs, and many other valuable teaching skills. This class is open to all early elementary (K-3) and K-12 special education teachers. (See page 1, "Summer Professional Development Courses," for class dates.) Teachers in all other schools are also invited; the suggested fee is \$350.

Explore West 40's entire Language Arts professional development programs: go to [www.west40.k12.il.us](http://www.west40.k12.il.us) and view pages 7-11 of the Summer Professional Development Catalog. Or call **Gertrude Johnson** at **708/482-4350** for program information, and for information on Reading First! ■

## Congratulations!

On March 18, at the SCOTY awards ceremony, 81 exemplary school citizens from West Cook County were recognized with the West 40 School Citizen of the Year award. The event was hosted by Mannheim Middle School, District 83.

Each year, the Larry Stilgebauer Technology Awards recognize Illinois educators for their innovative use of technology in the classroom. Educators from 12 West Cook County school districts were honored with one or more Stilgebauer awards in the individual, school, or district category. These school districts are: Forest Park District 91, Brookfield District 95, Riverside District 96, Cicero District 99, Oak Park District 97, LaGrange District 102, Lyons District 103, Lyons Township District 204, Riverside|Brookfield District 208, Mannheim District 83, Oak Park District 97, Rhodes District 84½, St. Mary School, and Westchester District 92½.

West 40 congratulates all the students who participated in the talent searches and all the teachers who coached them.

## ISBE Announces New Test Dates

The ISBE has announced new test dates for the 2004-2005 school year and adopted the testing schedule for the spring of 2005 (see chart at right).

This schedule of slightly earlier ISAT and IMAGE administrations, and keeping the PSAE dates in April (with make-ups in mid-May), will allow for preliminary reporting of reading and math scores by the end of June with reporting of the scores in the other subject areas by

July. ISBE staff was also instructed by the Board to pursue a shortening of the 45-day review time-frame to facilitate

earlier status notification to the school districts. The ISBE hopes that the new schedule meets everyone's needs, and

apologizes for the inconvenience this may cause in planning school calendars for the next year. ■

2005 TEST DATES		
Test	Dates	Notes
ISAT	March 7-18, 2005	Districts may apply for modification to accommodate spring break.
PSAE	April 27-28, 2005	Make-up tests are scheduled for May 11-12. There will be no modification to move IMAGE testing to PSAE dates.
IMAGE	March 7-18, 2005	Districts may apply for modification to accommodate spring break. There will be no modification to move IMAGE Testing to PSAE dates.

## Educators' Accolades

Teachers at Lyons Township High School continue to be high achievers. Congratulations to: Principal **John Young**, who is the Illinois State and West Suburban Educational Office Professionals Administrator of the Year; **George Ushela**, the Illinois Baseball Coaches 2003 Coach of the Year; Varsity Volleyball Coach **Joann Pyritz** and her 2003 volleyball team for receiving the Illinois High School Association

Sportsmanship Award; Librarian/Division Chair **Nancy Richter**, who participated in a panel presentation on Information Literacy in Schools at the Suburban Library System; Music teacher **Jane Ewing** and P.E. teacher **Susie Straube** ran the 26.2 mile Walt Disney World Marathon; Health teacher and athletic trainer **Rich Carey** presented and co-chaired the Great Lakes Athletic Trainers Association Annual Meeting and Sym-

posium, and moderated a panel discussion. Panel members included Principal **John Young**, School Physician Dr. **James Harazin**, Athletic Director **Mike Morris**, School Nurse **Pat Wilson**, and Athletic Trainer **Guido Arquilla**; P.E. Teacher **Sue Schneider** coached a paralympic athlete who qualified to swim in the U.S. Olympics trials.

Oak Park District 97 Technology Teacher **Janet Barnstable** and teachers **Carlie Frisch**, **Cha'Lawrence Dillard**, **Rebecca Baer**, and

**Kristen Warren** will travel to Japan in June to battle for first place in the ThinkQuest competition. ThinkQuest is an international website building competition for students and teachers. The team is one of the final nine out of 547 entries. Good luck, Oak Park!

Teachers, be sure to e-mail your accolades to **Kay Poyner Brown** at [kpoynerb@west40.k12.il.us](mailto:kpoynerb@west40.k12.il.us) and include your name, school and district. **WestWinds** will include as many as possible in each issue. ■

## Summer Professional Development Courses *continued*

### **Reading First! Academy, K through Third Grade. CEUs: 4.8**

June 28-July 1 for Kindergarten teachers; August 2-5 for first grade teachers; August 16-19 for second grade teachers; three sessions for third grade teachers: June 28-July 1, August 2-5, and August 16-19.

This class gives educators the opportunity to participate in a statewide, scientifically based professional development academy focusing on the five essential components of a sound reading program. This program is required for all Reading First! Districts, and tuition is waived for their K-3 teachers.

### **Developing Standards-based Units in Social Studies, July 7. CEUs: 1**

This course will help teachers choose social studies units that are interesting, manageable, with content and processes essential to students' understanding of social studies, and are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards. The framework can also be applied to any grade level or subject area.

The West 40 Academy has a number of new courses for Administrator Certificate Renewal that also offer CEUs for Professional Development. These include **Classroom Instruction that Works—The Leadership Perspective**, June 10, **Standards for the Principal/Administrator as the Instructional Leader in the 21st Century**, June 22, **The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork**, June 24, and **Leadership Academy for Administrators in System of Support Schools**, August 6, 9, & 10. ■

## OPRF Teacher Wins Golden Apple Award

**E**ach year, ten Illinois teachers are recognized by the Golden Apple Foundation with Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching. In 2004, 681 teachers from Cook and DuPage counties were nominated. Thirty-two finalists were announced in February and ten winners announced in March.

A teacher from a school in the West 40 service area was one of the 10 recipients of this prestigious award. He is **Aaron Podolner**, a physics teacher at Oak Park-River Forest High School.

Mr. Podolner's selection is exceptional because he has been teaching for only

four years. He is also a shining star of the high school for another reason: Podolner is himself a graduate of Oak Park-River Forest High School.

"He understands what motivates his students and how to engage them," a Golden Apple observer said. "His enthusiasm for his students and the material are contagious."

One student commented, "Mr. Podolner makes us think all the time and keeps us guessing as to what will happen next."

"He is an exceptional educator," said the Golden Apple observer, "(with) guileless enthusiasm, energy, youth, and

willingness to explore new ideas."

One student also remarked that Mr. Podolner gets his attention because the teacher is "always jumping on tables and throwing bowling balls all over the place."

As a Golden Apple winner, Aaron Podolner will receive a \$2,500 cash award, a tuition-free fall semester at Northwestern University, an Apple computer and induction into the Golden Apple Academy.

West 40 congratulates teacher Aaron Podolner and Oak Park-River Forest High School for this outstanding achievement. ■

## West 40 Governing Board

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