

2016: Year of the Trojan

By David Truitt, Superintendent

Just a few days ago, most of the world celebrated New Year's Eve and Day with much fanfare. For my family, this special occasion was filled with tasty food and desserts, music, family fun, college football Bowl Games, and a time of reflection and renewal. As a family, we always take time on New Year's Day to think back over the previous year and share our favorite memories and experiences. We also try to take a moment to discuss family and individual goals for the year. As you can imagine, my boys just love this exercise. Some would say our goal setting time is similar to setting New Year's resolutions. In addition to setting goals or resolutions on this special day, another fun activity centers on making predictions about good things you believe will occur during the upcoming "new year." Whether these predictions are about the success of a favorite sports team (Go Baylor and West Trojans!) or an election or event in the lives of our family, town, or country, it is always fun to think about and wonder what the future may hold for our lives. With 2016 now in full swing, I would like to make a bold prediction on behalf of the West Independent School District. I believe with all my heart that 2016 will be known as the "Year of the Trojan."

As you already know, the West Independent School District is going through a time of many exciting changes and challenges. As I think about all the many events, activities, and initiatives that will occur in the district and community over the next twelve months, I believe everyone will look back at this time period as a defining year in the history of our outstanding schools.

With championship level seasons complete at West High School in volleyball, football, and cross country, the basketball seasons are now underway. Soon the powerlifting, track, golf, softball, and baseball seasons will kick-off their memorable seasons to the delight of Trojan fans everywhere. In 2016, senior, Quentin Dancer, and the baseball team are both ready to defend their state championships, and I know the softball team, along with the other teams, are eyeing state championships as well. I know the other school districts in the area and across the state will remember 2016 as the "Year of the Trojan."

Recently, our Board of Trustees welcomed two new members, Dr. John Crowder and Mike Gerik, to the team. For 2016, Dr. Larry Sparks will serve as the new Board President. Ken Sykora will serve as the new Vice President, and Robin Waters will once again serve as the Board Secretary. These dedicated members, along with Leigh Crawshaw and Larry Hykel, are working hard to ensure all construction projects are underway and under budget and ready for the students and staff in a timely manner. In 2016, the new West Middle and High School campus will open, and the district will begin renovation work on the 1923 and 1957 buildings. New construction work on the cafeteria safe room at West Elementary, athletic fields at the new Middle and High School campus, and district maintenance and transportation facilities will also take place. "The Year of the Trojan" will also see the removal of the many temporary classrooms and buildings at the current secondary campus site.

In 2016, new academic initiatives will be added or strengthened at all campuses. New art and computer classes begin this week at West Elementary. The district will continue to expand honors course offerings and Project Lead the Way engineering and computer courses at West Middle School. New course

strands in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and Health Science will be offered at West High School. Also, the district will continue to review ways to expand all Dual Credit offerings for our high school students and seek more affordable ways for our students and families to afford these courses.

The “Year of the Trojan” will see new Pride of West Marching Band uniforms, student computers, cafeteria menu options, several new athletic uniforms, new school buses, enhanced security of our campuses, and student attendance growth. A new Teen School Board and Leadership West community group are also being formed, and the first-ever Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) community literacy day is set for February at West Elementary.

As you can see, it is a great time to be a Trojan. With the help and strong work ethic of our outstanding Board, staff, parents, and students, my 2016 prediction will easily come true. I cannot wait to see all the great things our students and wonderful staff will accomplish over the next twelve months. We are truly blessed in West! Throughout 2016, I hope you will come out to our many campus and district activities and events and be a witness to the “Year of the Trojan.” It is an exciting time to be in West. Go Trojans!