



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM DR. ROSS, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Greetings WES Family,

The holiday season is officially upon us, and our campus is filled with joy and anticipation as we prepare to close out the year. This is also a season of reflection as we look back on the year that is coming to a close. Our theme for this year, Attitude of Gratitude, is more than just words, it's a mindset we are working to instill in our students, ourselves, and our families. This year, we have made "gratitude" a campuswide initiative. We want our scholars to recognize how blessed we are to learn and grow in this community. We also want our students to understand the importance of sharing the joy of gratitude with others.

That spirit was on full display at our Annual West End School Thanksgiving Luncheon, where we welcomed more than 550 students, family members, staff, and friends. With the addition of our School for Girls, the celebration felt especially meaningful and was filled with laughter, connection, and love.

Our scholars also extended that spirit of giving through their participation in the WDRB Jude's **Jingle Tree**. On Tuesday, December 9, WDRB News visited our campus to highlight this special partnership. Each student created an ornament for the tree, and for every ornament donated, WDRB made a monetary contribution to Home of the Innocents. Our families, students, and staff also gave generously to support this cause. This initiative was led by our Head of Elementary School, Mr. Scott Whitenack. For all the ways we are blessed at WES, supporting others in our community is a meaningful way to show our gratitude for all that has been so graciously given to us.





Our parent organization, Families Loving On WES (FLOW), has also embraced the season of service. Through a partnership with Virginia Avenue Baptist Church, FLOW helped prepare Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts for Samaritan's Purse. We are deeply grateful for every individual who chooses to invest their time, energy, and care into the lives of our scholars.

This time of year also brings exciting learning beyond the classroom. Over the past several weeks, our scholars have explored many parts of Louisville through field trips. Our Pre-K students celebrated fall with visits to Huber Farms and the Louisville Water Company for Trick-or-Treating. Others explored nature and wildlife at the Louisville Nature Center, while our first-grade boys and girls enjoyed a memorable visit to the Louisville Zoo. In December, all of our scholars were treated to a beautiful presentation of **The Nutcracker** thanks to The Louisville Ballet for an experience that blended art, culture, and wonder.

Mrs. Ross and I have also been busy sharing the story of West End School beyond our campus. We had the opportunity to thank longtime supporters during a presentation at the Pendennis Club and to highlight the exciting growth of our School for Girls on **WAVE Country with Dawn Gee**. In the spirit of gratitude, I also joined John O'Leary on his **podcast**, where I shared both my personal journey and the remarkable work happening at WES. John's story of perseverance and service continues to inspire many, and it was an honor to spend time in conversation with him.

As we close out December, please know how thankful we are for you. Your support makes a lasting difference in the lives of our students and families. From all of us at West End School, Happy Holidays.



Dr. Greg Ross

Dr. Greg Ross
President and Head of School



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM MRS. ROSS, PRINCIPAL

Dear WES Supporters,

As we wrap up the fall season at West End School, I am excited to share several wonderful moments made possible by your continued belief in our students and our mission.

This month, our school community gathered for an energetic pep rally to kick off basketball season. The event included the debut performance of our new WES Cheerleaders. Their spirit and teamwork were a joy to see, and it was especially exciting to watch students from our newly launched Girls School take the floor for the first time.

We also celebrated our Quarter 1 Honor Roll students, and I am delighted to share this incredible accomplishment. A total of 124 scholars earned Honor Roll recognition. Sixty-five students achieved Purple Honor Roll with a strong mix of As and Bs, and an outstanding 59 students earned Gold Honor Roll with all As. We are so proud of their dedication and hard work.

To celebrate these achievements, each student received a certificate, a dress-down pass, and a special token that represents their accomplishment. Purple Honor Roll students earned purple ribbons, and Gold Honor Roll students received golden eagle keychains. Gold Honor Roll students will earn a new keychain each quarter, creating a meaningful collection that reflects their continued success.





DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM MRS. ROSS, PRINCIPAL



Our middle school Honor Roll students enjoyed a well-deserved movie day in the Rose Room. Scholars arrived with blankets and pillows, and we provided pizza and drinks to make the celebration both fun and memorable. It was a joy to honor their accomplishments in a way that felt special to them.

As Dr. Ross shared, three of our students, Kindergartners Ka'Lilah and Logan and fifth grader Diego, were invited to appear on WAVE News. They represented West End School with confidence, joy, and kindness, and we could not be more proud of the young leaders they are becoming.

As we look ahead to December, which is always full of learning and holiday excitement, we are also preparing students for MAP testing when we return from winter break. Our goal remains the same. We want every child to feel confident, prepared, and proud of the academic growth they will continue to demonstrate. We have also been working closely with our eighth-grade scholars as they prepare for the High School Placement Test, and we are eager to celebrate the opportunities that await this remarkable group of young men.

Thank you for making these moments possible. Your support fuels experiences that build confidence, character, joy, and opportunity for every WES student.
Warmly,



Laura Ross

Laura Ross
Principal, West End School



Middle School Orchestra Performs for Impact100 Louisville Annual Meeting

We were honored to have our Orchestra Ensemble perform at Impact100 Louisville's Annual Meeting and Awards at The Olmsted on November 10, 2025. Six of our middle school musicians played at the event celebrating the Impact100 Louisville's recent grant recipients, including West End School. Impact100 Louisville provides high-impact grants that reach under-served populations, supports nonprofits, and highlights unmet needs in our community.

Impact100 Louisville awarded WES a generous grant of \$100,000 to support our music program, covering musical instruments and travel to outside concerts. We loved the chance to perform at their event and to give back through song. Thank you to Impact100 for believing in our scholars!





Image courtesy of 247sports.com

Josh Minkins Gives Back to WES

WES is beyond grateful to former UofL Football and New England Patriots player Josh Minkins for visiting WES on November 20, 2025 and distributing 100 turkeys and 65 gift cards to our WES scholars and families for Thanksgiving! Josh joined us for a morning meeting and talked to us about his football career and his commitment to the West End of Louisville, leaving our students with the important message that they can do whatever they set their minds to do. The turkey and gift card giveaway was a partnership with Josh and the Louisville Metro Youth Transitional Services. We appreciate their support!





West End Students Perform at UofL Game for the Retirement of Junior Bridgeman's Jersey

On 12/12/2025, West End school Students did an incredible job singing the National Anthem. During halftime of this game, UofL retired the jersey of Mr. Junior Bridgeman who enriched the lives of our students, the Louisville community, and the nation. Thank you UofL for the opportunity to share in the recognition of a world changer.



West End Students Bring Holiday Cheer

Our third grade class made a trip to Treyton Oak Towers to carol and spread holiday cheer! Thank you 3rd grade for blessing the lives of others.





As 2025 comes to a close, the halls of West End School are filled with a sense of energy and pride in our students and the growth they have shown this semester. For our Middle School scholars, December offers a meaningful opportunity to celebrate progress, step into leadership, and reflect on the development of their character. Every lesson, success, and challenge has contributed to who they are becoming as learners and leaders, and it has been inspiring to watch their confidence take shape.



This month, our students spent time reviewing their MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) data and revisiting their academic goals. This reflection, grounded in Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw from the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, helps students understand the relationship between their effort and their growth. Teachers and students work side by side to turn this data into purposeful action, giving each scholar a clearer sense of direction as we prepare for the new year.

The SOAR Store continues to be a point of pride for our Middle School students. It rewards scholars who demonstrate Safety, Ownership, Achievement, and Respect, and it reinforces the positive choices we see from them every day. Through our PBIS token economy system, students earn CLAWs for helping peers, showing leadership, and modeling behaviors that strengthen our school culture. They can use their earned CLAWs to purchase snacks such as chips and candy. PBIS, or Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, is an evidence-based framework that supports students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. As we close the semester, it is evident that our students take pride in the habits they are practicing and the community they are helping to build.



MIDDLE SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

MICHAEL WARREN

We are also pleased to share that our two Middle School Student Ambassadors have been selected. These students were chosen based on teacher recommendations and their strong demonstration of the 7 Habits and our core principles. They will represent West End School by helping lead events, modeling responsibility, and serving as role models for their peers. Ambassador training will begin after the holiday break and will prepare them to step into leadership roles throughout the spring. Their development reflects Habit 1: Be Proactive and Habit 6: Synergize as they learn to step forward, collaborate with others, and support the broader school community.

Basketball season is well underway, and our Middle School teams continue to show true Soaring Eagle spirit. With 30 players taking on a full 18 game schedule, they approach each practice and game with determination, humility, and strong teamwork. Athletics at WES extend far beyond the court. They help students build discipline, confidence, and integrity. We are proud of our student-athletes and look forward to cheering them on as they continue their season. (The January basketball schedule is included below.)

As we move into the holiday season, we are filled with gratitude. We are grateful for our students who strive each day to live the 7 Habits, for our teachers who guide and challenge them, and for the families and supporters who believe in their potential. The growth we have witnessed in our Middle School scholars this semester is a powerful reminder that with opportunity, encouragement, and high expectations, our students can achieve extraordinary things.

On behalf of all of us at West End School, thank you for helping us finish this year strong and for continuing to invest in the success of our young leaders.





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

SCOTT WHITENACK

It's hard to believe that we are already heading into our mid-year Holiday Break! We have had a wonderful fall semester, filled with academic, athletic, and community achievements. We are so proud of all of our scholars who made the Honor Roll this fall and are looking forward to even greater achievements next semester. Our second quarter ends December 19, and report cards will go out in early January.

We are also thrilled to share that our "Little Dribblers" and cheerleading programs launched this fall.



The Little Dribblers program is a developmental basketball league for our K through 2 students, and we currently have 20 scholars learning and practicing the fundamentals of the game. We also have our first group of cheerleaders, thanks to the addition of our new Girls School. Twenty cheerleaders in grades PreK through 2 are now cheering on our teams, and they have already made a wonderful impact on both our basketball games and our overall school culture.

If you visit campus this month, you will immediately feel the excitement of the holiday season at West End School. Our Winter Wonderland Celebration and Classroom Door Decoration Contest on December 19 brought so much joy to our scholars, thanks to our fantastic FLOW parent volunteers. Our friends at the PHIA Group also provided Christmas parties for our students on December 17. We are grateful to these partners and to all of our volunteers for helping make this time of year so special for our scholars.





UPCOMING IMPORTANT

SCHOOL DATES

Dec. 19, 2025	Quarter 2 Ends
Dec. 22 - Jan. 6, 2026	Holiday Break
Jan. 5, 2026	No School - Teacher Professional Development
Jan. 6, 2026	Students Return to School
Jan. 13 - Jan. 16, 2026	Family Conferences
Jan. 19, 2026	No School - Martin Luther King Day
Jan. 24, 2026	FLOW Parent-only Bingo night
Jan. 27- Jan. 29, 2026	Winter MAP Testing
Feb. 7, 2026	Admissions Testing for Grades 1 - 7
Feb. 16 - Feb. 20, 2026	No School - Winter Break
Mar. 7, 2026	Admissions Testing for PreKindergarten and Kindergarten





BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

COME JOIN US FOR A GAME



- January 6** - KCD @ WES (B team 5:30, A team 6:30)
- January 8** - WES @ LKY (B team 5:30, A team 6:30)
- January 12** - WES @ Francis Parker (B team 5:30, A team 6:30)
- January 15** - Whitfield @ WES (C team 5:00, B team 6:00, A team 7:00)
- January 20** - Francis Parker (B team 5:30, A team 6:30)
- January 26** - Classical Academy @ WES (5pm) This game is tentative
- January 28** - Anchorage @ WES (C team 5:00, B team 6:00, A team 7:00)

There is always so much going on at WES! New events are added to the calendar all the time. For a Full Calendar including all Athletic Games please see our website.





flow

GO WITH THE FLOW

Each Friday in December, scholars have enjoyed ICEE Fridays, a fun and refreshing tradition that has quickly become a highlight of the month. At just two dollars per ICEE, this initiative brings excitement to the school week while generating funds that FLOW reinvests into student programming and teacher appreciation efforts. Thanks to strong family participation, ICEE Fridays continue to support the enrichment opportunities WES students deserve.





Jean Fridays: Celebrating School Spirit

Last month, FLOW launched Jean Fridays, giving students the opportunity to wear jeans for a small donation. This simple but engaging fundraiser was a success and contributed to FLOW's ability to support upcoming events and student experiences. Jean Fridays highlight how small, family-friendly initiatives can make a meaningful financial and cultural impact at West End School.

Winter Wonderland School Party – December 19

FLOW was proud to host the Winter Wonderland School Party on December 19. This student-only celebration transformed the campus into a festive experience filled with themed activities, treats, and joyful moments for every scholar. Volunteers prepared decorations, activity stations, and a special Santa photo area to make the event unforgettable. Donor support has played a key role in allowing FLOW to deliver experiences that build community, belonging, and school pride.

A Gift of Kindness: Anonymous Donor Supports WES Families

This season, FLOW was honored to receive a generous contribution from an anonymous donor who provided twenty \$50 gift cards. These were quietly distributed to families most in need, ensuring additional support during the holidays. Acts of kindness like this help strengthen the WES community and reflect the core values that donors and families share: compassion, dignity, and opportunity for all scholars.

Plan for Parent Bingo Night – January 24, 2026

Looking ahead, FLOW is excited to host Parent Bingo Night on January 24, 2026! This adults-only event will bring families together for an evening of fun, fellowship, and community building. Proceeds will directly benefit student activities and staff appreciation efforts. Parent Bingo Night is designed to strengthen parent engagement while contributing to the vibrant school culture that makes WES unique. Be on the lookout to sign up for this fun event!





The Admissions Office is excited to see so many people interested in and enthusiastic about attending West End School for the 2026-2027 school year! We are working hard to process over 160 applications and conducting tours to prospective families this fall. As in past years, we have far more applicants than slots available in our classes. Classes at WES generally are limited to just 15 students in each grade to allow for more individualized attention and learning. Our boys and girls PreKindergarten classes have 15 positions available each, but WES has limited space available in grades Kindergarten through 7 since most of our scholars return year to year. In early January 2026, we will ask our current families to commit to the upcoming 2026-2027 school year, and we will then have a better idea of how many vacancies we will have for the next year.

We have just three more tour dates scheduled for prospective families in January 2026 on January 9, 16, and 23. We encourage all applicant families to come for a tour so they can see WES in action, starting with the daily all-school morning meeting led by Dr. Ross. Interested families can call the Admissions Office or email us at admissions@westendschool.org to schedule a tour.

We also are getting ready for assessment testing on Saturday, February 7, 2026 for First through Seventh Grades and on Saturday, March 7, 2026 for PreKindergarten and Kindergarten. Email invitations for the assessment testing will be sent out by the end of January, but only to applicants who have provided us with their official state-issued birth certificate and up-to-date immunization certificate. These important documents must be received by the Admissions office by January 28, 2026 to ensure applicants receive their assessment invitations. Applicants can drop them off in the front office or email them to us at admissions@westendschool.org.

Please note that January 31, 2026 is our deadline for receiving applications for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year, so our best advice to interested families is to get their applications in as soon as possible before the deadline. We have updated the information on the application process on our Admissions page on the website at <https://www.westendschool.org/admissions/>.





VOLUNTEER CORNER

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE AN IMPACT



Our Volunteers Made our Thanksgiving Extra Special!

We are so grateful to our wonderful families and volunteer groups who served up 11 twenty-pound turkeys with all of the trimmings at our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon on November 21, 2025, right before the Thanksgiving Holiday. The turkeys were graciously donated by Wiltshire Pantry, and our families provided delicious side dishes. Our family volunteers as well as our outside volunteer groups served approximately 550 meals to all of our scholars, their families, staff, and friends of West End School. We are filled with gratitude for all of the people who made this luncheon so successful!!

Looking Ahead to 2026: Sign Up Now to Support West End School!

Area	What You'll Do	Sign-up Link
Elementary Classroom Support	Assist teachers and witness those exciting "Eureka!" moments as scholars learn. Note: Parents cannot volunteer in their child's classroom.	<u>Sign Up Here</u>
Basketball Little Dribblers	Help Coach Hedges keep practices running smoothly for our young athletes.	<u>Sign Up Here</u>
Middle School Dinners	Fuel our growing boys! Help supply dinner to keep them energized after a long day of learning and activities.	<u>Sign Up Here</u>
Support the Front Office	Help staff the "hive of activity"—our vital central hub for students, families, and staff.	<u>Sign Up Here</u>



VOLUNTEER CORNER

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Dear West End Volunteers,

Thank you! Your incredible passion, dedication, and unique talents are what truly make our school thrive. We are so grateful for your willingness to share your time with our students.

It's hard to believe, but 2026 is almost here! To ensure we hit the ground running, we are finalizing our plan for volunteer engagement now. We have several high-impact roles ready for you to step into.

Please review the opportunities below and click the links to sign up. Each link provides full details on the commitment. If you have any questions, please contact

Adrienne_Dubins@westendschool.org.



**We thank our volunteers for everything you do for West End School!
We don't know what we would do without you!!!**



New Raptor Safe Visitor/Volunteer Sign-In Coming in January

West End School is implementing a new security check-in process for all visitors. On the first day back after the holiday break, we will begin using the Raptor Safe app to simplify visitor check-in and provide a secure, fast, and convenient process for school visitors and volunteers. The app verifies every visitor's identity using the Raptor Passport, ensuring only authorized individuals are allowed entry to the school and enhancing security for students and staff. It also allows WES to know who is on campus at any given time in case of emergency.

To check in for your volunteer activities at WES, you will need to download the Raptor Safe app and use it to register and create a Raptor Passport, a personal QR code that you will use to sign-in electronically at WES each time you visit. We encourage you to set up your Raptor Passport as soon as possible so that you will have it ready to go the next time you volunteer at WES. You only need to create the Raptor Passport/personal QR code one time – you will use your unique QR code each time you enter the school.

RAPTOR[®]

T E C H N O L O G I E S

It takes just a few minutes to set up the Raptor Passport and is pretty easy to do. Once you download the app, just follow the prompts to fill in your identifying information (name, date of birth, etc.). You also will need your driver's license to scan into the app and will need to take a selfie to verify your identity, too. (The selfie picture was the most difficult for our test volunteer – the app uses the selfie to match up with your driver's license picture, so the selfie uses prompts to make the picture similar to your ID picture). Raptor Safe provides easy to use **step-by-step instructions** you can follow, too, to set up your account.

If you have any questions or problems, contact Adrienne Dubins at **Adrienne_Dubins@westendschool.org**.



FUND A FUTURE LEADER

SAY GOODBYE TO 2025 BY FUNDING A FUTURE LEADER

Each child at West End School attends via a scholarship provided by Donors who are committed to proving that there is genius in every neighborhood. Your support provides both education and opportunities that shape future leaders.



[DONATE NOW](#)



If you are interested in touring the school or discussing donation opportunities, please email Adrienne Dubins at adrienne.dubins@westendschool.org

WES Wish List

Are you looking for a way to help WES? Follow this [LINK](#) to see our wish list of school supplies, food items, and special events. You can donate the items individually or a Supply Drive makes a great group project!

