Principal’s Update

We are two weeks away from our first administration of the State-mandated testing for sophomores and juniors on March 2. Our school day will run from 7:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for all students and will feature special academic programming for each grade. Below please find a brief overview. A detailed letter will be sent to all families.

All juniors will take the SAT free of charge that morning. This past fall, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) adopted the SAT as its annual state assessment in language arts/literacy and math for high school students. All eleventh graders are expected to take the SAT during the school day on March 2. The scheduled make up day is April 27.

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify any concerns that families may have regarding this test and its impact on the college process. Ms. Starzyk, Director of School Counseling, attended a State workshop on this assessment presented by representatives of The College Board in late December. At that time, it was explained that students will have up to 48 hours to cancel their test results if they do not wish them to be part of their college score reports. However, these scores will be sent to the State of Connecticut so that students meet the graduation requirement of participation in this State-mandated assessment.

In addition, our sophomores will take the science CAPT, which is approximately a two-hour assessment. After testing, they will report to the auditorium where they will watch a Shakespearean performance, which is the culmination of our Shakespeare in Residence program that was made possible by a grant from the Weston Arts Foundation.

Our freshmen will learn about their upcoming interdisciplinary assessment in biology and world studies with teachers from both of these academic disciplines. This performance-based assessment is part of our district’s initiative to provide students with authentic learning experiences with real-world application. This particular assessment aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that we strive to integrate into our work.

Finally, seniors who are participating in our Senior Internship Program are required to participate in a program that reviews safety in the work place and the components of the portfolio that they will complete as part of this process. The specific time of this program will be announced.
The following members of our school community were named student and staff of the month for January.

Freshman: Catrin Zharyy
Sopomore : Sara Eiler
Junior: Christian Cuevas
Senior: Nicole Prorokovic
Staff: Cafeteria Cashier Mrs. French
Faculty: Biology Teacher Ms. Greenberg

Academic Programs

Art
Art teachers Mrs. O’Keefe, Mrs. Arena, and Ms. Hawthorne are proud to announce the following honors that their students received in two competitions this month. Two art students earned awards in the State of CT Scholastic Art and 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 will be on display at the Hartford Art School Silpe Gallery from January 17 through February 5. The gallery is open 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the week and 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the weekends.

Ten students have art work on exhibit in the fourth Annual Teen Visions High School Art Exhibition at Sacred Heart University. This unique exhibition of student art will be on view in the Art and Design Department at Sacred Heart University Through February 8. The work is hung by the University professors and judged by graduate students from the University art department. Jerry’s Artarama sponsors the event.

Andre De Pasquale received first place for his ceramic sculpture “Elephant.” The following students earned second place: Grace Juneau for her pen drawing “Marine Science,” Mackenzie Daffner for her pen and watercolor “Estrangement,” and Krista Nayden for her photograph “Overlapping collage.” The selections were among 120 pieces submitted from 11 participating area high schools. The student work on exhibit is of superior quality. Art teachers Ms. Hawthorn, Mrs. Arena, and Mrs. O’Keefe are very proud of their students.

Thanks to generous funding from WestonArts, our English 10 students have the opportunity to participate in a Shakespeare residency program, managed by Shakesperience Productions of Waterbury, CT. The resident artists/teachers in this program are working with our sophomores to adapt and direct performances of scenes from Twelfth Night. After completing a
thorough analysis of their scenes, our students are responsible for all parts of the production, including acting, staging, directing, and set design. Students will participate in three workshops, culminating in a final performance in early March.

Honors Biology classes are currently working on a collaborative lab with Honors Biology classes from New Canaan High School. Both schools are planting and observing the effects of radiation on different seed species. The data will be pooled so that the students may draw conclusions from a larger sample size and collaborate with a scientific community beyond their own classroom.

Our New Vintage Jazz Ensemble performed at the Berklee College of Music High School Jazz Festival on February 6. This Festival, held in Boston, MA, is the largest festival of its kind in North America. New Vintage performed along with over 200 of the area’s finest high school jazz programs. Our symphonic band, wind ensemble, and symphonic orchestra will be traveling to Boston, MA on March 7 to perform at the legendary Symphony Hall. It is noted that Symphony Hall remains, acoustically, among the top three concert halls in the world and is considered the finest in the United States. Each ensemble is evaluated in a non-competitive environment by leading educators from the worlds of collegiate and military performance ensembles, providing performers with a once-in-a-lifetime educational experience.

Social Studies teacher Mr. Moeder has been working with colleagues at Stamford High School to provide additional instruction for students who will take the AP US History (APUSH) exam this May. For many of these students, this is their first AP course. Mr. Moeder has been involved with this Saturday program since the fall.

Project Lead the Way
Project Lead the Way students are involved in a variety of projects as we work towards more advanced skills. Introductory students are stepping up their inventor skills by completing a variety of challenging drawings. Computer Integrated Manufacturing students are creating yo-yos with custom designs utilizing Inventor, EdgeCAM, and the CNC router, while Civil Engineering and Architecture students are finishing up their tiny home project in which they designed and modeled a full set of plans on Autodesk Revit.

Mr. Bencher’s Videography 2 class has begun participation in the School of Ethical Education (SEE) Integrity Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest. The contest invites Connecticut high school and college students to promote the value of academic integrity. Winners will be announced in May.
Co-Curricular Programs

Athletics
The ski team returned from Smugglers Notch ready for their race season. The boys opened up undefeated against class S schools in their first race while the girls won two races and lost one race against schools in our division. The girls’ basketball team is one win away from qualifying for the State tournament for the first time in four years, while our boys’ basketball team hosted Pomeraug in a game that was telecasted live by CPTV Sports.

Our girls’ indoor track and field team is the SWC champion for the fourth year in a row. Our wrestlers competed in the SWC championship on February 13. Our Lady Trojan basketball team has qualified for the CIAC State tournament.

Pop up programs are in full swing at WHS. Students and staff enjoyed learning how to knit and danced Zumba in our dance studio afterschool. Students created Valentine’s Day cards for a nearby retirement community as well as their class-sponsored child through Save the Children.

Student Government
The third annual WHS Winter Olympics, which took place the first week of February, was a great success. Events included floor hockey, game night, and trivia night. Grades competed in these different activities to earn medals for their classes, with the Class of 2016 winning the overall competition. All profits made from the various night activities went to Apple’s Preschool in Stamford to help purchase communication devices for 120 special education students.

Weston Teen Peace Works held its third annual Poetry Jam Open Mic Slam event in honor of National Teen Dating Abuse Prevention month on February 12. Student bands, poets, and singers showcased their talents with the themes of hope and empowerment. Students also filled out No More cards to take a stand against domestic violence. No More is a national campaign to prevent abuse and engage bystanders.

Students involved in the W78 Weston TV Network are producing a segment on biology teacher Ms. Greenberg and her therapy dog, Gryphon. This piece will feature the use of a GoPro camera that captures Gryphon in action on his agility course.

Alumni News
David Glass, Class of 1997 and graduate of Colgate University, is a creative supervisor at McCann Erikson Advertising in New York City.

Tracy Glass, Class of 2000 and graduate of Hamilton College, lives in Hong Kong and works for Barron’s Asia.

Dr. Ian Shupack, Class of 1987 and graduate of Washington and Lee University, uses his Spanish on a daily basis in his family practice based in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Shupack, who graduated from Texas A & M Medical School, is married to Patrice Neary, Class of 1987 as well. Both were former Spanish students of Principal Mrs. Deorio.
Andrew Uzenoff, Class of 2008 and graduate of Lafayette College, works in the compensation department for Jet Blue Airlines. Dr. Sarah Uzenoff, Class of 1999 and graduate of Princeton University, is a clinical psychologist in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

| Weston Middle School | Dan Doak, Principal |

**In this issue…**

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- **High School Students Serve as Musical Mentors to our Sixth Graders**
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**WMS Short Wharf Presents Disney’s The Little Mermaid Jr.**
We would like to congratulate Producer Meagan Burns-Min, Director/Choreographer Stacey Curti, and all of the students, faculty, and staff who made this year’s musical such a success. Performances were held January 29, 30, and 31 at the Weston High School Auditorium.

**Town Librarians Visit WMS to Issue Library Cards**
Sixth-grade English teachers Meredith Buckley and Dana Goetz organized a drive for students to sign up for a Weston Public Library card. Access to the town library not only offers students the opportunity to borrow great books, but also provides access to databases and online resources, which support student learning. Approximately 100 library cards were issued to our students on February 11.

**Weston Middle School Participates in National Geography Bee**
Each year, students work with their social studies teacher to demonstrate their knowledge of geography throughout the world. This year, each grade level team held preliminary round competitions to select the top two scorers to advance to the school-wide competition. The questions are formulated by the National Geographic Society and are comprehensive and challenging.
High School Students Serve as Musical Mentors to our Sixth Graders
Student musicians at Weston High School are volunteering their time to mentor sixth grade Weston students who are beginning their musical instruction. Each week, Weston High School band students spend 45 minutes afterschool with the beginning musicians to help teach how to read music, work on a piece of music, or review the basics on trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, and flute. This is the second year for the Musical Mentor program. It was started by current WHS junior Alex Raucci, who recalls what it was like to start an instrument and wanted to start a program to inspire the younger generation of musicians. The Musical Mentorship program is currently running its fourth session and will begin spring session in April. Please contact faculty advisor Ms. Soboleski for more information.

Sixth Grade Students Learn About Carnaval and Mardi Gras
Sixth-grade French students celebrated Mardi Gras on February 9 and 10. Their celebration included lessons and videos on famous “carnavals” in France and Quebec, Canada. They also enjoyed tasting some traditional treats of Carnaval and Mardi Gras, including a “galette des rois” (a King Cake) and “beignets,” a fried donut-like dessert. According to the tradition, a small token, or “fève,” is hidden inside the King Cake. Whoever receives the piece of cake with the token is crowned the king or queen. Students enjoyed learning about the Carnaval and Mardi Gras traditions.

Officer Mogollon Teaches about Internet Safety
Officer Joe Mogollon, from the Weston Police Department, has been visiting each grade level to discuss internet safety. He met with the sixth-grade students on February 11 and the eighth-grade students on February 12. He will meet with the seventh-grade students after February break.

Mock Trial Teams Advance to the Quarter Finals
On February 11, all three of our Mock Trial teams won their cases at a competition in Wallingford, CT. Our teams will compete later this month in the quarter finals. This is the first time that all three of our teams have made it to the next level. Our teams are coached by Mrs. Peggy Jorgensen and Mr. Andrew Marone.
Robotics Team Competes in Danbury
Our robotics team participated in their first competition of the year at Danbury High School on Saturday, February 6. Our students learned a lot and continue to alter the design of their robotics to enhance performance. We are looking forward to the next competition.

Professional Development Update
Mrs. Marcie Ames, special education teacher, attended a national conference to learn about the latest developments in assistive technology.

Seventh-grade math teachers Ms. Alyson Agler and Mr. Brian Reddington worked with Curriculum Instructional Leader Mrs. Janine Russo and consultant Dr. Anne Burgunder, on best practices in lesson design and instructional strategies.

Weston Intermediate School

Pattie Falber, Principal

In this issue…
Fifth-Grade Eye Dissection
Third-Grade Fractured Fairy Tales
Fourth-Grade Author Study
Fifth-Grade Embedded Task
Valentines for Vets
Professional Development

Fifth-Grade Eye Dissection
As part of the science unit on Light Energy, fifth-grade students study the parts of the eye and how they work together to collect images, which are transmitted to the brain for interpretation. During this study, students have an opportunity to take part in an actual sheep eye dissection. Working in small groups, students observe as a teacher dissects the eye. Students have a chance to touch and feel the different parts of the eye, ask questions, and explore the similarities and differences between a sheep eye and a human eye. This optional activity (we understand that not all can stomach an eye dissection) has become one of the most anticipated learning experiences in fifth grade.
Third Grade Fractured Fairy Tales
Did you ever hear the story of Cinderella where the main character is a boy, or the main problem is to try to save a public library? Or the story of The Three Little Pigs that uses minnows and sharks instead of pigs and a wolf? Unusual, yes, but those are just some of the stories our third graders are writing during their unit on Fractured Fairy Tales. Students are learning the magic of fairy tales, and practicing their storytelling skills, while writing adapted tales and creating their own original fairy tale. This unit is one of the narrative writing units that allows students to develop their creative writing skills and understand how story elements are connected in a logical and meaningful way. This unit is paired with a reading unit of study on analyzing many different fairy tales.

Fourth-Grade Author Study
Fourth-grade readers are involved in an in-depth author study. In this unit, students are analyzing multiple books by the same author, taking notice of similar characters, conflicts, messages, and themes. Students also learn about the author in order to understand why these similarities exist. At the end of the unit, students will be writing to the author to submit a proposal for his/her next novel.

Fifth-Grade Embedded Task
Over the last few weeks, fifth graders were involved in an integrated curriculum-embedded performance task for science. The performance task provides opportunities for students to interact with interesting materials that provoke questions that can be investigated using a scientific approach. Each performance task includes two experiments. The first experiment provides structure and direction, and teachable moments during which teachers provide mini-lessons, then feedback on the skills necessary for students to proceed independently. The second experiment allows students an opportunity to work independently. This task culminates their science unit on sensory perception and the brain. It involves testing variables that may affect an individual’s reaction time. Some students investigated factors such as texting, chewing gum, and listening to music, while others looked at how scents, such as lavender and vanilla, could have an effect. Math and language arts skills were also integrated, as they researched and presented their findings.

Valentines for Vets
Once again, our students put their creative talents to work to create beautiful Valentine’s Day cards for veterans and members of our police force. Inside the cards, they wrote heartfelt thank you notes, creative poems, and words of inspiration to remember the day and the people who serve. Valentines for Vets is an international service project designed to help make a difference for active and retired service men and women.
Professional Development
This month, several of our teachers took the opportunity at a recent faculty meeting to share what they had learned while attending various professional learning workshops. Thanks in part to the generosity of our PTO, teachers can attend workshops and professional seminars outside of school. Teachers then bring back what they’ve learned to share with their colleagues and team members. Some of the recently attended workshops included teacher leadership, mindfulness, and building student resiliency. These professional learning days provide an important opportunity for our teachers to continue to grow their professional practice and to share what they’ve learned with others.

Hurlbutt Elementary School
Laura Kaddis, Principal

In this issue…
Hurlbutt Celebrates a Positive School Climate
Teaching and Learning
Home-School Partnership

Hurlbutt Celebrates a Positive School Climate
On February 2, we celebrated 100 days of learning at Hurlbutt. Throughout the day, classes celebrated 100 days of school. Each class marked this day with a variety of activities including wearing 100-day hats and glasses, by counting, grouping, and performing many mathematical applications. Numeracy is an important concept as students continue to build understanding of numbers and the base-ten system that is an important building block for developing computational fluency. Since the first day of school, our students have been counting days of school. There was much excitement as our count grew closer and closer to 100.

Teaching and Learning
Our first graders have begun the Forces and Motion AIM unit (Academic Innovation & Measurement). AIM units encourage and celebrate innovation in teaching and learning and prepare our students for the challenges of a global society. This K-12 initiative is unique to Weston and strives to explicitly teach the highest priority student outcomes (e.g. critical and creative thinking, collaboration, effective communication). Our first graders began their study by designing a roller coaster using five pieces of track. The students then went to the computer lab to test their prototype using a roller coaster design program. If their roller coaster was successful, a marble rolled from the beginning and made it all the way to the end.
way to the end. If the roller coaster was not successful, the marble would get stuck. The most important part of the task was having the "engineers" determine WHY their roller coaster did or did not work. Our first graders couldn’t wait to revise their tracks and see if the roller coaster was successful. Throughout the unit they will be given more opportunities to use scientific vocabulary that will help them with writing their reflections!

During our weekly book exchange time in the Library Resource Center (LRC), our students had an opportunity to share their opinions about the books they read. This activity supports our writing curriculum by giving students a real-world application and audience. All grades have units of study throughout the year in which they learn strategies and author’s craft for opinion writing. Students filled out a paper heart sharing a recommendation or feedback on a book they recently read from our LRC. After attaching the heart to the book, the book was displayed for other students to browse. Our students loved looking through the selection of books their peers had recommended. This was a fun way to combine the excitement of Valentine’s Day with book recommendations. If you are looking for a good book, stop by Hurlbutt and check out our recommendations.

All of our students continue to acquire and use an incredible amount of vocabulary in Spanish. This month our first and second grade students have been learning about los grupos de las comidas. In addition to learning the words for fruit, vegetable, and many other food groups, our students are using that vocabulary to categorize. We used the Smartboard capabilities that allowed them to use a virtual spinner to select a category. Using their critical thinking skills, students identified which food belongs in the selected category. This unit supports our health curriculum.

As a culminating activity to the measurement unit of study, our second graders held their annual Hurlbutt Elementary School Metric Olympics event. This annual event engages the students in a hands-on application of the measurement and estimation skills they have been learning. By tallying their points and timing their Olympic events, the students are reinforcing their math skills as well. The events were speed skating (on paper plates!), paper plate discus throw, tower building, and snowball shot put. Here is a picture of some of our second graders speed skating down the hall. Team members used their paper plates to travel along the designated path, then recorded their times and calculated a grand total for the team. We always look forward to this exciting and engaging event.
Our PTO led the annual “Souper Bowl” event at Hurlbutt which is always exciting for all. During the week before the Super Bowl, our students and staff brought in cans of soup for the Weston Food Pantry. This event is a great way for our students to remember our neighbors in need while also celebrating an exciting sporting event in our country. On the last day of the can drive our students were encouraged to wear their favorite sports shirt.

Through the generous support of our PTO and their fundraising efforts, storyteller Jim Napolitano brought a new art form to our students, shadow puppetry. He entertained and educated us about this unique storyteller approach. Our students were inspired by the creativity and many students talked about wanting to make shadow puppets at home. This assembly supports our first grade science unit, Shadows. During the shadow unit students learn that shadows have a light source, an object to block the light and a surface on which to observe the shadow. This was such a great way for them to see how shadows can be used to tell stories. This event also supports our reading and writing curriculum as the students are able to identify the characters, settings and problems in the stories.