

West Portal Elementary School
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415-759-2846 Fax: 415-242-2526
<http://www.westportalschool.com/>

How to be an involved parent at West Portal Elementary School 2002-2003

A Parent Involvement Orientation Packet

Created by the West Portal Parents Club

Purpose of this Orientation Packet

When parents are involved in the education of their children, not only do their children benefit, but all the children in the school, and sometimes district, benefit. Decades of research show the positive connection between parent involvement and student success at all grade levels and across racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Effective parent involvement also has proven links to excellent schools – high teacher morale, positive relationships in the community and improved student performance.

The West Portal Parents Club created this packet so that parents at West Portal Elementary School will have the information they need to be involved.

What is Effective Parent Involvement?

Effective parent involvement happens when parents see themselves as equal partners with the school and school district and participate at various levels of decision-making. Meaningful parent involvement recognizes parents as:**

Equal partners. Parents and families are equal and actively engaged partners with communities and schools.

Proactive problem-solvers. Parents move beyond a help-only-when-asked mode to identify problems and bring their talents and ideas to the policy table, not just the homework table.

Effective decision-makers. Parents use available resources and ideas to work with educators to define and analyze issues and find solutions.

Standard raisers. Parents challenge mediocrity at every level in public schools by setting high standards and helping students and educators meet those standards.

Mentors to others. Parents pave the way for ongoing and significant involvement at all levels of the district by creating welcome spaces and meaningful roles for more parents.

Committed to diversity in action. Parent involvement crosses racial, cultural and socioeconomic lines to develop partnerships among parents that are needed to effectively promote the best education for **all** students.

Community advocates. Parents answer a civic duty to help make public schools effective for all children and strong anchors of their communities.

* The use of the term "parent" in this document and in other Parents Club material should be interpreted broadly to include any adult who plays an important role in a child's life, education, development and well-being.

** Definition taken from Parents for Public Schools, www.parents4publicschools.com

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[West Portal Elementary Parking Map](#).....33

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Welcome from the Parents Club President - August, 2002

Dear Parents and Guardians of West Portal Elementary School:

Isn't it frustrating to think of all the things we would like to see our kids learn – and then see the limited resources the school district gives us? Ever think of sending your kids to a private school? Do you have the money to do so? Even if you do, is that the right thing for your child? These are the questions that plagued a lot of us when choosing a school for our children.

My family was prepared to move to the peninsula to a school district that has much more resources. However, when we toured West Portal, we realized that this was the place for our children. It is a school full of warmth, a family away from home. The teachers are so committed to educating their students and finding a way to hook each child into the joys of learning.. We decided to make a go of it and have never looked back. Our eldest just graduated and we have another a couple of years behind.

It's a pleasure to welcome you and your families to our West Portal Elementary community. When you look at a school district as large as ours, the average may not be up to the standards you desire. At West Portal, the parents, staff, administration and community partner to make sure your child gets a great education.

There are many factors that contribute to excellence and you can make a difference. The Parents Club is a vital part of your child's education. Not only does the Parents Club raise funds and supply the school with all sorts of things from paper to computers to extra staff, it contributes what I like to think of as love. What do I mean by that? Parents invest their time and their talents by volunteering at West Portal. Helping out in the classroom, going on field trips, reading to the class, helping in the library, running an activity, helping in the Chinese New Year Parade or Spring Festival, teaching cultural activities, and even stuffing envelopes --; these are just a few of the many things that parents do at our school.

Volunteering your time, infusing your personality, and contributing your own knowledge and wisdom are all things you can't buy and no private school can offer. This is also what defines the West Portal Parents Club. Give of yourself, through your spirit and support, and your investment will be returned manifold.

Sincerely,

Russ Granich
President, West Portal Parents Club

A Letter from the Principal – August, 2002

Dear West Portal Families,

The reason so many of us believe in the axiom, "It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child," is because it's true. Families and educators alike recognize that our children's academic and socio-emotional growth is a responsibility shared by school and family. We recognize that family involvement in our schools is critical if our schools are to be effective.

Both the California State Board of Education and the San Francisco Board of Education have strong policy statements regarding family involvement in schools. The State Board declares: "Parent involvement is fundamental to a healthy system of public education." The San Francisco Board begins its policy statement with: "Research studies have shown that parent involvement in a child's education is a powerful factor in educational success and can be the greatest positive influence on a child's future."

How fortunate that at West Portal School there are so many opportunities for families to assist their children and enhance the school's instructional program through its exceptional volunteer program.

Several years ago, West Portal School sent home the following list for families to consider:

**TOP 10 REASONS
TO SUPPORT THE PARENTS CLUB
AND BE INVOLVED IN WEST PORTAL SCHOOL**

10. Meet other families and staff.
9. Attend informative meetings with refreshments and child care provided.
8. Help make important decisions about school programs and policies.
7. Show your children that you care about their education.
6. Help teachers obtain necessary materials for the classroom and the library.
5. Help maintain our schools academic success.
4. Be a role model for your children.
3. Help to supplement insufficient funds allocated to our schools.
2. Support and help supervise our school's extracurricular activities.
1. WE CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

We cannot do it without you. I encourage you to use this excellent, informative West Portal Elementary School Parent Involvement Packet and become an involved member of the West Portal School Community.

Thank you!

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Sincerely,

Jeanne Villafuerte, Retired Principal

Margarett Anne Centrella, Principal

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West Portal Elementary – Hours and Emergency Information

West Portal Elementary and West Portal parents need to work together to ensure the most ideal educational environment for West Portal students. West Portal Elementary knows that parents expect the school to be open, accessible and ready to teach your child during scheduled school hours. At the same time, parents are expected to promote a learning environment in the home, which includes proper rest, nutritious meals and coming to school on time.

The school schedule is as follows:

Grades 1-5 8:40 am – 2:40 pm

Kindergarten 8:40 am – 2:30 pm

It may be necessary for students to be late for a variety of reasons. However, consistent late arrival to school is disruptive to the child's educational program and disrupts learning and instruction for the other children and the teacher.

If there is to be any change to your child's usual routine, please discuss this with your child before s/he leaves home for the day and inform the school in writing. This includes riding the school bus changes and if someone different is picking up your child. It is your responsibility to keep your emergency card updated. In the event of an emergency, changes can be called into the school at the main number but best to keep such calls to a minimum. Delivering phone messages to the teacher is disruptive to the classroom and messages can be misinterpreted.

Visiting West Portal Elementary

Visiting times are preferred on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.

Emergency Information

Being prepared in the case of an emergency is everyone's responsibility. Every year our students and staff practice an earthquake preparedness drill. We have two goals for the drill: 1) for students and staff to be able to perform the "Duck, Cover and Hold " activities, perform a complete building evacuation and locate a command post and first aid station; 2) to evacuate everyone in the building in less than 5 minutes.

The Procedure is as follows:

A bell rings and a verbal signal is given by the teacher to "Drop". This initiates the "Duck, Cover , and Hold" activity. At this time the teacher discusses with the children that in the case of a real evacuation it is important to place close attention to all the directions that are given by the teacher (in a practice drill, the school practices the evacuation procedure).

During the practice drill, the school uses the fire drill procedure to evacuate (in the event of a real evacuation process, students and staff evacuate without any signal). Students evacuate according to their fire drill sites, then move to the park area, on the grass. A designee from the office will be at the park with communication access (walkie-talkies) to the principal and school secretary. The custodian immediately does a sweep of the school site and proceeds to the gas and electric turn off areas. The Day Care Bungalow is the Command Center. The Main Office is the Communication Center. The two medical/first aid stations are in the Day Care Bungalow and Room 8A.

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The school secretary remains in the office as one release station. A second set of release forms are taken to the Day Care Bungalow along with additional first aid chests. Once the Command Center is set up the Administrative team circulates to make sure the children are safe and all procedures are being followed and then remains in that area. All inclusion paraprofessionals stay with their classes. Members of the Administrative Team will assist classes, and then check in with the Communication and Command Centers.

The assigned Search and Rescue Team will survey any damage and report it directly to the Communication Center. Every room is taped with a large X after being searched.

An "All Clear" signal such as a long steady bell or an announcement will signal when it is safe for students and staff to return to class. All staff are to review safety plans for home and school with their students.

In the event of an actual disaster, **parents are not to call the school**. There are only two telephone lines open and they are used for communication with the District Disaster Task Force. Parents/Guardians may pick up their children only by checking in at the designated Release Centers.

A little about your school and its parent involvement tradition

West Portal Elementary is an award-winning school with two programs - a general education program and a two-way English-Chinese immersion program. Despite these two very different programs, West Portal Elementary has one administration, one Parents Club and shared resources. West Portal's philosophy is that a collaborative school environment, with involvement of administration, teachers, families and the community across programs, can empower all students to succeed.

The West Portal Parents Club serves as an important vehicle for channeling parents' involvement in the school. A fall survey gathers information from parents, their skills and areas of volunteer interest. Keeping track of the resources parents and the community can offer ensures that contributions of time and materials (paper, computers, etc.) can be directed to where they will have the greatest impact. Parents are also encouraged to support our annual fund-raising drive by making a tax-deductible contribution. These funds are used exclusively for West Portal supplies, activities, and programs.

Parent involvement at West Portal spans almost every aspect of what the school has to offer: academics, enrichment, governance and community-building. The Parents Club, a Parent Volunteer Coordinator, principal and teachers help parents find ways to participate effectively at West Portal. Parents help students meet academic goals through tutoring in the classroom and organizing study groups during the lunch hour. Parents also help start (and sometimes staff) new education and enrichment programs such as:

- the Game Room, where students can mingle and learn informally through fun activities
- the award-winning Kinder Music Makers Program, bringing San Francisco State graduate music students to the school
- physical education for all grades
- after-school Chinese brush painting
- the celebrated West Portal Elementary School entries in San Francisco's annual Chinese New Year Parade
- the Spring Musical, directed by teachers and parents

Governance and committee work are other important ways parents are involved. The School Site Council, a separate body from the Parents Club, helps the school set education priorities, and thus spending priorities. The Parents Club oversees the Inclusion Program Committee, charged with finding ways to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities, and the Chinese Immersion Program Enrichment Committee, which provides Chinese cultural opportunities for students in both the Chinese immersion and general education tracks..

Fundraising is a significant objective of parent involvement. Various parent committees, with student involvement, ensure that every year there is a Spring Festival, e- and paper scrip, sweatshirt sales, a fall Pumpkin Patch and a Book Fair. The two biggest fundraisers are the Education Fund Drive and the Spring Festival and Auction. The money raised is traditionally dedicated to buying equipment and supplies for the school and to defray costs of enrichment activities. Large expenditures have included remodeling the library and funding programs like Kinder Music Makers and a K-5 physical education program that includes a perceptual motor program for K-1 and physical training and conditioning for 2nd-5th grade.

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West Portal emphasizes community-building activities not only because they are ways for families to connect with local agencies and to each other, but also because West Portal recognizes the impact these activities have on student learning. Parent education and family workshops offered include Puberty Education, Holiday Sing Along, Science Night and Middle School Enrollment Night. Translation is an important component to inclusive community-building, and every effort is made to have parent notices translated into Chinese and have interpreting available at school events.

The principal, school administrators, classroom teachers and support staff emphasize that personal outreach and clear communication are important factors in getting and keeping volunteers. School staff are encouraged to provide specific details about the volunteer opportunities, and to communicate with parents about the opportunities to help both inside and outside the classroom. Educational Consultant Resources trained school staff on how to best welcome and utilize parent volunteers. One notable suggestion that has taken root was for teachers to establish a volunteer station in the classroom where resources and tools can be collected, and where the volunteer has an official space in which to work.

We live in a fast-paced, hard-working city, and we know that parents' time is precious. Any time you can give, whether it's a few hours each week or helping out on just one event, is time well spent. West Portal is addressing many barriers to parents volunteering during the school day. Parents have the opportunity to volunteer in classrooms other than their children's in order to spread services equally among all classrooms. A number of opportunities for out-of-school involvement have been identified, such as collating, making phone calls and processing book orders.

Parent involvement needs to be aligned with the school mission and educational goals. Mechanisms to ensure this include having an administrative liaison, usually the principal herself, attend Parents Club Board meetings and other governing committees, and using the School Site Plan as a basis for prioritizing parent involvement activities. Also, to prevent miscommunication or duplication, all notices need to be reviewed by the principal before being distributed to parents.

West Portal Elementary School has carefully built a reputation for success, both in education and parent involvement. This doesn't come without considerable effort, initiative and collaboration on the part of the community, families, teachers and administration. We look forward to working with you and your children.

More detailed information about West Portal Elementary can be found on the SFUSD website at <http://orb.sfusd.edu/sarcs2/sarc-876.pdf> or the West Portal Elementary website at www.westportalschool.com.

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Who's Who at West Portal Elementary

Parents Club Board

Parents Club Board members are elected by the members West Portal parents at the end of the school year or, if seats are vacant, can be elected by the Board throughout the year. Though the Parents Club would love to see you at the Parents Club business meetings, we recognize that not all parents are able to come. Contact any one of the Board members through the information provided below or by leaving a note in the Parents Club mailbox in the main office. To find out what the Parents Club does, see page 21.

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
President	Russ Granich	russ@granich.net	415-661-8684
Vice President(s)	Gayline Tom	gaylinetom@aol.com	415-826-6326
Secretary	Mary Jue	mary@jue-kuster.com	415-661-1708
	Vanessa Whitcomb	dvwhitcomb@att.net	415-242-1425
Treasurer(s)	Karen Leung	leungrk@aol.com	415-564-2822
	Ilana Bernstein	d-desmond1@mindspring	415-452-9879
Chinese Immersion Program Enrichment Committee Liaison	Linda Renteria	SALIENTE@aol.com	415-587-6670
Facilities Committee Liaison	Russ Granich	russ@granich.net	415-661-8684
	Margarett Anne Centrella	Wysenhimer@jps.net	415-759-2846
GATE Liaison	Buff Harding, Jr.	bjharding@aol.com	415-661-3653
Inclusion Liaison	Rose Von Buchau		415-695-1920
	Vanessa Whitcomb	dvwhitcomb@att.net	415-242-1425
Newsletter Liaison	Mary Jue	mary@jue-kuster.com	415-661-1708
Parent Education Committee Chair	Mary Jue	mary@jue-kuster.com	415-661-1708
Parent Volunteer Coordinator	Vanessa Whitcomb	dvwhitcomb@att.net	415-242-1425
Social Committee Chair	John Mogannam	johnmog@aol.com	415-661-0137
Technology Committee Chair	Buff Harding, Jr.	bjharding@aol.com	415-661-3653
Traffic Safety Committee Chair	Pat Madden	pmadden94116@yahoo.com	415-681-6207
West Portal C.A.R.E. Liaison	John Mogannam	johnmog@aol.com	415-661-0137
General Board Member	Carolyn Johnston	Cjsfca@aol.com	415-731-0841

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General Board Member	Jessie Roth	jroth@medicine.ucsf.edu	415-664-8936
General Board Member	Rob Roth		415-664-8936
General Board Member	Terry Tom		415-826-6326
Administration Liaison	Margarett Anne Centrella	Wysenhimer@jps.net	415-759-2846

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School Staff and Support Personnel (as of August 16, 2002)

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Room Number</u>
Principal	Margarett Anne Centrella	Main Office
Assistant Principal	Charles Shannon	Main Office
Kindergarten Teacher	Alexia Tindol	B3
	Laurie Breisach	
Kindergarten Teacher	Debbie Huysentruyt	B4
	Mary Falzon	
Kindergarten Teacher	Kathy Callaghan	15
Kindergarten Teacher	Winsome So	17
Kindergarten-First Grade Teacher (CIP)	Jennie Lee	14
First Grade Teacher	Lynette Adams	B1
First Grade Teacher	Jennifer Nesson	B2
First Grade Teacher	Dianne Mogannam	10
First Grade Teacher (CIP)	Daisy Chan	11
Second Grade Teacher	Shirlee Martin	B6
Second Grade Teacher	Jane Pruitt	12
Second Grade Teacher (CIP)	Ching-Yee Way	B32
Second Grade Teacher	Suzanne Vradelis	B37
Second/Third Grade Teacher (CIP)	Jane Wong	B31
Third Grade Teacher	Jennifer Jordan	B5
Third Grade Teacher		B33
Third Grade Teacher	Johnny Hansell	B35
Third Grade Teacher (CIP)	Liza Choy	B36
Fourth Grade Teacher (CIP)	Abigail Vahey	21
Fourth Grade Teacher	Cindy Bernstein	23
Fourth Grade Teacher	Sheila Audet	26
Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher	Cheryl McCue	22

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<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Room Number</u>
Fifth Grade Teacher	Marina Chiappellone	20
Fifth Grade Teacher	Kim Lind	24
Fifth Grade Teacher (CIP)	Karen Chu	25
Resource Specialist	Inga Townsend	13
Speech Therapist	Catherine Soofi	B34
Resource Teacher (ELL)	Lori Murakami	27
Inclusion Resource Teacher	Tiffany Kendall	13/B34
Resource/Student Activities	Catherine Lewis	27
Music	John Calloway	
Psychologist	Minu Shaw	
Secretary	Michel Knorr	Main Office
Secretary	Susan Hyde	Main Office
Elementary Advisor	Bertha Smith	B34
Cafeteria	Patsy Smith	
Custodian	Claudio Morino	
Custodian	Larry Ajoste	
Parent Liaison	Judy Higa	27
CIP Paraprofessional	Josephine Lai	
Library Paraprofessional		Library
Art Paraprofessional	Bonnie Nuno	
Special Ed Paraprofessional	Michelle Strickland	13
Computer Paraprofessional	Joanne Weinman	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Ernestine Brown	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Madeline Cabading	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Tania Dufour	

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<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Room Number</u>
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Jarrod Formalejo	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Holly Mack	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Shane Medanich	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Eng Nottingham	
Inclusion Paraprofessional	Marianila Cumpos	
Yard Monitor	Gabriel Bonilla	
Yard Monitor	Margaret Cheng	
Yard Monitor	Helen Huang	
Yard Monitor	Josephine Lai	
Yard Monitor	Rene Qare	
Yard Monitor	Bertha Smith	
Yard Monitor	Michelle Strickland	
Yard Monitor	Gayline Tom	

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School Site Council (SSC)

Members of the School Site Council are elected by their constituents (staff or parents) at the end of each even-numbered school year. To find out what the School Site Council does, see page 24. If contact information for a member is not given below, contact another member or the principal for assistance.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Erika Andrew	erikana@earthlink.net	415-566-7009
Buff Harding, Jr.	bjharding@aol.com	415-661-3653
John Mogannam	johnmog@aol.com	415-661-0137
Cathy Rico	crico@speakeasy.net	415-585-7220
Gayline Tom	gaylinetom@aol.com	45-826-6326
Deborah Parker Wong	dpw@medialinkgroup.com	415-242-9806

Alternates

Carolyn Johnston	Cjsfca@aol.com	415-731-0841
Rose Von Buchau		415-695-1920
Kathryn Rato	kathrynrato@hotmail.com	415-731-6839

Bilingual Advisory Committee (BAC)

The BAC advises the School Site Council and monitors the services received by English Learning (EL) students. If contact information for a member is not given below, contact another member or the principal for assistance.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u>
David/Debra Chen	dandd000@yahoo.com	415-731-4290

Mei Wong

Wai Wong

Alternate

Dan Xi Li

What you need to know about:

West Portal Elementary Volunteer Opportunities

There are many ways you can volunteer your time and talents. Below are some of the ways in which you could help. *If you are interested in any of the opportunities below, please contact the Parent Volunteer Coordinator listed on page 12.*

Classroom Helper: Assist teachers in the classroom. Ask your child's teacher, or another teacher, about specific tasks.

Committee Member: There are a number of committees to serve on. For a list of committees, see page 22.

Event Coordinator or Helper: Coordinate or assist at various school events, e.g. parent education nights, Spring Festival.

Field Trip Chaperone: Accompany classes on field trips and or provide transportation.

Fundraising Coordinator/Helper: Assist with one or more fundraising events or programs, such as helping to plan the Spring Auction or informing parents of the Boxtops or Scrip Programs.

Game Room Monitor: Supervise children in the lunchtime game room.

Grant Researcher/Writer: Assist with finding potential grants and/or writing grant proposals.

Landscaping Helper: Help plan and implement landscaping projects in and around the school.

Library Assistant: Assist in the library and/or run the CIP library.

Message Folder Helper: Assemble school message folders on Wednesday mornings.

Office/Clerical Helper: Assist in the main office with clerical duties, e.g. copying, typing, filing.

Parents Club Board: Serve on the Parents Club Board and help plan and coordinate parent and school activities (see page 21 for details).

School Site Council: Serve on the School Site Council to develop the school's strategy for meeting the educational needs of all students at West Portal Elementary (see page 24 for details).

Sports Coach: Assist in coaching softball, basketball or other sports after school.

Sweatshirt Sale Coordinator: Coordinate the sale of West Portal Elementary sweatshirts. This is an important fundraiser that also helps market our school to the community.

Traffic Greeter: During peak traffic times around the school, assist parents with following traffic safety guidelines to ensure children get to and from school safely.

Translator/Interpreter: Provide interpreting or translation services in languages other than English at school events or for school communication materials.

Webpage Design and Upkeep: Assist with keeping the West Portal Elementary webpage up to date and inviting.

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Yard Monitor: Monitor and supervise the play yards during recess and lunch.

West Portal Elementary Fundraising Opportunities

If “fundraising” brings up memories of wrapping paper, candy and magazine sales, never fear! West Portal Elementary does not currently participate in such programs. But a major goal of the Parent Club is to raise funds to support a variety of programs, including Physical Education and Kinder Music Makers, and purchase supplies such as educational materials and computers. Parents are critical in this effort as parents realize how beneficial such programs and materials are to the success of all children in the school. *Let the principal or Parents Club know if you have a new idea for raising money.* (The programs and events are listed in the order in which they occur in the school year.)

Boxtops Program: (ongoing) The school gets money for each General Mills “Boxtop for Education” collected and returned to your child’s teacher. Start collecting now! More details about how the program works will be given to you through the student folders early in the fall.

Education Fund: (ongoing) The primary income generator for the Parents Club is the Education Fund Campaign. Each West Portal family is asked to contribute at least \$250 to this fund in support of the wonderful enrichment programs described in this Packet. If your company has a matching gift program, your tax-deductible contribution can go even further. Every contribution, large and small, helps our school.

E-Scrip and Paper Scrip Programs: (ongoing) Parents need to enroll in order to contribute through these programs. The Parents Club will pay the initial enrollment fee (\$10/family) and the school will get a percentage of purchases made through participating merchants or registered credit cards. There’s no cost to you, and the contributions are sent automatically to West Portal each month! More details about how these programs work will be given to you through the student folders early in the fall.

Scholastic Monthly Book Orders: (ongoing) Students get an opportunity to buy inexpensive books and the teacher receives credit to obtain free books to strengthen the classroom collection. Ask your teacher for details.

Sweatshirt Sales: (ongoing) Buy a sweatshirt with the West Portal logo to show pride in your school! Sweatshirts come in adult and child sizes.

Rummage Sale: (Fall) Empty your closets and clean your garage! West Portal Elementary will sponsor a school-wide rummage sale. Our collective unwanted junk can add up to thousands of dollars for school programs!!

Spring Festival: (late winter)) West Portal Elementary is renowned for its Spring Festival, a combination auction, raffle, dinner and cultural celebration with student performances. Look for notices in the fall to sign up and help with this effort!

Non-Fundraising Programs and Events

West Portal Elementary is committed to providing a variety of activities to tap the skills and talents of parents to enrich the educational experience of West Portal students. Below are some of the current programs and events we hope to offer every year. New ideas are always welcome.

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Contact the Parents Club or the principal for assistance in getting your idea underway. (The programs and events are listed in the order in which they will occur.)

Welcome Back Brunch: (September) This culinary event occurs early in the school year so families could have an opportunity to meet other families and school staff.

Game Room: (ongoing) Parents organize and staff a lunchtime game room for 1st-5th grade students. If you can give just one hour a week, or one hour a month, we need your help to keep the game room open each day!

Science Night – Exploratorium: (fall) West Portal Elementary partners with the Exploratorium to offer parent-child science education. These events are fun, hands-on demonstrations of how to use ordinary household items to learn more about science.

Pumpkin Patch: (fall) A wonderful event held during school hours where students can buy a pumpkin and fun trinkets to bring home. Parents help organize the event.

Middle School Information Night: (fall/winter) This event educates parents about how to choose and enroll in middle school. Middle school representatives are invited to talk about their respective schools and answer questions.

Holiday Sing Along: (December) Families are invited to eat and then join in a festive choral group that includes students from a local high school to sing along West Portal Avenue.

Chinese New Year Parade: (winter/spring) West Portal Elementary has built a tradition of participating in San Francisco's Chinese New Year Parade. Students perform stilt-walking, traditional drumming, fan, ribbon and sword dancing, dragon and lion dancing. This is a wonderful opportunity for students and parents alike. Notices go out in the fall to prepare for this huge endeavor.

Chinese Immersion Program Language Showcase: (spring) An educational activity for Chinese Immersion program students to present their oral language skills. Parents assist with refreshments.

Scholastic Book Fair: (spring) The Scholastic Book Fair is a chance for students to "go shopping" for books. Not only does this encourage reading, but the school benefits by receiving credit toward obtaining more books.

Spring Musical: (spring) Parents and teachers work with students to put on a stage musical. Last year's production was "The Wizard of Oz" with music from the original movie and "The Wiz" stage adaptation.

Parent Education Nights: (occasional) The Parent Education Committee organizes evening forums when parents come to learn more about issues that impact their children's education. If you have an idea, contact this committee.

After-School Cooking Classes: (occasional) Parents, often through the CIP Enrichment Committee, organize cooking classes at a nominal cost for students after school. Parents are invited to participate to sharpen their cooking skills!

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West Portal Parents Club

Purpose of the West Portal Parents Club

The West Portal Parents Club is committed to organizing activities that promote and enrich the learning experience of West Portal Elementary School students, including activities to enhance parent involvement in their child's education. The West Portal Parents Club recognizes the importance of parent involvement and encourages its parent members to get involved at various levels of participation and decision-making.

Your Parents Club sponsors a number of opportunities for parents to get involved. Check out our list of events and committees to get an idea of the range of activities we organize.

How is the Parents Club different than the PTA or other parent groups?

Unlike the PTA, there are no dues to be a member. The West Portal Parents Club is an independent, nonprofit, public benefit corporation that is guided by a set of Bylaws created by and for its members.

Structure of the West Portal Parents Club and your privileges as a member

The West Portal Parents Club has an elected Board of Directors to make decisions regarding the business of the organization, including operations and allocation of funds. The Bylaws that guide the organization are available in the school's main office. The officers of the West Portal Parents Club, who are also on the Board of Directors, are the President, Vice President(s), Treasurer(s) and Secretary.

Though all parents are welcome to participate in any Parents Club-sponsored event or meeting, only board members can vote on Parents Club business, including how the Parents Club sets its spending priorities. West Portal parent members elect the Board of Directors through an election process that takes place at the end of every school year.

How do you join?

It's easy to become a member! Just fill out the membership form that comes home in the student folders at the beginning of the school year and return it to your child's teacher. There are no dues or eligibility requirements besides having a child who is enrolled at West Portal Elementary.

How can you communicate with the Board or various committees?

The West Portal Parents Club wants to ensure two-way communication between the Board, committees and the rest of the parents. Currently, there are several ways the Board disseminates information:

- the weekly communications folder that goes home with your child
- the bulletin board outside the auditorium
- the school web site, www.westportalschool.com
- our email list (there's a link on the web site to sign up)
- the West Portal Times Parents Club page

If you have a question, concern, or comment, you can:

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- give the information to your teacher
- leave a message in the Parents Club mailbox in the main office
- contact any of the Board members directly (see the Who's Who section of this packet on page 12.)

The schedule for Parents Club Business Meetings will be distributed early in September and reminders will be on the meeting minutes distributed after every meeting (we make our best effort to distribute/post the agenda and meeting minutes in a timely manner). We encourage your participation, as that is what makes our school even better. *If you need an interpreter in a language other than English, let us know ahead of time.*

How do you get involved?

Your participation is *essential* to the success of West Portal Elementary and its students.

- *Have a new idea?* Let us know and we can help you get it going!
- *Work full time but can help from home?* Call the Parent Volunteer Coordinator and he or she will match you with a need!
- *Speak another language?* We welcome your help translating occasional notices!
- *Can afford an hour (or more) a week?* Let your teacher know and you can be a classroom volunteer!
- *Don't have time but can cook like Martin Yan?* Volunteer to provide food for the next event or help at a one-time event teaching students (and parents) to put together yummy and nutritious dishes!
- *Have ideas about how the school or Parent Club should prioritize spending?* Run for School Site Council or Parents Club Board!
- *Want to learn how to assist your child with schoolwork?* Come to our evening parent education events!

There are innumerable ways to get involved to benefit the school and your child. If you need more ideas, contact your child's teacher, the principal or Parent Volunteer Coordinator.

West Portal Parent Club Positions and Committees

The committees and positions listed below have been established by the Board of Directors by resolution for specific purposes. Board members take on the responsibility of the positions after being elected. The information below is intended to give you an idea of what the various committees do so that you can direct your questions, concerns and comments to the appropriate committee or person. We also hope that you will find the time to join one of the various committees by contacting the committee chair or liaison listed in the Who's Who section of this packet on page 12.

Board Officers

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President: The president shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors. He or she shall constitute such committees as necessary for the smooth conduct of the Board. He or she shall have such other powers and duties as the Board or the Bylaws may prescribe.

Vice President(s): In the absence or disability of the president, the vice president(s) shall perform all the duties of, and be subject to all the restrictions on, the president. The vice president(s) shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be from time to time prescribed for him or her by the Board or the Bylaws.

Secretary: The secretary shall take minutes at and keep a book of Minutes of all meetings of the Board, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special.

Treasurer(s): The treasurer shall keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the properties and transactions of the corporation. The treasurer shall deposit and disburse all moneys and other valuables in the name of the corporation.

Other Board Positions

Administration Liaison: Usually the principal or his/her designee, the Administration Liaison acts as the bridge between the administration of the school and the Parents Club. As the Parents Club's goals are aligned with the Academic Plan for the school, this liaison is an important resource to ensure parent activities contribute to the overall educational success of all students at West Portal Elementary.

Chinese Immersion Program Enrichment Committee and Liaison: The CIP Enrichment Committee operates under the auspices of the Parent Club Board. The mission of the CIP Enrichment Committee is to provide support, enrichment programs and advocacy for the teachers and students in the Chinese Immersion Program and West Portal Elementary School in regard to language and culture. The CIP Enrichment Committee Liaison acts as the link between the Committee and the Parents Club Board by keeping apprised of the Committee's activities and reporting developments to the Board.

Facilities Committee and Liaison (ad hoc): The Facilities Committee meets as needed to oversee facility condition and improvements. Is usually composed of the principal, staff and parents. The Liaison acts as the link between the Facilities Committee and the Parents Club by keeping apprised of facility needs and reporting developments to the Parents Club Board.

GATE Liaison: The Gifted and Talented Program (GATE) is designed to address the educational needs of students identified through testing as eligible for GATE services. The GATE Liaison acts as the link between the GATE parent and teacher community by keeping apprised of the SFUSD and school GATE Program and reporting developments to the Parent Club Board.

Inclusion Liaison: The Inclusion Program has been at West Portal Elementary School since 1994. Inclusion is a program that allows each child with special needs to attend their neighborhood school in general education classes with their non-disabled peers. Services are brought to the child rather than the child being in a special education setting. Students in the Inclusion Program are supported in an age-appropriate classroom and have access to the core curriculum as do all students in the class. Students may require adaptations to the curriculum in order to have adequate access to the core curriculum standards. In addition to working on the same goals as all students in the classroom, students in the Inclusion Program also work towards individualized goals that help a

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student work to the best of his/her abilities. The Inclusion Liaison keeps apprised of developments in the SFUSD and school Inclusion Programs and reports between the school Inclusion Program and the Parent Club Board.

Parent Education Committee: The Parent Education Committee identifies the learning needs of the West Portal Elementary parents and creates education opportunities to meet those needs.

Parent Volunteer Coordinator: The Parent Volunteer Coordinator keeps record of all parents who have expressed interest in volunteering and assists in notifying parents of volunteer opportunities as they arise.

Social Committee: The Social Committee assists the Parent Club Board in making community connections for refreshment contributions and other enhancements.

Technology Committee: The Technology Committee works closely with the school administration and teachers to provide technical assistance to improve the communications within the school and school community.

Traffic Safety Committee: The Traffic Safety Committee works to educate the school community about traffic safety and, when necessary, partners with San Francisco Parking and Traffic to ensure or improve the safety of the students when traveling to and from school.

West Portal C.A.R.E Liaison: West Portal C.A.R.E. is a private, non-profit organization that has been providing before- and after-school care, as well as spring break and summer programs for West Portal students and others since 1982 (for more details, see page 25). The West Portal C.A.R.E. Liaison is a parent who acts as the link between West Portal C.A.R.E organization and the Parent Club by keeping apprised of West Portal C.A.R.E programming and reporting developments to the Parent Club.

School Site Council

The School Site Council (SSC) is a major part of the overall decision-making structure at each school. They are a very special group of people who are elected by their peers. The SSC is composed of school administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and community members (students often participate in the middle and high school levels). Their primary role is to guide the Site Planning Process to ensure that the needs of all students are specifically addressed in the School Site Plan. The School Site Plan is a living document that highlights the goals for the school and the programs and dollars that the school needs to turn these goals into a reality for students (San Francisco Unified School District, December 2001, *The School Site Council Handbook: A Resource for Every School Community Member*). More detailed information about School Site Councils can be obtained by visiting <http://storm.sfusd.edu/apps/ssc/>.

Parents have an investment in the success of their children, and thus the success of their schools. This is recognized by the San Francisco Unified School District that requires that half of the composition of elementary school site councils be family and community members.

In October of every even year (2002, 2004, etc.), all school site councils should elect new members, including alternate members to take the place of those who leave the SSC for various reasons. The school principal is responsible for designing and conducting an election where parents are able to elect parents and community members to the SSC. Though the school district has developed a set of "model" bylaws that are the rules for conducting business, these can be

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customized by each school. A copy of the West Portal Elementary SSC Bylaws are available through the main office. Meeting times and locations are announced through the student message folders.

West Portal C.A.R.E., Inc.

Philosophy and Programs

West Portal C.A.R.E., a non-profit organization, operates five licensed school-age child care programs in San Francisco. West Portal C.A.R.E. provides on-site before and after school care. Their stated mission is to balance and enhance the school day through opportunities for children to learn and experience new things through physical activity, social experience and hands-on participatory activities. The curriculum includes developmentally appropriate, structured and non-structured group and individual activities that support the academic studies of the children. In addition, the curriculum emphasizes learning social skills, such as problem solving and cooperation with others. Programs offered at West Portal also include a spring break program and a summer day camp.

Parent Participation

Their "open door policy" means parents are welcome to visit any time during the course of the program day. West Portal C.A.R.E. thrives from the help, talent and skills of the family volunteers who participate in a variety of ways. Parents and guardians volunteer to serve on the West Portal C.A.R.E Site Councils, advisory committees that support the daily operation at the site level. West Portal C.A.R.E's West Portal Elementary offices are located on the school grounds on the Claremont Avenue side. You can also reach Site Director Pamela Bernstein at 415-242-8641.

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West Portal Elementary Academic Plan Goals

Every parent has access to the Academic or School Site Plan of their child's school through the school's main office. Consult the Academic Plan for more details, including the specific actions to achieve each goal.

West Portal Elementary's Academic Goals for 2002-2003

- GOAL #1** Significantly increase academic achievement and learning for all students, including closing the achievement gap.
- GOAL #2** Ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive education by providing a high-quality program of studies in the Core Curriculum.
- GOAL #3** Improve the instructional delivery to all students using best practices and whole school reform models.
- GOAL #4** Ensure a safe secure school and learning environment.
- GOAL #5** Significantly increase the involvement of a broad base of parents and community at the school level.

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West Portal Parents Club Budget

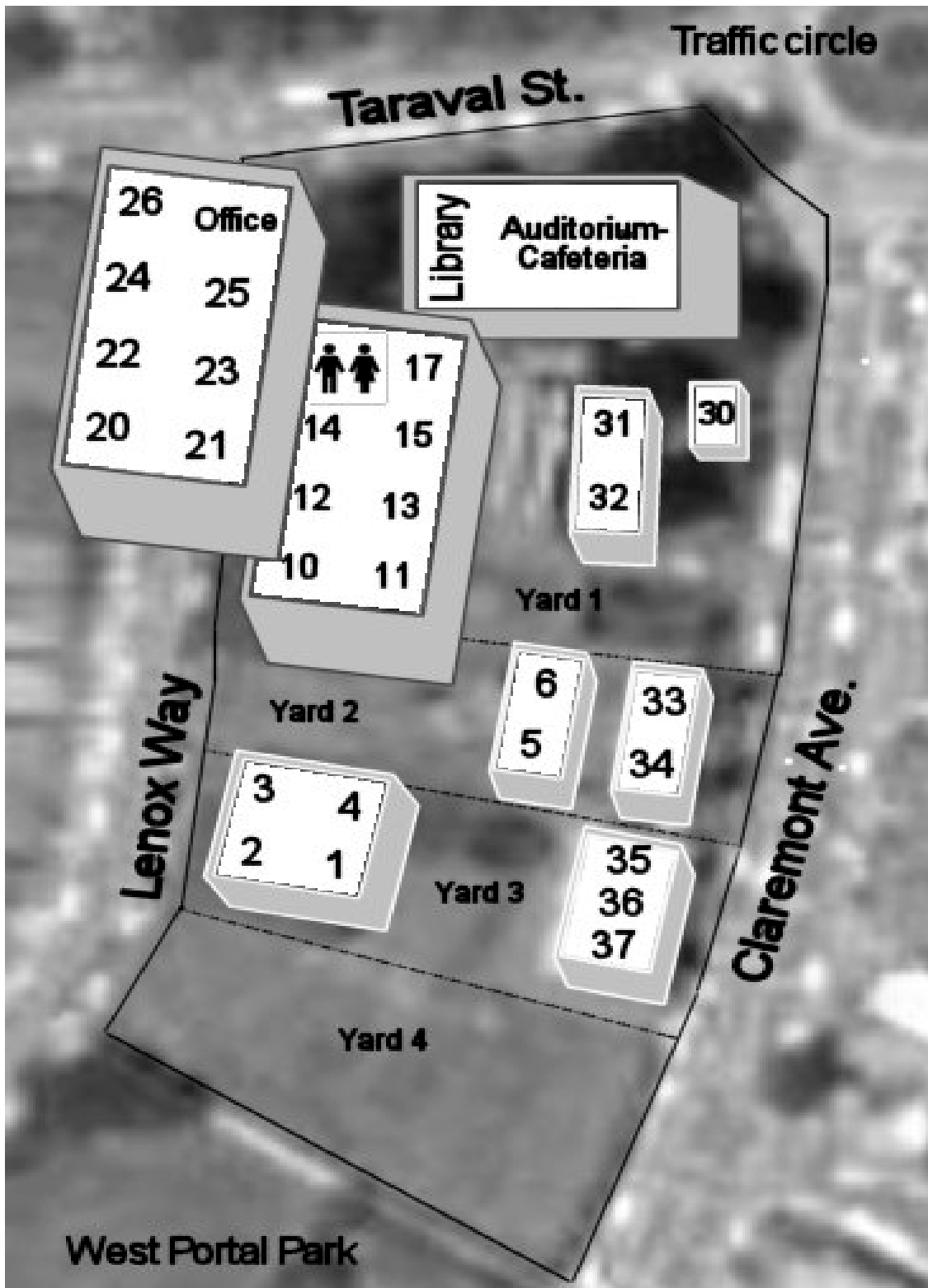
The following information is to show how each fundraiser contributes to the overall funding of various programs, equipment and supplies that enrich the educational experience of the families of West Portal Elementary. For more details, you can contact the Parents Club Treasurer on page 12.

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Fundraiser/Special Event</u>	<u>2002-2003 Projected Income</u>
Ongoing	Education Fund	\$36,750
Ongoing	Matching Gifts	\$3,500
Ongoing	Boxtops	\$250
Ongoing	Internet, E-Scrip, Etc.	\$3,500
Ongoing	Sweatshirts, Etc.	\$0
Ongoing	West Portal C.A.R.E.	\$1,000
Oct.	Pumpkin Patch	\$500
Feb/March	Spring Festival/Raffle	\$25,000
April	Book Fair	(Books)
	2001-2002 Carryover	\$30,000
TOTAL		\$100,500

<u>Spending Category</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>2002-2003 Amount Budgeted</u>
Premises Maintenance	classroom mats and air filters, emergency backpack supplies, landscaping	\$3,300
Equipment and Supplies	Parent Club computer supplies, school risograph, school copy machine upgrade	\$5,000
Instructional Materials	classroom supplies, message folders, student workbooks	\$39,700
Field Trips and Transportation	field trip admission and transportation	\$6,900
Programs: Arts and Music	Music Makers Program, parent education nights, Spring Musical,	\$10,250
Programs: Recognition/Graduation	graduation, yearbook, teacher/staff appreciation, volunteer appreciation	\$1,450
Programs: Enrichment	Game Room, perceptual motor skills para, physical education program	\$28,000
Parent Club Operating Expenses	Caring Fund, child care, fundraiser expenses, Parent Club web page	\$3,200
TOTAL		\$97,800

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West Portal Elementary School Map (Teachers and grades on reverse)



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West Portal Elementary School
 Parent Involvement Orientation Packet 2002-2003

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Room Number</u>
Kindergarten Teacher	Alexia Tindol	B3
	Laurie Breisach	
Kindergarten Teacher	Debbie Huysentruyt	B4
	Mary Falzon	
Kindergarten Teacher	Kathy Callaghan	15
Kindergarten Teacher	Winsome So	17
Kindergarten-First Grade Teacher (CIP)	Jennie Lee	14
First Grade Teacher	Lynette Adams	B1
First Grade Teacher	Jennifer Nesson	B2
First Grade Teacher	Dianne Mogannam	10
First Grade Teacher (CIP)	Daisy Chan	11
Second Grade Teacher	Shirlee Martin	B6
Second Grade Teacher	Jane Pruitt	12
Second Grade Teacher (CIP)	Ching-Yee Way	B32
Second Grade Teacher	Suzanne Vradelis	B37
Second/Third Grade Teacher (CIP)	Jane Wong	B31
Third Grade Teacher	Jennifer Jordan	B5
Third Grade Teacher		B33
Third Grade Teacher	Johnny Hansell	B35
Third Grade Teacher (CIP)	Liza Choy	B36
Fourth Grade Teacher (CIP)	Abigail Vahey	21
Fourth Grade Teacher	Cindy Bernstein	23
Fourth Grade Teacher	Sheila Audet	26
Fourth/Fifth Grade Teacher	Cheryl McCue	22
Fifth Grade Teacher	Marina Chiappellone	20
Fifth Grade Teacher	Kim Lind	24
Fifth Grade Teacher (CIP)	Karen Chu	25

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West Portal Elementary Traffic Safety

Safety coming to and from school is a primary concern because the streets surrounding West Portal Elementary are heavily used. Compounding the problem are drivers who do not follow some simple traffic safety rules. Parents can help ensure children are benefiting from their West Portal education by making sure children get to school safely. Take care when dropping off or picking up your child, and/or volunteer to be a Traffic Greeter in the mornings.

Before you start off for the next trip to West Portal Elementary, take a minute to think about the safe and unsafe driving you see around the school every day. We all need to follow common sense – and traffic rules – to keep the roads safe for all children.

The Department of Parking and Traffic will continue to crack down on parking and driving offenses.

Please Don't:

- Do not double-park anywhere near the school, not even for a minute. Did you know there is a \$50 fine for double-parking? When parents double-park at drop off and dismissal times, children have to weave between cars to get to the sidewalk. It's just not safe – and it's not worth the risk to your child. Double parking means more congestion on Lenox Way and other surrounding streets. When traffic backs up, cars and pedestrians are at much greater risk for accidents.
- Do not block crosswalks or bus zones. When you park in a crosswalk, it is very dangerous to those using the crosswalk to cross the street and can cost you a \$50 ticket. Let's keep the crosswalks safe for our children!
- Do not make U-turns near the school. Lenox, Taraval and Claremont are extremely congested roads and traffic gets even more backed up when cars try to turn around in someone's driveway.

Please Do:

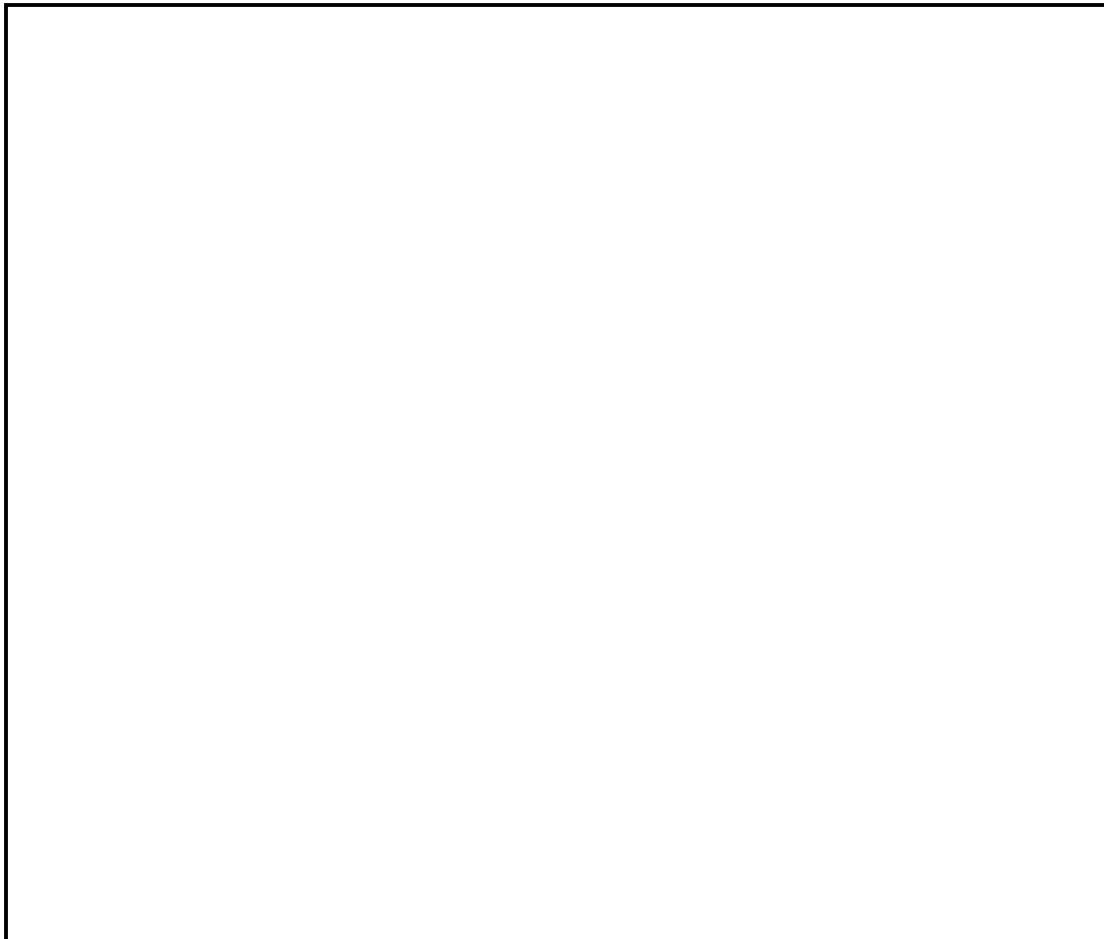
- Park your car in a legitimate parking spot (see map on the next page).
- Walk with your child to school, and use this time to teach them to use the crosswalks safely.
- For older children, use our drop-off zone at the top of Lenox Way
- Take the extra time to circle the block instead of making a U-turn.

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West Portal Elementary Parking Map

(created by the West Portal Elementary Traffic Safety Committee)

If you need to drive your child to school, please follow the safety rules on the preceding page. The map shows streets that often have plenty of parking. If you will be parked for a while, be sure to check street cleaning signs. White zones around the school are to be used for dropping off and picking up ONLY, not for parking in.



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Park in a legal spot and walk with your child to school.

White Zones are for drop off and pick up **ONLY**.