

WESTLAWN ELEMENTARY

# Tailfeathers

Cecilia Vanderhye, Acting Principal  
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October 14, 2008



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## Nests Come Together

Friday, October 3, was an exciting day at Westlawn Elementary School! At 1:20 pm, all Westlawn students left their classrooms to join their Nests. Our youngest Nests members in kindergarten through second grade were picked up by a staff member, and our third through sixth graders went in pairs or small groups to their Nests. Returning students reconnected with their Nests from previous years, and new students joined existing Nests. It was exciting to see groups of kindergarteners through sixth graders working together as a team.

Nests (Nurturing & Educating Students To Succeed) are cross grade level student groupings that meet on a monthly basis to promote community and the idea that every student can make a difference. Each meeting has a literature and/or teambuilding focus, promoting mentoring among peers and providing a global world view. Two staff members facilitate each Nest, and new staff members are paired with returning staff members for this purpose.

Our first Nests of the year focused on building a community, with activities that helped students and staff get to know each other. Older students paired up with younger students to help them write and interact with one another. Beginning in November, our sixth grade students will be the leaders of Nests. They will receive leadership training in October and ongoing teacher support to lead our Nests.

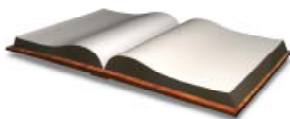
Cecilia Vanderhye, Acting Principal

**For more information, visit our web site at [www.fcps.edu/Westlawn](http://www.fcps.edu/Westlawn).  
*Tailfeathers* is a bimonthly publication.**

**News from our librarian,  
Mrs. Chastain:**

- Kindergarten is reading stories about colors and learning how to take care of our library books.
- 1st and 2nd are learning about what kinds of materials they can find in the library and how to take care of their library books.
- 3rd graders are learning how to find books in the library by using the online library catalog. Students in 3rd grade will also be introduced to various kinds of reference books.
- 4th graders are using atlases and a map of Virginia. They will also be introduced to the online databases that Fairfax County Public Schools subscribes to.
- 5th graders will work on an extensive ongoing research project on Global Awareness and Technology that will link what they are learning in Social Studies about cultures to their world today.
- 6th grade students will apply what they know about reference resources to do research within the curriculum using books and online sources.

All students are encouraged to use the library either with their classes, in small groups, or individually to find answers to their questions. Reading is encouraged through the Virginia Readers' Choice program, book groups, and book talks. We are looking forward to our Bedford Falls Book Fair in November.



**Two Weeks At-A-Glance  
October 13-October 24**

13 Columbus Day Holiday	14 8:00 am Parent Partners	15	16	17
20	21 8:00 am Parent Partners	22	23	24 Fall Picture Day  6:30-8:30 PTA FALL Dance



**Spotlight on Learning**

**Interactive Notebooks  
in First Grade**



The interactive notebook is used as a place for students to process new ideas taught in class. In first grade the notebooks are used with instruction in Social Studies. As first grade students are just learning to write, it provides the main ideas from the lessons for the students. The class then reads them outloud and highlights the most important words in each section. The students will then draw a picture that helps them remember the important facts about the famous person, holiday or geography just learned. These notebooks invite students to become engaged in their learning in a way that is meaningful for them.

**Upcoming Dates**

Oct 30 Kindergarten to Pumpkin Patch  
Nov 3rd, 4th Teacher Work Days/ Student Holiday  
Nov 5th Early Dismissal Day