

Summary of "Chili Chow-Down" PTC Night  
Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010; 5:30 pm  
held at WLC

Approximately 12 parents and all WLC staff attended; chili and toppings were enjoyed by all.

2 questions were submitted beforehand: how to challenge middle schoolers in math, and preparation in grammar going into high school.

Mr. Gaither addressed the questions. Regarding M.S. math challenge, he outlined the philosophy of "how well you do vs. how much you do," meaning the staff strives for depth of knowledge. Examples were given of reaching the same answers via different equations to demonstrate understanding, as opposed to rote memorization. He cited concrete support for challenging students individually: there are 6 math levels in grades 6-7-8 at Woods, most students at Woods take Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (algebra district-wide is usually taken in 9<sup>th</sup> grade), and Woods is the only middle-level school in the district excelling in math.

Speaking on language skills/grammar in preparation for high school, Mr. Gaither spoke on the WLC goal of making good writers and speakers. He mentioned practical application of grammatical rules (verb tense, noun-verb agreement) in the context of compositions, rather than drills such as sentence diagramming or memorizing sentence patterns. Ms. McCutcheon lent support by mentioning that the staff strives to give Woods students as broad an experience as possible, and other opportunities would suffer at the expense of extensive, rote drills.

Woods students' transition to high school was briefly discussed, with the consensus being they enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade well-prepared and with more maturity than some other students. Discussion then turned to the 3-pathway plan proposed by the district and how it might affect Woods as a school. One recommendation was that parents be involved at the district level by attending school board meetings and contacting the school board members to voice their concerns.

Thanks to all the staff and those parents who attended and brought food. The effort was appreciated!