

## Schools must impart 21st century workplace skills, Keenan says

By Kevin Kelley

### WESTLAKE

Today's schools need to instill the knack for innovation and creativity in students as well as the ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, Westlake City Schools Dan Keenan told new teachers attending the Aug. 12 West Shore Chamber of Commerce luncheon at La Centre Conference and Banquet Facility.

"We need to teach our kids to be information and technology literate," Keenan told the chamber, which for several years has welcomed new teachers in the Bay Village and Westlake school districts at its August luncheon.

Keenan praised the business community for the support it gave the school district. He noted that he has worked for six school districts, but the West Shore Chamber of Commerce was the only one to host a luncheon to welcome new teachers.

"You are truly an active and involved business community that benefits our schools," Keenan told the chamber members.

The mission statement of the Westlake City Schools states "We educate for excellence," Keenan noted.

During his period interviewing for the top job and



New teachers from the Bay Village Schools and Westlake City Schools were welcomed at the Aug. 12 luncheon meeting of the West Shore Chamber of Commerce. (West Life photo by Kevin Kelley)

his first year as superintendent, Keenan said he has come to realize that the district backs up its mission statement with results.

The Westlake district has received the rating of "excellent" on the state report card for the 10th consecutive year. The district is one of only 18 out of over 600 statewide to have achieved that accomplishment, Keenan noted.

"That tradition of excellence is something that drives our employees, our students and our community everyday," Keenan said.

The district's mission statement also talks about empowering students, he said. The district also wants to give its students the spark and enthusiasm needed to be successful in the 21st century, Keenan said.

"We need to teach our kids those skills that you want to see — the motivation and drive that's necessary for them to perform well and succeed in businesses, and certainly to have the flexibility to bring together and integrate what they've learned in different ways so they can solve problems in real world situations," he said.

Learning has to be something students can relate to, Keenan said.

As part of the district's growing emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education, the schools have developed 11 partnerships with corporations and three partnerships with higher education institutions, Keenan reported.