



# WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Annual Instructional Update 2015-2016

Presented to the  
Weston Board of Education  
Curriculum Committee  
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**Colleen A. Palmer, Ph.D.**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

**Kenneth G. Craw, Ed.D.**  
**Assistant Superintendent of  
Curriculum and Instruction**

# **WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Our commitment to excellence and continued, purposeful innovation will make Weston Public Schools the standard in designing educational pathways and environments that cultivate empowered citizens of the global community.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Weston Public Schools, as a caring and supportive community partnership, is to empower each student to achieve success and contribute to our global society by developing and cultivating character, knowledge and creativity through a dynamic learning experience that challenges each student to continually pursue personal excellence.

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## Contributors

Superintendent .....	Dr. Colleen Palmer
Assistant Superintendent .....	Dr. Kenneth Craw
Director of Digital Learning & Innovation .....	Dr. Craig Tunks
Mathematics, Grades K-5 .....	Mrs. Carolyn Vinton
Mathematics, Grades 6-12 .....	Ms. Janine Russo
Science, Grades K-5 .....	Mrs. Carolyn Vinton
Science, Grades 6-12 .....	Dr. Darcy Ronan
Language Arts, Grades K-5 .....	Mrs. Andrea Noble, Mrs. Alex Bluestein
English, Grades 6-12 .....	Ms. Christine Cincotta
Social Studies, Grades K-5 .....	Mrs. Andrea Noble, Mrs. Alex Bluestein
Social Studies, Grades 6-12 .....	Mr. Brian Scott
World Language, Grades K-12 .....	Mrs. Mercedes Fernandes
Visual Arts, Grades K-12 .....	Ms. Sydney Girardi
Performing Arts, Grades K-12 .....	Ms. Elizabeth Morris
Health and Physical Education, Grades K-12 .....	Mrs. Kim Kus
Technology Education, Grades 6-12 .....	Dr. Darcy Ronan
School Counseling, Grades K-12 .....	Ms. Lois Pernice
Project Challenge, Grades 3-8 .....	Ms. Lois Pernice

## **Table of Contents**

Mathematics, Grades K-5 .....	1
Mathematics, Grades 6-12 .....	3
Science, Grades K-5 .....	6
Science, Grades 6-12 .....	7
Language Arts, Grades K-5 .....	10
English, Grades 6-12 .....	12
Social Studies, Grades K-5 .....	15
Social Studies, Grades 6-12 .....	16
World Language, Grades K-12 .....	19
Visual Arts, Grades K-12 .....	22
Performing Arts, Grades K-12 .....	25
Health and Physical Education Grades K-12 .....	29
Technology Education Grades 6-12 .....	30
School Counseling Grades K-12 .....	33
Project Challenge Grades 3-8 .....	35

## MATHEMATICS, GRADES K-5

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Continue instructional coaching to provide observational data to teachers in mathematics for the purpose of reflection, increasing repertoire, and improving instruction. Coaching next year will focus on support for further development of instructional strategies leading to successful math learning for teachers of kindergarten through grade five, and including an emphasis on differentiation and blended learning.
- Continue to provide high-quality professional development opportunities for all teachers using both internal capacity and outside consultants.
- Continue to provide opportunities for parent education at all levels.
- Assist teachers with implementation of new K-5 standards-based progress reports, corresponding rubrics, and assessments for rollout in fall 2015.
- Complete curriculum revision using Atlas electronic mapping for grades three through five during the summer of 2015, bringing these revised documents to the Board next year.
- Reflect on findings of Tri-State Consortium math visit, March 2015, to inform the continuous growth of our program, implementing suggestions where appropriate.
- Begin exploration of the use of performance assessments at the elementary level.

### II. Accomplishments

- Curriculum revision using Atlas electronic mapping for grades three through five took place during the summer of 2015. This completed the K-5 Math revision process.
- Assessments were aligned and rubrics created to facilitate the new grading standards on the K-5 standards-based progress reports that were implemented this year.
- At the start of the year, professional development sessions at both HES and WIS allowed teachers to analyze and reflect on the findings in the report from our Tri-State Consortium visit last spring. Teachers used this reflection to set goals for the year.
- In the fall, six parent workshops were offered and well attended by K-5 parents. The morning and evening sessions at HES provided an introduction to the ways our primary students learn mathematics. The WIS sessions helped parents understand the instructional methods and content in the intermediate grades. Later in the fall, there were also sessions on problem solving for parents of grades 2-5.
- CIL led professional development focused on instructional strategies for specific mathematical content as well as blended learning using *DreamBox Learning*.
- Specific professional development, on both curriculum and instructional practice, was provided to teachers new to the district or new to a grade, as well as long term substitutes.
- We had a return visit from Dr. Yeap Ban Har, one of Singapore's foremost educational leaders, April 4-6. Each grade chose their most challenging math content to teach, and this was the topic of their session with Dr. Yeap. The formats included both modeled lessons with our students and direct instruction for teachers. Dr. Yeap also provided an evening session for parents.
- Weston's Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Plan continued to be helpful in encouraging teachers to avail themselves of instructional coaching. This coaching was focused on instructional strategies, including an emphasis on differentiation.

- We had 40 students from grades four and five participate on our Mathematical Olympiad teams this year. These students met before school on Tuesday mornings. Our teams continue to excel in this international competition.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- High-quality professional development, using both internal capacity and outside experts, continues to be necessary to build and maintain high-level instructional capacity.
- An efficient data warehouse program would make the collection and analysis of student data more efficient and useful.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Continue instructional coaching for the purpose of reflection, increasing repertoire, and improving instruction. Coaching next year will focus on support for further developing the instructional strategies leading to successful math learning for K-5 teachers, including an emphasis on differentiation and blended learning.
- Continue to provide high-quality professional development opportunities for all teachers using both internal capacity and outside consultants.
- Continue to provide opportunities for parent education at all levels.
- Develop a K-5 math department web site as a resource for parents and students.
- Continue to respond to the recommendations of the Tri-State Consortium's report in anticipation of a March 2017 follow-up visit.

## MATHEMATICS, GRADES 6-12

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Pilot a sixth-grade program with reduced tracking, providing greater opportunity for all students to achieve high standards and build a strong foundation in algebra by eighth grade.
- Vertically align the content and depth of courses common to the middle and high schools (algebra, geometry).
- Continue revision of curriculum and implementation of *Math in Focus* at WMS, including the development of a sixth-grade curriculum that utilizes the *Math in Focus* program at both levels - standard and accelerated.
- Continue the development of performance-based assessments. All courses will aim to implement one performance-based assessment in each semester next year.
- Develop a curriculum for the Computer Coding 2 course.
- Continue to explore blended learning opportunities that will enhance the delivery of math instruction, meeting the needs of all learners.

### II. Accomplishments

- Sixth grade teachers have successfully implemented the 6-2 (standard level) course by providing some students with additional time in a small-group setting to master content. Teachers have used this opportunity for pre-teaching material as well as for teaching concepts using an alternative approach. Teachers have reported an increased confidence level for these students and unit assessment data supports the claim that students are achieving grade-level standards.
- A new 6-3 (accelerated level) curriculum was implemented using units from all three *Math in Focus* courses.
- Sixth and seventh grade teachers worked with a consultant from Metamorphosis Teaching Learning Communities. This professional development focused on teaching philosophies as well as effective differentiation techniques for a diverse classroom of learners.
- Seventh grade teachers began preparations for implementing a 7-2E (standard level, extended time) program for the 2016-2017 school year.
- Eighth grade teachers worked with a consultant on *Math in Focus* curriculum and teaching philosophy.
- WMS and WHS Honors Geometry teachers worked closely to align the scope and sequence of the course between both schools. All assessments, including unit tests, midterm, final, and performance-based assessments, were common among all honors geometry classes.
- A new Algebra 2 book aligned with our curriculum and CCSS was adopted and used in standard and honors Algebra 2 courses at WHS.
- A new semester long Computer Coding 2 course was implemented at WHS for the first time this year. The curriculum for this course was developed last summer.
- As a result of the success of our computer coding program, the need for an AP Computer Science course has been identified. The AP Computer Science A course will run for the 2016-2017 school year, utilizing a blended-learning platform.
- To expand the options for a fourth year of math, a full-year project-based standard level statistics course will run for the 2016-2017 school year.

- Algebra 1A students at WHS used the web-based MathXL blended learning tool as part of the curriculum. This program provides interactive assistance, practice problems, homework, and testing to the students. Progress, results, and time spent is provided to the teacher.
- All secondary teachers continue to refine and implement performance-based assessments in all classes.
- All secondary teachers, along with administrators, participated in professional development in April facilitated by Dr. Yeap Ban Har, an international authority on Singapore Math. Dr. Yeap modeled seventh grade and eighth grade classes at WMS as well as Standard Geometry, Honors Pre-Calculus, and Standard Algebra 2 classes at WHS. Following each lesson, there was a debrief session with the teachers, focusing on the principles and methodology of the Singaporean philosophy.
- A WHS teacher was invited to speak on alternative forms of assessment at the regional conference of the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics in Philadelphia this coming November.
- Eighth and ninth grade algebra students participated in a 90-minute workshop through the *Engineers in Algebra* program, facilitated by Mr. Mark Love, and sponsored by the WMS and WHS PTOs. The workshop aligned with the Common Core Practice Standards and allowed students to delve into problem solving in the real-life situation of analyzing and planning traffic intersections.
- Ten students participated on the WMS Mathematics Team at five competitions with the Fairfield County Junior Math League.
- The WHS Mathematics Team entered its seventh year in the Fairfield County Mathematics League.
- A team of students participated in TEAMS (Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science) in March.
- Thirty WHS students participated in the 2016 American Mathematics Competition.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- More work needs to be done to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners in the 6-2 course.
- As we implement the extended math program in seventh grade for 2016-2017, there will be an emphasis on effectively differentiating in these classes.
- WMS teachers will reconsider the order in which they teach curricular content to better meet the cognitive needs and abilities of students at different times of the school year.
- The alignment of Algebra content and units at the middle and high schools will continue and include opportunities for these teachers to meet together for common planning time.
- There is a significant curricular overlap in the 8-1 (grade level eighth grade course) and Algebra 1 at WHS. Teachers will identify the redundancies and revise the scope and sequence of these courses.
- There is a significant curricular overlap in Standard Algebra 2 and Standard Pre-Calculus at WHS. Teachers will identify the redundancies and revise the scope and sequence of these courses over the summer 2016.
- WHS teachers will continue to prepare for pedagogical changes as the students come to the high school out of the *Math in Focus* curriculum.

#### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Pilot a seventh-grade program incorporating flexibility and additional instructional time to provide greater opportunity for all students to achieve high standards and build a strong foundation in algebra by eighth grade.
- Continue implementing differentiation strategies to meet the needs of all learners in the 6-2 and 7-2 classes.
- Successfully implement the AP Computer Science A course on a blended-learning platform.
- The following bullets outline important curriculum work to be accomplished during the summer 2016:
  - Continue to vertically align the content and depth of the Algebra 1 courses common to the middle and high schools;
  - Revise the scope and sequence of the 8-1 and Algebra 1 courses to minimize redundancies;
  - Revise the scope and sequence of the Standard Algebra 2 and Standard Pre-Calculus courses to minimize redundancies; and,
  - Develop a curriculum for standard statistics.

## SCIENCE, GRADES K-5

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Continue the implementation and explore the development of AIM units in all grades, K-5.
- Focus instructional coaching on implementation of inquiry and clarity of instruction, utilizing the Skillful Teacher training.
- Examine the impact of Connecticut's decision on whether to adopt the *Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)*, and plan for curriculum adjustments that may be necessary.

### II. Accomplishments

- Coaching this year was focused on teachers new to the district or to their grade level.
- AIM units continued to be refined based on teacher reflection.
- Our students continued to take part in rich science experiences involving inquiry, the use of science notebooks, and thinking deeply about their science content. All of our content is taught through hands-on experiences at every level.
- The second WIS science fair took place on March 29 and 30, 2016. This was an inquiry-based science fair with students selecting a question of their own interest that could be investigated through the inquiry process. We had 146 fourth and fifth graders take part, working either independently or in a small group. This represents approximately a 30% increase from last year.
- Our fifth graders continue to achieve among the highest in Connecticut on the CMT science assessment.

### III. Challenges and Needs

- Connecticut has adopted the NGSS but has not clarified the content changes for each grade level. This inhibits any significant content alignment. Once that happens, time and study will be needed to assess areas where we will need to adjust curriculum.
- The impact of curricular changes on the time allotted for science instruction needs to be examined. The content in the new standards is likely to be substantially greater, so decisions will need to be made that allow time to maintain the hands-on, inquiry approach valued by our district.

### IV. 2016-2017 Goals

- Continue to focus instructional coaching on implementation of inquiry, clarity of instruction, and developing 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking skills.
- Now that Connecticut has adopted the NGSS, professional development will continue with teachers to prepare them for alignment.
- Begin appropriate curricular renewal dependent on the progress of state content standard development.

## SCIENCE, GRADES 6-12

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Prepare for the curriculum renewal process and potential adoption of NGSS by continuing to examine and map our current curriculum relative to the NGSS.
- Participate in professional development experiences related to NGSS as they become available, pending adoption.
- Continue to expand efforts to incorporate performance-based assessments at all levels. Specifically, develop the sixth grade PADI (Performance Assessment Design Initiative) assessment and share its design principles with the rest of the WMS science teachers.

### II. Accomplishments

- The Connecticut State Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt the NGSS on November 4, 2015. The State's implementation timeline will coincide nicely with our district's curriculum renewal timeline.
- All secondary science teachers have already thoroughly examined, discussed, and begun implementing and assessing the NGSS Science Practices. In addition, this year science teachers examined the learning expectations and content standards for their relevant curriculum areas, identifying areas of commonality and difference with the current curriculum.
- All secondary science teachers have discussed possible arrangements of topics at the middle school level, in anticipation of a three year roll-out of revised curriculum. A cross-disciplinary approach in the middle grades can be organized to reinforce cross-cutting concepts of science.
- A group of four science teachers will participate in the first wave of state-led NGSS professional development, a five-day Next Generations Science Exemplar System for Professional Development (NGSX) course in June, followed by sharing with the remainder of the department in August.
- The sixth grade science and social studies teachers collaborated on an interdisciplinary performance assessment (PADI) engaging students in an exploration of an authentic water issue in the local or global community, "Guardians of the Water Galaxy." Seven students received a written response from the authentic audience they contacted, which included government officials and academics.
- For the first time, nearly all seventh and eighth graders had the opportunity to take the STEM-area PFA course "Science Discovery Workshop". In this course, students developed an authentic investigation to pursue an answer to an "un-Google-able" question. The most promising student projects will be shared the evening of June 1 at the second annual Weston STEM Expo.
- Jade Dayton (grade seven) represented WMS at the annual Connecticut Science & Engineering Fair held at Quinnipiac University this March. She developed her project, entitled "Natural Water Filters" during last year's pilot of the Science Discovery Workshop with Mr. Rosvally. Jade presented a display of her project alongside over 500 other middle school and high school entries and earned a special award and prize from the American Meteorological Society.

- For the first time, all ninth graders at WHS are enrolled in biology courses at either the standard or honors level, in addition to approximately half of the sophomore class.
- Honors Biology classes participated in an online collaboration with their New Canaan High School peers, pooling data from a plant genetics investigation. This inquiry gives students an experience with a large data set and the complexities of scientific collaboration.
- The ninth grade science and social studies teachers collaborated on the second implementation of the PADI performance assessment entitled “Global Petri Dish” wherein student groups create a public service announcement for their selected disease. Teachers from both disciplines evaluated student work. Students with top-rated videos will have the opportunity to have their work viewed and commented upon by a panel of experts.
- WHS science classes continue to use the Interlace platform (now called Visual Classroom) to promote collaboration, metacognition (thinking about one’s own thinking), and provide opportunities for formative assessment.
- A new course proposal for standard-level Environmental Science was approved by the Board of Education this fall, and two sections will run in the coming school year. As our “bubble” cohort rises, this and other courses will be important offerings for upper division students taking standard-level courses.
- The WHS Science Olympiad team participated in 23 science and technology events at a state competition held at UCONN. They prepared throughout the year by studying topics like protein modeling or invasive species while other teams of students constructed robot arms or bridges.
- A group of teachers and administrators have discussed various models for science research courses, including conducting site visits to research other district programs and attending local science research competitions.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- The current standard biology textbook is over 13 years old. Replacement is overdue but awaits the availability of NGSS-aligned publications.
- The current WMS science textbooks do not reflect the organization of the NGSS. Selected use of these textbooks, a different product, a teacher-designed text, or a combination of all three should all be considered.
- This year’s biology “bubble” will move to chemistry next year. We are well-positioned in terms of staff to cover the temporary increase in chemistry sections. There will be a summer facilities project to expand the square footage of a chemistry lab to accommodate the required number of lab stations to effectively deliver laboratory experiences.
- Significant revision to courses will be required to bring our curriculum into alignment with NGSS. The first wave of these changes will occur in grades six and nine.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Provide NGSX professional development to all secondary science teachers such that they can begin to revise units and lessons throughout the year.
- Develop a scope and sequence for the science courses that fulfills the objectives of NGSS, to be implemented over multiple years.
- Develop and implement NGSS-aligned curricula in grades six and nine (biology) during the 2016-2017 school year.

- Support student interest in independent science projects generated in Science Discovery Workshop and encourage participation in competitions and events outside of WMS.
- Plan and propose a Science Research course (or sequence of courses) and implementation model for WHS to begin in the 2017-2018 year.
- **Interdisciplinary PFA course:** Develop and implement an eighth-grade interdisciplinary PFA course that includes a lane for continuation of student-driven projects.

## LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES K-5

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Ongoing refinement of literacy instruction and curriculum across reading and writing will continue to be a priority in all classrooms. This work will be done in conjunction with the units of study available from Teachers College.
- A number of staff will be participating in the district's summer institute led by members of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. We will need to facilitate professional development for the remaining staff members who may not be able to attend this institute.
- Integrating technology into all aspects of our literacy program, inclusive of curriculum, instruction, and ongoing assessment, will be a primary focus for both curriculum and professional development.
- A restructuring of the literacy departments at both HES and WIS will necessitate our working closely with all staff to strengthen both the intervention and instructional models.
- The use of literacy data to strengthen differentiation of instruction within the workshop model will continue to be a primary focus of both professional development and instructional coaching.

### II. Accomplishments

- Thirty-five teachers, administrators, and CILs in grades K-5 attended a week-long summer institute on teaching writing delivered by a staff developer from Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Teachers, administrators, and CILs worked successfully with a staff developer from Teachers College, Columbia University to enhance teachers' instructional practices in Writer's Workshop.
- CILs worked closely with staff developers to ensure continuity of learning and determine next steps for teacher coaching and growth.
- Based on recommendations from the staff developers, additional writing units of study were developed and implemented in all classrooms K-5.
- Teachers College writing rubrics that are aligned with Common Core State Standards and writing units of study have been used to pre- and post-assess student writing in all grades K-5. This assessment data is used to differentiate instruction and provide targeted feedback to writers.
- Professional development has focused primarily on using writing data and resources to develop strategies for differentiated small group instruction and individual conferring with writers in the workshop classroom.
- Administrators and CILs have embedded themselves in classrooms as coaches and co-teachers to provide models for classroom teachers on writing mini-lessons and conferences.
- AIM units and assessments continue to be implemented in alignment with the PADI work.
- New standards-based progress reports were implemented in grades K-5. Progress report rubrics, designed to provide consistency in grading and the use of classroom data, were also created.

- Google is used to house assessment data in grades K-2, and writing data 3-5. Both schools continue to explore ways of using Google and other technology platforms in authentic ways for both reading and writing.

### **III. Challenges**

- Dedicated professional development is needed to support teachers with the analysis of writing data to make instructional decisions.
- Teachers need a single warehouse for all the data they collect on an ongoing basis. This will enable teachers to find and use the data they collect more efficiently, which will in turn streamline the grading process.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Ongoing refinement of literacy instruction and curriculum across reading and writing will continue to be a priority in all classrooms. This work will be done in conjunction with the units of study available from Teachers College.
- Integrating technology into all aspects of our literacy program, inclusive of curriculum, instruction, and ongoing assessment, will continue to be a focus for both curriculum and professional development.
- The use of literacy data to strengthen differentiation of instruction within the workshop model will continue to be a primary focus of both professional development and instructional coaching.
- Language arts CILs will be attending the Teachers College summer institute on the teaching of reading in order to best prepare ourselves for the next level of our work in refining and growing instructional practices with teaching Reader's Workshop.

## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADES 6-12

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Continue with implementation of content specific professional development with an emphasis on revision and metacognition in the English classroom.
- Implement additional specific curricular and instructional strategies for vertical alignment between grades eight and nine.
- Create and implement professional development opportunities to allow for cross-curricular connections with the writing portfolio.
- Explore blended learning opportunities for the English classroom that will enhance both instruction and learning.
- Review the data from the 2015 Sophomore Writing Portfolio and the 2015 Grade Eight Writing Portfolio and make revisions as needed.

### II. Accomplishments

- All English teachers at WMS participated in five full-day professional development sessions with a trainer from Teachers College. In these five sessions, teachers learned new strategies for writing instruction in the middle school classroom. The consultant also worked with teachers inside the classroom on conferencing techniques, metacognitive approaches to the revision process, and goal-setting for students. This work follows up on the four-day writing workshop institute that our teachers attended this past summer.
- Teachers in grades eight and nine have continued to implement strategies to clarify the students' understanding of the skills requirements between these grades. Eighth grade teachers use scaffolding strategies and have created analytical assignments that will prepare students for the work in their ninth grade English classes.
- The grade eight writing portfolio is in its second year of full implementation. Revisions were made to the project to streamline the process and to clarify expectations to our students. In total, 185 portfolios were scored and comprehensive, narrative feedback on individual student's writing successes and goals will be provided to parents and students.
- The sophomore writing portfolio, also in its second year of full implementation, will be scored in mid-May. Teachers (from a variety of disciplines), administrators, staff members, and outside writing experts will be a part of the scoring process.
- A fully-operational writing center, staffed by two English teachers opened at WHS in August 2015. Writing Center coordinators have held almost 500 individual conferences with students between opening and April 1, 2016.
- Writing Center coordinators have been working with teachers from several disciplines on creating and revising assessments, rubrics, and assignments.
- The grade eleven teachers have developed and refined a unit on the elements of the personal narrative. Supported by the Writing Center, teachers provide students with exemplars from a variety of writers and encourage students to draft, revise, and workshop essays that could ultimately be submitted as college essays.
- Grade level partners continue to use scheduled curriculum time to collaborate on planning and assessments. This allows teachers to communicate common expectations to all students.

- Teachers have enriched their teaching and their students' classroom experiences through blended learning. All English teachers use Google Classroom to communicate information about homework, assignments, and assessments. Teachers also provide real-time feedback to students through Classroom. In addition, grammar tools such as NoRedInk.com and Grammarly.com help target the students' writing needs and teachers are able to personalize learning based on the data from these websites. Techniques for using these, and many other, digital tools are shared among colleagues at curricular partner and department meetings.
- Thanks to generous funding from WestonArts, tenth grade English students had the opportunity to participate in a Shakespeare residency program, managed by *Shakesperience* Productions (Waterbury, CT). The resident artists/teachers in this program, in cooperation with our tenth grade teachers, worked with the students to create adaptations of scenes from *Twelfth Night*. Students were responsible for all aspects of the production, including acting, directing, stage managing, set design, sound, and lighting. This experience allowed students to take control of their own learning, while analyzing and responding to a complex text.
- Two grade six English teachers partnered with the Weston Public Library to encourage students to sign up for town library cards. Weston Public Library librarians visited WMS and issued approximately 100 library cards.
- One seventh grade student is a State-level finalist in the Library of Congress Letters About Literature writing contest. Students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to the author about how the book affected them personally. Students worked on this assignment in class prior to submitting to the contest.
- English teacher Michael Mezzo has been offered a grant from the English Speaking Union of Greenwich to attend a four-week summer institute in creative writing at The University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Studying modernism and Scottish literature as well as participating in a workshop with writers from all over the world, Mr. Mezzo will put his learning to good use towards the Writing Center's efforts to promote personal and creative writing among WHS students.
- The English faculty continues to be very active in co-curricular positions, serving as assistant student government advisor, as well as advisors for the junior class, newspaper, and literary magazine.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- The Writing Center coordinators need to implement structured professional development for teachers in other curricular areas to systematize writing instruction for our students.
- We have made strides in aligning our eighth and ninth grade expectations over the past two years. We need to extend this work and communicate our vertical alignment in grades six through twelve.
- The portfolio teams in grades eight and ten need to examine the data from this year's portfolios and make adjustments to the process as needed.
- Teachers need to be supported as they continue to incorporate blended learning into their instruction.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Create and implement professional development opportunities to allow for cross-curricular connections with the Writing Center.
- Continue to promote and encourage student use of the Writing Center.

- Articulate vertical alignment from grades six through twelve.
- Revise the current grade eight writing rubric to align more closely with the WHS writing rubric.
- Review the data from the 2015 grade eight and grade ten writing portfolios and make any necessary adjustments to the process.
- Continue to incorporate blended learning opportunities into the English classroom that will enhance both instruction and learning.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES K-5**

### **I. 2015-2016 Goals**

- Now that the State of Connecticut has adopted their Social Studies Curriculum Framework, we can more specifically assess alignment and prioritize current units based upon the adopted standards.
- Ensure alignment of resources in light of curricular changes.
- Modify performance-based assessments, as needed.

### **II. Accomplishments**

- We have established a K-5 social studies committee whose role it is to create a scope and sequence for each grade level aligned with the CT Social Studies Frameworks.
- CILs met with the State social studies consultant to discuss the new framework and shifts in pedagogy in order to inform our curriculum renewal and professional development planning.
- CILs attended a social studies workshop provided by the CT Council for Social Studies focused on inquiry in the social studies classroom to bring this new learning back to the district.
- The revision of social studies units that embed inquiry as an instructional practice will commence over the summer.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- The newly adopted frameworks are very heavy on content in some grade levels. Developing units that honor this content within the confines of our existing teacher schedules may be a challenge.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Implement and refine new social studies units created by grade level teams.
- Develop tasks and assessments aligned with the new social studies units.
- Create performance standards aligned with social studies units to be assessed on K-5 progress reports.
- Acquire appropriate resources aligned with new social studies units to facilitate inquiry-based learning experiences.
- Support and coach teachers as they transfer their knowledge of science inquiry to the teaching of social studies.

## SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 6-12

### I. 2015-16 Goals

- Increase opportunities to engage in vertical articulation discussions on writing instruction.
- Implement district writing standards in alignment with eighth and tenth grade writing portfolios.
- Expand the initial pilot of the eighth grade writing portfolio to the entire grade level.
- Increase inter-departmental collaboration around the PADI performance-based assessments.
- Work towards greater curricular partner collaboration for all departmental common performance-based assessments.
- Establish greater frequency of opportunities for collaborative team planning to revise and update written curriculum and assessments.
- Increase peer feedback and alignment among teachers from different departments utilizing strategies such as critical friends.

### II. Accomplishments

- Through 6-12 department meetings and professional development opportunities, the social studies department increased vertical alignment for writing.
- Social studies department members, along with their English language arts colleagues participated in the full implementation of both the eighth and tenth grade writing portfolios.
- The social studies department successfully completed three interdisciplinary performance-based assessments. These included the 9<sup>th</sup> grade *Global Petri Dish*, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade *Population Problem*, and the 6<sup>th</sup> grade *Guardians of the Water Galaxy*.
  - *The Global Petri Dish* task required students to research infectious diseases and weigh evidence to determine which disease they believe is the greatest threat to us. This assessment used an expert panel that included members of the Weston Westport Health District and various medical and PSA experts from our local community. It was selected as one of the top 35 tasks in the Tri-State consortium and will be published on the Tri-State Google site as an exemplar.
  - *The Population Problem* task engaged students in examining and analyzing Weston Public Schools' enrollment trends.
  - *The Guardians of the Water Galaxy* task called upon students to participate in an interdisciplinary project researching water issues and proposing potential solutions. Students received responses from a number of non-profit and corporate groups including: UNICEF, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, American University, the USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of State, and The New York Times.
- 2015-2016 marked the first full year of implementation of the renewed 6-12 social studies curriculum. This newly revised curriculum is aligned with both the Connecticut Social Studies Framework and the National Framework, referred to as the C3 document. All courses have been highly successful and have deepened the level of student engagement by focusing on the inquiry process and student centered learning.

- Teachers at each course level have collaborated in unit planning and revisions of common assessments as a result of the scheduling of common planning time by the WHS administration.
- Grades 6-12 social studies teachers continue to observe colleagues throughout the school year. This was highlighted with our WMS learning walks this spring.
- The AP US History curriculum was revised and renewed this year to match the new College Board revisions to this course. Rubrics for our AP course were adjusted to reflect the newly revised AP US History writing rubric.
- The WMS Mock Trial Team had both of their seventh grade teams reach the top eight teams in the State out of 50 teams. The eighth grade team performed admirably in the finals where they placed second in the state at the Appellate Court in Hartford, CT.
- WMS student Kobe Bilstad won our school geography bee and went on to compete at the National Geographic Bee State Finals.
- Eighth grader, Grace Millman won second place in the district finals for National History Day. She moves on to the state finals at the end of April. Her outstanding documentary is about the Killing Fields of Cambodia.
- In January, The Times of Israel featured WHS's Facing History and Ourselves course in the article: *Trailblazing Connecticut course is blueprint for future Holocaust education* by Cathryn J. Prince. The article highlighted how the course uses current events to teach students about the past.
- Students in the Introduction to Economics course participated in presentations to local business owners in a restaurant project. This was a performance-based assessment that allowed students to receive feedback from real restaurant and business professionals on the development of economic models and business plans.
- Department members Dan Passarelli, Christina Conetta, Andrew Jorge, and Brian Scott collaborated with Weston Historical Society members Ken Edgar and Reg Bowden to begin the development of next year's World War II exhibit at the Weston Historical Society.
- Curriculum Instructional Leader Brian Scott presented an EdTalk at the Kappa Delta Pi Convocation. Kappa Delta Pi is an International Honor Society in education.
- Department members Tom MacDonald and Shara Kolodney completed their work with PADI in the fall, with Barbara George and Andrew Marone serving as mentors during the process.
- Department member Bill Moeder was an assessor for The College Board Advanced Placement United States History reading in June, 2015. In addition, Mr. Moeder was a consultant for EASTCONN and worked with inner city students in preparing them for the AP exam in May.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- Summer curriculum time is needed to identify digital resources for revised courses. There is the potential for these open educational resources to complement or replace traditional textbooks.
- With the establishment of the WHS Writing Center, there is a need for even greater collaboration and coordination with the writing center specialists to further support the department efforts in meeting the district's writing goals.
- There is a strong interest in pursuing external professional development conferences to improve content knowledge and instructional practices.

#### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Teachers and media center specialists will collaborate to create a framework to identify targeted research skills at each grade level.
- Department members will seek increased opportunities for inter-departmental review of assessment practices, as well as the anchoring of standards for inter-departmental projects and assessments.
- The social studies department will create opportunities for calibration of assessments and instructional practices.

## **WORLD LANGUAGE, GRADES K-12**

### **I. 2015-2016 Goals**

- Continue formal curriculum renewal process.
- Continue with improvements to K-2 FLES program and implementation of new curriculum.
- Send out monthly parent bulletins to keep parents and community informed about the Spanish program at HES.
- Align textbooks to newly revised curriculum.
- Articulate alignment between WMS and WHS French programs to ensure higher enrollment retention. Continue to monitor French 2 enrollment.
- Design extracurricular opportunities for WMS French/Spanish students (Spanish club/French club, Spanish & French Junior National Honor Societies, etc.)
- Continue the development and design of performance-based assessments and the embedding of AIM units when possible at all levels.
- Ensure that students inducted into the National Chinese/French/Latin/Spanish Honor societies are promoting the study of languages and meeting the requirements of the society.
- Continue professional partnership with New Canaan Public School Spanish teacher colleagues.
- Attend and present at 13<sup>th</sup> annual World Language SHARE meeting of Fairfield County school districts.

### **II. Accomplishments**

- Continued formal curriculum renewal process for world languages with an emphasis on training teachers in the new standards.
- K-12 world language teachers received two full days of training with Ms. Rita Oleksak on the newly revised World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012, and the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners from ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). Ms. Rita Oleksak is a former ACTFL president and current Director of Foreign Languages/ELL at Glastonbury Public Schools.
- K-12 teachers revised and redesigned the vertical articulation of language programs.
- K-12 teachers applied more differentiation strategies into their courses based on departmental discussions.
- Teachers developed and implemented new performance-based assessments at all levels.
- Teachers have enriched their teaching and their student's classroom experiences through blended learning. Teachers implemented Google Apps for Education as well as other digital tools on a daily basis.
- K-2 Spanish teachers at HES completed year two of the curriculum renewal plan with a successful implementation of the new curriculum.
- K-2 Spanish teachers at HES made revisions to the new kindergarten curriculum.
- Monthly parent bulletins (El Boletín de Hurlbutt) were sent to HES parents keeping them informed of the Spanish curriculum, highlighting units of focus and interdisciplinary connections.

- The third grade curriculum was revised since incoming students have participated in the new FLES program.
- WIS Spanish courses have gradually started to look like the HES FLES (Foreign Language Elementary School) program that has been so successful.
- One hundred seventy Spanish and French students in eighth grade participated in the National French Contest and National Spanish Exam. Gold, silver, and bronze medals were awarded to WMS students as a result of outstanding performance.
- One hundred five Spanish students in seventh grade participated in the National Spanish Exam for the first time. Gold, silver, and bronze medals were awarded to WMS students as a result of outstanding performance.
- Piloted Middlebury Interactive Languages Chinese program with two students at WMS.
- Seventh grade Spanish students attended a Hispanic Folkloric Ballet at The Ridgefield Playhouse.
- WMS French students exchanged letters with students from France.
- WMS students were recognized for outstanding academic achievements in Spanish and French classes at the annual world language celebration.
- Fifteen Latin students are enrolled in AP Latin in the first year of the program.
- Enrollment in AP Spanish Language and Culture is more than double than in previous years.
- Projected enrollment for French 2 at WHS has doubled.
- WHS students participated in national French, Spanish and Latin exam contests. Students received gold, silver, and bronze medals as a result of outstanding performance in the contests.
- Latin students participated in State Latin Day in May.
- WHS world language students participated in an International Trip to Spain for eight days in April.
- WHS inducted students into the National French, Chinese, Latin and Spanish Honor Societies. National French, Chinese, Latin and Spanish Honor Society members have actively participated in activities that promote the appreciation and promotion of World Languages (e.g. assisting in non-profit organizations in Bridgeport and Stamford)
- A member of the Spanish National Honor Society was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship by AATSP (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese).
- A Latin student completed a comprehensive independent study on the history of medicine in the ancient world.
- A Latin student wrote an essay for an Eidolon contest, an online magazine that publishes scholarly articles on the ancient world.
- WHS students were recognized for outstanding academic achievements in world language classes at the World Language Celebration/National Honor Society Induction Night.
- Teachers participated in a variety of internal and external professional development opportunities.
  - Four world language teachers visited Glastonbury Public Schools world language programs – a highly reputable program in CT.
  - Latin teacher, Amanda Telford, attended a College Board course for AP Latin teachers at Taft.

- Chinese teacher, Sharon Mae Wong, attended the Annual Conference on the Teaching of Chinese in NYC.
- Spanish teacher, Maria Caracuel, attended a workshop about trends in language assessment - Scenario-Based Language Assessment at Teachers College, Columbia University.
- French teacher, Gretchen Mancuso, and Spanish teacher, Mercedes Fernandes, attended a seminar about making the best uses of digital tools in the world language classroom.
- In our continued partnership with New Canaan Public Schools, WPS hosted a critical friends meeting with their teachers and administrators.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- Research and pilot new textbooks and ancillary materials for Spanish programs K-12.
- Research and pilot new textbooks and ancillary materials for French programs 6-8.
- Continue to seek subject-specific professional development opportunities for all world language teachers.
- Continue to seek professional development support in the area of technology.
- Review framework for determining student grades for all world language courses.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Continue with curriculum renewal process with a focus on Spanish in grades 2-12, French grades 6-12, Latin levels 1-4, and Chinese levels 1-4.
- Continue to incorporate blended learning opportunities into world language courses that will enhance both instruction and learning.
- Explore more software opportunities for blended learning in world languages.
- Continue to provide subject specific professional development opportunities for world language teachers.
- Continue to monitor French enrollment numbers.
- Adjust teaching and learning experiences to reflect students' input from a survey.

## **VISUAL ARTS, GRADES K-12**

### **I. 2015-2016 Goals**

- Continue to align the district arts curriculum with the new National Core Arts Standards, revise and refine curriculum, and input units into the electronic curriculum mapping software.
- Provide guidance and appropriate time for arts teachers to review and determine the best way to use digital resources like Google classroom and Google sites to strengthen classroom to home connections.
- Create a plan with the IT department to deploy the appropriate technology, both hardware and software, to support all of our arts courses.
- Continue to foster creativity and utilize digital tools in appropriate arts courses to support district initiatives.
- Provide professional development (from local universities, with coursework, or by bringing in clinicians) that is directly aligned with updated curriculum content and research-based instructional pedagogy in the arts.
- Continue to review K-12 scheduling and determine the most effective way to schedule classes so as not to lose instructional time.

### **II. Accomplishments**

- The Art Jam all-district Art Show was held on May 4 this year. Student artwork was displayed and music shared simultaneously at all four schools in a comprehensive district wide exhibit.
- K-12 visual arts teachers began a collaborative effort of reflecting on and revising vertical alignment of the K-12 visual arts curriculum. They continued to input curriculum into Atlas Rubicon in preparation of the upcoming curriculum revision.
- Sydney Girardi was one of nine teachers selected nationally to pilot the 2015-16 High School Model Cornerstone Assessment Pilot Project in Media Arts for the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. The Advanced Contemporary Media Design students participated in the project that will aide in the design of a standards-based high school cornerstone project for media arts.
- WHS art classes have benefitted greatly from the Adobe CC subscription service. The availability of new and frequently updated graphic software allows the students to keep up with rapidly changing industry techniques and media processes.
- A group of WHS Advanced Videography students won first place in a “Teen Safe Driving Video Contest,” sponsored by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and Travelers Insurance. The group, seniors Julia Asphar and Eli Hason and junior Cameron Okoro, created a 25-second public service announcement-style video that highlights why it is important for teens to focus on safe driving. WHS took first prize and received \$5,000 upon winning.
- Students from WHS Videography 2, Television Production and Advanced Videography classes submitted projects to the New Age Film Festival of New Canaan in the categories of Documentary, Narrative, TV Production, and PSA/Commercials. The awards ceremony is Wednesday, May 25.
- Videography 2 students submitted public service announcements to The School for Ethical Education’s 2015-2016 Integrity Works Public Service Announcement Contest. Winners will be announced on May 4.

- Two WHS art students earned State of CT Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Olivia Stanley was awarded a silver medal for her work, 'Tree Slice' and Kaitlin Brozek won an honorable mention for 'Gone Girl'. The pieces were on display at the Hartford Art School Silpe Gallery in January, 2016.
- Ten WHS art students had artwork displayed in the fourth annual Teen Visions High School Art Exhibition at Sacred Heart University in February. The following students won awards in the juried show: Andre De Pasquale - first place for his ceramic sculpture 'Elephant', Grace Juneau - second place for her pen drawing 'Marine Science', Mackenzie Daffner – second place for her pen and watercolor 'Estrangement' and Krista Nayden – second place for her photograph 'Overlapping collage'. The selections judged from 120 artworks from 11 participating area high schools.
- Five WHS students were selected to display artwork at the annual NCC Art Galley High School Art Invitational in April. Exhibiting students are Georgia Burkard (grade 10), Christopher Gallardo (grade 12), Miriam Low (grade 12), Maya Orr (grade 11), and Deniz Yazar (grade 11).
- Art with a Heart club at WHS raised money through bake sales to donate money to two causes this year: Vuria, our adopted elephant, and United with Kenya to support improvements in the water system.
- National Art Honor Society extended the visual arts curriculum by painting wall murals at Adam's House, a grief education center located in Shelton, CT established by The Adam Wysota Foundation.
- WHS teachers extended curricular student learning by modeling professional visual arts exhibition opportunities:
  - Holly Hawthorn was featured in a show at Mark Twain Library in Redding, CT in November, 2015. She exhibited her years of watercolor sketched postcards.
  - Kate O'Keefe was selected to be part of *IDENTITY: An Art Exhibit* at Southern CT State University in March, 2016. Kate displayed a series of paintings focused on issues surrounding motherhood and maternity.
- Fourth graders explored how art can influence life and vice versa adding to the 'reflecting' and 'responding' visual art curriculum components. They wrote about how their chosen clay bowl textures reflect a meaningful, personal experience, making connections and recognizing how art connects us as humans and requires us to express our thoughts and ideas visually. This connects vertically to responding and reflecting fifth grade students include in their abstract self-portrait weaving unit.
- Holly Hawthorn attended a week long set painting workshop at Goodspeed Musical Theatre Institute in East Haddam CT. She worked with scenic artists and instructors from NYC, and the current resident artists, bringing her learning back to work directly with WHS art students.
- WHS welcomed Mary Reamer as a fifth visual art teacher this year. Mary shared her instructional time between WHS and HES, smoothly adapting to her dual role both professionally and personally.
- K-12 visual arts teachers each identified one area of technology learning they would like to concentrate on this year, independently increased their skills and knowledge in that area, and extended that learning to their instruction/students.

- K-12 visual arts teachers provided student work for central office this year, providing an additional exhibition experience for students.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- The limited availability of technology hardware at WMS, WIS, and HES for visual art classrooms use is being addressed for the future through the 2016-2017 technology lease.
- WHS art classes were impacted by inadequate technology this year due to old hardware. In order to meet the needs of the curriculum, it would be highly beneficial for the computers in the WHS arts wing to be replaced. This need is being addressed through the 2016-2017 technology lease.
- An examination of space utilization for courses being offered at WHS in room B9 is important in order to ensure successful delivery of the curriculum.
- Art teachers are interested in continuing to identify high-quality content specific professional development to support their personal and professional growth.
- Evaluate allocation of instructional time for art courses at WIS in order to ensure fidelity of curriculum implementation.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Continue to align the district arts curriculum with the new National Core Arts Standards, revise and refine curriculum and vertical alignment; reflect on and revise curricular units in the electronic curriculum mapping software.
- Create teams of student volunteers at WMS to select, frame, and hang artwork, or paint murals to be displayed in school public areas. By having students participate in this effort, at least two more WMS walls will have finished, framed artwork, and/or murals, more student work will be on view and a positive energy will be enhanced in the school.
- At HES, create a video snapshot or work in progress slide show to be displayed on the entryway monitor.
- Continue to foster student pride in work and model authentic artist exhibition opportunities for all grade levels through district and town art exhibitions.
- Continue to foster creativity and utilize digital tools in appropriate arts courses to support district initiative.
- Provide professional development (from local universities, with coursework, or by bringing in guest artists) that is directly aligned with updated curriculum content and research-based instructional pedagogy in the arts.
- Continue to review K-12 scheduling and determine the most effective way to schedule classes so as not to lose instructional time.
- K-12 visual art teachers continue their focus on expanding their technology proficiency and integration into classroom experiences.

## PERFORMING ARTS, GRADES K-12

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Continue to align our arts curriculum with the new National Core Arts Standards, revise and refine curriculum, and input units into Atlas.
- Provide guidance and appropriate time for teachers to review and determine the best way to use digital resources like Google classroom and Google sites to strengthen classroom to home connections.
- Develop a plan to include AP Music Theory or Music Theory at WHS.
- Continue to refine and develop curricular and co-curricular programs that align with the overview of theatre arts elements and processes.
- Create a plan with the IT department to secure the appropriate technology, both hardware and software, to support all of our arts courses.
- Find collaborative planning time for all building-level departments to meet and discuss updated methodologies, review scope and sequence, and work on vertical alignment.
- Continue to foster creativity and utilize digital tools in appropriate arts courses to support STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) initiative.
- Determine the most appropriate way to ensure a yearly auditorium review that includes safety inspections, inventory, and maintenance.
- Provide professional development (from local universities, with coursework, or by bringing in clinicians) that is directly aligned with updated curriculum content and research-based instructional pedagogy in the arts.
- Continue to review K-12 scheduling to determine the most effective way to schedule classes and courses ensuring all students are able to participate in the arts programs that they desire.

### II. Accomplishments

#### *Curriculum, Instruction, and Instructional Technology*

- The K-12 music and drama teachers completed portions of the rewrite of the curricula to align with the new National Core Arts Standards and continued to input units in Atlas.
- The WMS general music classes (Group Guitar, Piano Lab and Music Technology) are all utilizing multiple digital tools in their courses. They are composing, podcasting, using basic digital recording, and sampling to create new music using a variety of programs.
- WestonArts sponsored Adam Glaser, a professor of music at Hofstra University and the conductor of the Julliard pre-college orchestra, worked with the WHS ensembles in preparation for their spring concerts.
- The WHS and WMS student mentoring program, *Music Mentors*, ran successful fall, winter and spring programs this year.
- Three WPS music teachers were accepted and presented a workshop to music teachers and administrators on Improvisation at the National Music educator's conference in Nashville, TN.
- Students at all levels have engaged in activities and units on improvisation meant to foster creativity in music and music literacy.
- Many music classrooms continue to utilize Google Classroom and Moodle as digital tools to deliver instruction.

- WIS orchestra students have access to a growing library of home practice videos via a new fourth grade Google site.
- A review of our technology needs has led to a plan to secure the appropriate technology, both hardware and software, to support all of our courses.

#### ***All State, Regional Musicians and Performing Arts Honors***

- Eleven WHS band and three WHS orchestra students were selected, by process of audition, to participate in the Western Regional High School Festival. Three WHS band students and one choral student were selected to participate in the Connecticut All-State Festival.
- The WHS Wind Ensemble performed at Boston Symphony Hall at the 2016 US Bands Concert Band Series sponsored by Youth Education in the Arts and Yamaha.
- Four WMS band students were selected, by process of audition, to participate in the Connecticut Music Educators Association Western Regional Middle School Concert Festival.
- Six WMS orchestra students and one WHS student were selected, by process of audition, to participate in the Fairfield County Strings concert.
- WHS Company will be participating in the 2016 13<sup>th</sup> Annual High School Halo Awards on Wednesday, June 1, which honor excellence in high school theatre arts.
- The Tri-M Music Honor Society inducted 22 junior and 21 senior members into their respective chapters in April bringing our total number of members to 96. The Tri-M Music Honor Society is the international music honor society for middle/junior high and high school students. It is designed to recognize students for their academic and musical achievements, reward them for their accomplishments and service activities, and to inspire other students to excel at music and leadership.
- The WMS Tri-M chapter sponsored events for Music in Our Schools Month with creative segments on the morning show like Musical Fun Facts and Music Through the Decades (brief lesson on music from the 30's, 50's, 80's and today, accompanied by words of wisdom from artists of those times). All students were encouraged to play Jammin' Jeopardy to compete for Weston Warrior Day Points via a Jeopardy-style Friday segment. Tri-M pop-up performances allowed several students to perform live for their peers during lunch periods. Students performed in a recital-style performance at the induction ceremony. Tri-M is planning a Georgetown nursing home performance in May and/or June.
- Ten sixth grade band students were selected to perform at the annual "Play with the Westport Community Band."
- Several students were involved in area select ensembles such as the Fairfield County Children's Choir, the Norwalk Youth Symphony, the Bridgeport Youth Orchestra, the Ridgefield Youth Symphony, the Fairfield County Strings Festival, and a variety of summer arts ensembles.

#### ***Music and Theatre Arts Performances***

- The WHS drama club Company presented the comedy *You Can't Take it With You* in the fall and the musical comedy *Legally Blonde: The Musical* in the spring. Each production at WHS benefitted from the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, costume designers, and technical theatre personnel who dedicated their time and talent to this very successful co-curricular program.
- Company will present a student-run production of *Dialogue* that will feature student written and directed one-act plays, scenes, and multiple musical acts on May 22.

- The WMS theatre group Short Wharf presented *The Little Mermaid* this winter and benefitted from the talents of student artists, musicians, actors, costume designers, and technical theater personnel from Company who worked along-side middle school students to train them in areas of technical theatre.
- The WIS theatre group Show Stoppers presented *The Jungle Book*.
- The WHS Jazz Band performed in the Norwalk High School Jazz Festival where they performed well and participated in a clinic with Jazz educators. The WHS Jazz Band was adjudicated and received valuable feedback for improvement.
- The WHS String Orchestra, The WHS Wind Ensemble and WHS Symphonic Orchestra will perform at the OrchestraFest concert on May 19. This concert will feature music through the ages, starting with Rossini's Overture to the Barber of Seville, and other music by Wagner, Sousa, Gershwin, and ending with a cowboy Western movie music selection called Go West! Ninety students will combine their skills in this presentation.
- Over 1,000 students in WHS, WMS, and WIS performed in winter and spring choral, band, and orchestra concerts in their various school music ensembles.
- Over 300 WHS and WMS students performed in the band Spectrum Concert on March 16 and featured enhanced lighting by a professional lighting company.
- The WMS eighth grade orchestra participated in the Music for Youth Orchestra Exchange with the Haven String Quartet and students from High Horizon's and Multi-Cultural Magnet schools in Bridgeport. A concert featuring all student musicians and the quartet will be held at WHS on May 27.
- A WHS and WMS marching band was formed for students to participate in the Memorial Day Parade.
- The WMS eighth grade band and chamber singers combined to perform at the Veteran's Day assembly.
- Sixth grade band members played at the WMS Barnes and Noble book fair and orchestra students played holiday tunes in December and March.
- All WIS students performed patriotic music at a Veteran's Day assembly and performed multicultural holiday music at a winter sing along in December.
- WIS grade three students performed a music concert in the spring and HES K-2 students will perform grade level concerts.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- Music Theory is a highly specialized course at WHS but is necessary to complete a comprehensive high school music program. Meeting the minimum number of students to run the class has presented a challenge and we will need to find a way to raise student awareness so that we can provide this important piece of our program.
- There is a need to review K-12 teacher scheduling to determine a more effective way to utilize individual strengths and support the program for students.
- We need to review the enrollment in the orchestra program in grades 4-8 to determine the appropriate allocation of staffing for the program.
- A replacement plan for some of the secondary band and orchestra instruments, and a plan for teaching instruments at WIS, will be developed to address these needs.
- A SMART Board in the second WIS music classroom and band lesson room would enhance instruction in beginning band, orchestra, and general music.

#### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Continue to foster creativity and utilize digital tools with up-to-date technology in appropriate arts courses to support STEAM initiative.
- Continue to provide guidance and appropriate time for arts teachers to review and determine the best way to use digital resources like Google classroom and Google sites to strengthen classroom to home connections.
- Continue to provide support and professional development on the National Core Arts Standards.
- Develop a schedule for K-12 teachers that will support the K-12 music program effectively.
- Develop a plan to address the need for additional theatre arts courses to include technical theatre and related content.
- Review theatre arts CIL position that was added in 2014 to determine if it is the most effective approach to sustaining a high-quality theatre program.
- Obtain feedback regarding 2015-2016 co-curricular productions to inform the continuous improvement of these programs.

## **HEALTH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION, GRADES K-12**

### **I. 2015-2016 Goals**

- Complete the health curriculum renewal process.
- Obtain approval for the updated pool safety plan.
- Make adjustments to WMS health curriculum to incorporate nutrition units from the seventh and eighth grade family and consumer science courses (FACS).
- Conduct external school visits for the upcoming physical education curriculum renewal process.
- Explore flexible implementation of physical education curriculum.
- Continued focus on building performance-based assessments in both health and physical education.

### **II. Accomplishments**

- Completed the second year of the curricular renewal process for health and updated curriculum in Atlas.
- Adjustments were made to the health curriculum to incorporate additional lessons on the effects of heroin and vaping.
- Modifications were made to the eighth grade physical education curriculum to accommodate the removal of the swimming program.
- Physical education teachers attended site visits to other districts to prepare for the curricular renewal process to begin next year.
- All physical fitness scores were entered in the PowerSchool database for grades 3-12.
- Physical fitness information with student test results was sent home to all parents to communicate accumulated results.
- Created a physical fitness tip sheet for parents and students containing suggestions for how to improve physical fitness. This information can be found on the WPS website.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- Review physical education class sizes for special activities (project adventure, swimming).
- Seek scheduling options to better balance physical education class sizes at WHS.
- Optimize WMS scheduling to ensure all students receive the core health curriculum.

### **IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Begin physical education curriculum renewal cycle with a focus on lifetime wellness.
- Implement updated health curriculum units and assessments.
- Implement instructional coaching with fidelity.
- Reorganize Project Adventure unit to manage larger groups of students.

## TECHNOLOGY, GRADES 6-12

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Plan for the growth of co-curricular Robotics offerings at WHS.
- Continue the WMS Robotics Club, with the goal that all students will be prepared for the 2016 competition season.
- Continue to monitor the 8/9 transition in technology, with particular attention to the gender balance in these courses.
- With NGSS adoption pending, explore opportunities for collaborations between science and technology, particularly in the seventh and eighth grades. These grades are a particularly suitable arena to explore the possibilities of STEM education, with all students enrolled in the same science and technology courses.

### II. Accomplishments

- During the summer of 2015, the WMS H-wing technology classroom, as well as the adjoining FACS classrooms and a general purpose classroom, were remodeled and joined together to create a suite of two large, multi-purpose technology education classrooms. These rooms and the furniture therein is designed for flexibility. As such, the classrooms are used for coding and engineering classes as well as the Robotics Club.
- During the summer of 2015, technology education teachers Rich Blozie, Rebecca Kaplan, and Mackenzie Moosbrugger, as well as Darcy Ronan and Ken Craw, met to develop and plan a revised curriculum in technology for the middle school level. This summer curriculum work resulted in a new sixth grade trimester coding course using the Scratch platform, a revised seventh grade year-long course focusing on the Design & Modeling module, and a revised eighth grade year-long course focusing on the Automation & Robotics module. Each course maximizes opportunity for both skill development and application of skills to open-ended, student-driven projects.
- In an effort to continue strong ninth grade enrollment in technology courses, WHS PLTW teacher Mackenzie Moosbrugger and her students visited eighth grade courses to speak about offerings at the high school level.
- Due to strong interest among the freshman class, growth in course enrollment continues. See table below.

Year	PLTW- IED	PLTW- CIM	PLTW- POE	PLTW- CEA	Total FTE
2015-2016	50 (2 sections)	20 (1 section)	(off year)	30 (2 sections)	1.2 FTE
2016-2017	76 (3 sections)	27 (2 sections)	31 (2 sections)	(off year)	1.4 FTE

- Among the 76 students planning to enroll in the introductory PLTW course, 10 are female. This means that roughly 10% of girls from this cohort are electing a PLTW course, as well as more than 50% of boys.
- The Civil Engineering & Architecture classes was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the Stamford Hospital high-rise under construction, through a parental connection. Students

saw various stages of construction, examined digital plans made with the same tools they use, and digitally connected with engineers from the project.

- Geoffrey Brencher completed PLTW training during the summer of 2015 in order to teach the “extra” section on Introduction to Engineering Design.
- The WMS Robotics Club recently completed its second season. Parent and software developer Matt Smith served as the “content matter expert” for the club, with Patty Nizlek and George Hayes joining him as advisors. Overall, 48 students were involved with about half of those students consistently attending. WMS was one of two middle school teams at an annual competition in Danbury. While boarding the bus with three non-functional robots, three teams passed inspection and were able to compete. The robots placed 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> out of 35 robots. Two teams were actively recruited as partners for the later eliminations rounds by top-tier teams. The Robotics Club also began using digital tools to collaborate on code, testing libraries, and access “Jump Start” demo code.

### **III. Challenges and Needs**

- Teaching one new course and two revised courses, as well as the adjustment to the new rooms, has been a heavy lift for our WMS technology & engineering teachers. They will need time to reflect on, fine-tune, and codify the revised curriculum. In addition, there is much reorganization, inventory, and storage work to be done that could not be done over last summer due to construction and cannot be done while the curriculum is in motion.
- Focusing on the Automation & Robotics unit for the eighth grade curriculum is a positive development, however it means the “flip-flop” model regarding VEX parts no longer works. Although some new kits were purchased and some parts were shared from WHS and from the Robotics Club, there was a shortage of some parts, causing one teacher or another to shift a build earlier or later so they can access more parts. Students build over multiple periods so once a part is on a project, it may be unavailable for a week or more. With eight simultaneous sections all using VEX parts, and each kit meeting the needs of 4 students, that’s a total of 48 kits. We were 19 short of that at the start of this year and purchased 6 additional kits. We will continue to work to close that gap.
- Our WHS program has now entered the growth-stage characterized by fractional FTE in addition to Mackenzie Moosbrugger’s teaching assignments. Managing personnel with an eye to the continued growth of the program is essential.
- This year’s WHS Science Olympiad included a robotics division so students with an interest in robotics applied their skills in that arena. We should continue exploring student interest in robotics at WHS and provide opportunities for co-curricular engagement. We are considering extending the WMS Robotics Club to the high school level. Our current thinking is to maximize the resources of the WMS Innovation Space to offer the opportunity for WHS students to compete alongside the WMS team.
- As the WHS program grows, we will also need to consider possible uses of space when the program expands beyond eight total sections. Because there are eight periods at WHS, this is the maximum periods that the current configuration of rooms/computers can support.
- The hardware and software demands of the PLTW program are greater than other curriculum areas. There have been difficulties in maintaining high levels of functionality at the student/classroom level. In addition, students, especially at the high school level, need a work-at-home option for completing assignments.

**IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- Complete the “moving in” process to the WMS Innovation Space with all relevant furniture and equipment.
- Document and map the revised WMS technology and engineering courses on Atlas and ensure vertical articulation among coding and engineering strands.
- Plan for the continued growth of the WHS program with special attention to staffing, facilities, co-curricular opportunities, and gender balance.

## SCHOOL COUNSELING, K-12

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Present a clear implementation plan for the Effective School Solutions (ESS) program to the WHS administration and the Board of Education prior to the budget workshops. The program will then be added to the budget process for approval. The ESS program will provide support for WHS students with emotional concerns.
- Restructure the counseling staff and supports at the elementary level due to the reduction of a school counseling position.
- Continue professional development and student education programs on drug and alcohol usage. Provide consultation for families in need of assistance with this issue.
- Continue the renewal process for the school counseling curriculum.
- Continue to expand the use of Student Success Plans (SSP) to provide additional focus on both career and college planning.

### II. Accomplishments

- The ESS program was clearly presented and has been embraced by the BOE, as well as the BOS and BOF members, and will be implemented at WHS for next year. Final adjustments to the contract are being made. A preliminary meeting is being arranged with WHS staff and ESS supervisors in order to discuss the implementation. We are excited to have the program in the district for next year as a support for our students who struggle with emotional stressors.
- One of the school psychologist positions at WIS was split this year between the WIS and HES to assist with counseling needs. We will continue to monitor the needs of the students and make adjustments in staffing assignments, if needed.
- The school counseling staff work individually with students and their families regarding drug and alcohol concerns. Professional development was provided for staff on topics related to these issues, particularly in the area of current substance abuse trends. We continue to work closely with Weston Youth Services to provide speakers for parents and students on this topic, as well as referrals for additional assistance outside of school. WHS has arranged a “community conversation” with a panel of area experts for parents on the topic of substance abuse trends.
- The school counseling staff is finishing the curriculum renewal process and is implementing the information into the Atlas curriculum. This work will be finalized over the summer and presented to the BOE in the fall.
- The counseling department held a successful Family University program for students and parents on the topic of resiliency. The program targeted students at the secondary level and may focus even more closely on seventh and eighth grade students in the future.

### III. Challenges and Needs

- In light of increased opiate abuse across the country, WHS will continue its efforts in relation to prevention education and intervention, as appropriate.
- Continue to assess the distribution of school counseling support at each of our schools based on current needs of students.

- We are monitoring the increased numbers of students with more significant emotional concerns at the elementary level.
- There is a continued focus on expanding and exploring career options for students who may not be attending a 4-year college program post high school.

**IV. 2016-2017 Goals**

- The district will closely monitor the implementation of the ESS plan at WHS. There will be periodic data collection with regard to the success of the implementation. It is important for the ESS staff to build strong connections with students and families, and we will support ESS staff with this endeavor.
- Continue to monitor students at WHS with substance abuse concerns.
- Provide additional training for counseling staff and teachers at the elementary level for supporting students with emotional concerns at younger ages.
- Provide for more specific identification through the SSPs of students who might need more of a career path post high school. Increase ability to offer more vocational opportunities for students.

## PROJECT CHALLENGE, 3-8

### I. 2015-2016 Goals

- Review the previous Project Challenge guide and gain feedback from current school committees.
- Work with a curriculum consultant and utilize Atlas for curriculum development.
- Examine student placement data for the last four years to review trends in Project Challenge enrollments.
- Determine a plan for next steps as part of the curriculum renewal cycle.

### II. Accomplishments

- Increased student participation in enrichment opportunities. Additional enrichment opportunities were added to the co-curricular program (e.g. Odyssey of the Mind, robotics, and WIS science fair).
- Students, teachers, and parent volunteers continued the success of the Mock Trial enrichment program at WMS.

### III. Challenges/Needs

- Assist parents with the understanding of the Project Challenge program in relation to enrichment opportunities.
- Assist parents with the understanding of the identification of students for the Project Challenge program.

### IV. Goals for 2016-2017

- Initiate a Project Challenge committee to review the identification process and delivery of services.
- Review all relevant Project Challenge data and feedback from current school committees.
- Survey students/parents to ascertain information regarding the programs.
- Work with a curriculum consultant to write and electronically map the Project Challenge curriculum.