



Principal Jenni Weipert invited the news media to watch the football team parade through the halls with the drumline and out to the front of the building on Sept. 9. Weipert said she likes to recognize students in as many ways possible.

New principal doesn't fit the mold

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Jenni Weipert isn't what one might imagine the average principal to be. West High's new head principal has brought new ideas to improve the learning environment. She's adventurous and driven by goals. She's bold, and that sets her apart from the rest.

She said one goal is to organize the school day so that students have a supportive learning environment. When visiting West last year, she noticed food wrappers in the hall and students standing in congested hallways talking. Consequently, she and her administrative team prohibited outside food and shortened passing time from five minutes to four minutes. Also, students cannot enter the building before 7:55 a.m. because of the lack of hall supervision.

Another goal is to get students to feel together as a whole—even if students play just a small part, she wants it to be some part. "I want to increase the school spirit, student pride, and purpose. I want the kids to have a purpose and be proud of this school, themselves and each other."

"We are a very diverse community with lots of talent and lots of potential," she added. "We are very fortunate to have a lot of talented teachers as well, and some pretty unique course offerings. The talent is here, and the knowledge is here. We just have to bring it together a little tighter."

She said one challenging aspect of being a principal is "having to meet the wants and needs of 2,000 different students." She says the job requires "making sure you're doing the right thing at the right time. It's a pretty intense job."

When she's stressed, she'll go out to classrooms and talk to the students. "I love talking to kids. It makes me feel so much

better and makes me feel like what I'm doing is important."

One of the biggest rewards of her job is "watching kids grow." She said she wants students to know that "I am here for them, and that my door is always open. We don't have to agree all the time, but we have to agree to work together."

Growing up, her family moved around a lot. She attended Smart and West for a short while, and she graduated from San Angelo High School in Angelo, Texas. She described herself as a good academic student, but because she felt bored, "I was challenging" for teachers.

She went to St. Ambrose University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in education, reading, language arts and social studies. She got her master's degree at the University of Iowa in administration with a minor in psychology. She also has a special education administration degree. She graduated from both schools at the top of her class.

She started teaching at Wood, and then was the principal at Smart, associate principal at Central, and principal at Walcott.

At West she leads students in the Pledge of Allegiance to begin each day because it builds a sense of community. Her sense of organization comes from being part of an Army family. Weipert has spent her entire life traveling the world. From the years 1982-86, she lived in Germany with her husband and daughter. While living there, she got to learn things that most people in America take for granted.

"They don't sell traditional baked goods in Germany, so I started making my own birthday cakes and pastries," said Weipert. It

started off as something fun for her and her daughter to bond over, until it became something she enjoyed and was very good at.

Weipert also got to experience what it was like to be on an all army team for both softball and volleyball while in Germany. If you don't believe it, she has a mangled finger to prove it. "I love sports, that's a big part of my life," she explained. While in Germany she was in a championship game for volleyball.

She went up to block a ball and got what she thought was a jam. The coach pulled on her finger to get rid of the jam, only to tear it even more than before. Weipert had no other option though. She got back on the court and finished out the game, helping her team get the victory.

Another sport that is huge in her life is football. "I watch every Iowa Hawkeye game," she said.

"I'm a huge fan." She's also a huge fan of Peyton Manning and is willing to follow whatever team he plays for. "I just love football."

Weipert enjoys weight training. She has been lifting weights for over 20 years. It plays a huge role in her life.

Sometimes while running on her treadmill she likes to read. "I read everything from *Moby Dick* and Edgar Allen Poe to romance novels and mysteries," Weipert explained. She likes being able to mix two of her favorite things together, reading and working out.

"I like to go on walks, ride my bike, and go on motorcycle rides. Any kind of outdoor activity," she said. "I like to dabble in pretty much anything."

She said she loves the high school level because of all the sports, activities and clubs. "All the excitement of high school is just fun to be around. That's what makes the job worth it everyday."