

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT

November 16, 2015



Weston High School

Lisa Deorio, Principal

In this issue...

- Principal's Update*
- School Counseling & College and Career Center*
- Academic Programs*
- Professional Development*
- Co-Curricular Programs*
- Alumni News*

Principal's Update

In this second quarter, we have made some logistical changes to our freshman and sophomore study halls in response to students' needs. The freshman study hall now has a laptop cart available for student use. Our sophomore study hall, formerly located in the cafeteria, is now in our main lobby, where students can also access laptops from the Library Learning Commons. This simple change, suggested during a PTO general meeting, allows our students to access Google Classroom and work on assignments that require access to the internet and school network.

In addition, our National Honor Society is providing peer tutoring one period per day in the Library Learning Commons. Students are encouraged to stop by and check the daily schedule as the period changes every day. Ninth graders in quiet study should get a pass from the librarian in order to leave their study hall and come to the library. Below is the schedule.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY TUTORING IN THE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY LEARNING COMMONS

| | |
|-------|----------|
| A Day | Period 5 |
| B Day | Period 2 |
| C Day | Period 1 |
| D Day | Period 3 |
| E Day | Period 6 |
| F Day | Period 7 |
| G Day | Period 8 |
| H Day | Period 4 |

School Counseling & College and Career Center

On November 17, school counselors held a meeting for parents entitled *Sophomore Secrets to Success*. They provided an overview of the sophomore year and an introduction to Naviance and standardized

testing. If you were unable to make this meeting, the presentation will be posted to our school counseling website for your convenience.

On Wednesday, November 18, counselors will be presenting two programs for our juniors and their parents. Beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the WHS auditorium, counselors will review the ACT and eight key changes of the new SAT, as well as provide a comprehensive comparison between the current SAT and the new SAT, which is effective March 2016. This information was also shared during Trojan Time advisory for our students. This program will be followed at 7:00 p.m. with the junior college planning evening seminar. Counselors will discuss post-secondary planning. Topics include how to research different colleges and universities, when to visit schools, and what are the different criteria for admissions.

Academic Programs

Art

Students in Ms. Hawthorn's sculpture class have created an interesting exhibit in our Library Learning Commons. Three "invisible" figures can be seen studying and enjoying this space with our students.



Music

Thirty six students from our band, choir, jazz, and orchestra programs auditioned for the Connecticut Music Educators Associations' (CMEA) Western Region Festival this month, which is one of the largest groups from WHS in recent years. Students prepared music specifically selected for their instrument or voice by CMEA. The auditions, held at Danbury High School, required students to perform their solos in front of 2 judges. The year's festival will be held at Staples High School in January.

Project Lead the Way

Students in Computer Integrated Manufacturing simulated a small scale production company by designing and creating chocolate lollipops for Halloween that they sold the morning of October 29.

Social Studies

On Veterans Day social studies teacher Mr. French organized and held a program during the lunch block where students listened to a panel of veterans who had served in various roles in the U.S. military during conflict or in a supporting role at home.

Videography

The Advanced Videography students have begun work on the 2016 DMV Travelers Teen Safe Driving video contest. This year's theme is When Shifting into Drive, Keep the Safety of Others in Mind. The video must follow the thematic requirement of teen drivers demonstrating safety and thinking of the safety of others while driving.

World Language

The Latin Honor Society has been sponsoring twice-weekly Latin 2 review sessions with Magistra Telford in room C-1. During these sessions, students review basic topics from Latin 1 as well as vocabulary. Topics are announced in advance and posted in the World Language hallway. Students are

also given the opportunity to review vocabulary. Sessions are held Tuesdays before school and Thursdays after school and last about 20 minutes.

Professional Development

Principal Mrs. Deorio, Tech Integrator Mr. Webster, Librarian Mrs. Snaith, and Director of Digital Learning and Innovation Dr. Tunks participated in a workshop at Cooperative Educational Services on how to transform the Library Learning Commons (LLC) . Our goal is to enhance our LLC to create more flexible space so that students and teachers create knowledge through self-directed learning. Social studies teacher Mr. Moeder is serving as a consultant for EASTCONN, assisting students at Stamford High School in preparing them for the AP Government and AP U.S. History exams this year.

Co-Curricular Programs



Athletics

Congratulations to our girls' swimming and diving team, which was undefeated this season and won the SWC tournament.



Girls' volleyball had a strong season competing in the finals of the SWC Tournament, losing a challenging match to Barlow this month.

The Western Connecticut Soccer Officials Association awarded our girls' soccer team the Art Hamm Sportsmanship Award at its annual banquet on November 23. This honor is given to an exemplary soccer program that displays exceptional sportsmanship.

Our Unified Sports team competed against Masuk in soccer this month. I would like to thank WHS Unified Partners Derek Nussbaum, Jennifer Altamirano, and Peter Friedrichsen for participating with our Weston athletes.



Student Government

The Class of 2018 participated in the breast cancer walk at Sherwood Island as members of the team Brenda's Valor, which was organized by Brandon Berger.

Circle of Friends members held two fund raisers this month. They hosted a bake sale and sold tie-dye shirts designed by our Community Class students. They also cheered on our Unified Sports team when they competed against Masuk High School.



The Model United Nations club (MUN), under the direction of advisor Mr. Jorge, participated in the Fairfield University Model United Nations Conference. Our delegates worked diligently to prepare for their specific assignments that included portraying the President of Lebanon, serving as the Canadian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference of 1911, and representing different planets in the Star Wars universe. The MUN club looks forward to their next conference at Boston University in the spring.

Mock Trial is preparing for its competition on December 4 at the Stamford courthouse under the supervision of advisor Mrs. Del Savio. Community volunteers have been working tirelessly with the students to help them get ready.



Members of our National Art Honors Society (NAHS) and advisor Mrs. O’Keefe have been designing and creating murals in the children’s room at the Adam’s House in Shelton, CT. Adam’s House, run by the Adam Wysota Foundation, will open as a grief education center next month.

The National Honor Society (NHS) and NAHS hosted a Halloween party the morning of October 31 for WHS staff and their children. Students dressed in costume, painted faces, served cider and cookies, played games, and danced with over 30 children.



UNICEF raised funds for Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF. Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF is a campaign to help children all over the globe by fighting malnutrition and diseases.



The Company production of the comedy *You Can’t Take It With You* was a resounding success as evidenced by the continual laughter of the audience during the three performances this month.

Alumni News

Sam Panton, Class of 2015, shared these thoughts with English teacher Mr. Risoli about his experience at WHS. *“I just wanted to email you to let you know everything is going well with me. I wanted to thank you again for what you taught me. Can you thank Mrs. Snaith (librarian) for me too because the research here is the same that we need to do in English and she helped to make sure we picked out credible sources. I just wanted to say thank you.”*



Olivia Donnelly, Class of 2015, shared these comments on a recent visit. *“I was lucky to graduate from here. All of the teachers cared about me a lot. I placed into the highest level of Spanish as a freshman and really like my conversation and writing course. I am thinking of double majoring with Spanish. I miss Ms. Fernandes’ class.”*

Jacob Greisman, Class of 2012, will graduate from Colgate this spring with a major in neuroscience and minor in Spanish. He will apply to medical schools for fall 2017, and for the remainder of the year will work as the Clinic Director for Floating Doctors. This organization brings medical care to villagers living in the surrounding jungles of Panama. Jacob's training as an EMT and his fluency in Spanish will serve him well in this role.

Sarah Greisman, Class of 2015, a student at Brandeis, is spending her first semester at American University, taking classes and interning with the Anti-Defamation League. Her duties include attending and summarizing discussions of hate crimes at congressional hearings, staffing D.C. events hosted by the ADL, researching materials, and other similar duties.

Jacob Evan Peyser, Class of 2009, graduated the University of Michigan's College of Engineering. Jacob works for IBM as a Software Developer Advocate in its Blue Mix Cloud Division, traveling the world to promote the next generation of technology. Jacob resides in Austin, Texas.

Michele Eve Peyser, Class of 2005 and graduate of the University of Wisconsin, received her master's degree in speech and language from Florida State University. She currently works in Boston as a speech and language pathologist treating birth to three-year-old children at a state sponsored facility. Michele also assists both seniors and brain trauma patients with corrective speech and learning techniques.

Weston Middle School

Dan Doak, Principal

In this issue...

Student Government Update
Student Government Update
Eighth Grade Students Visit Boston
Sixth Grade Field Trip to Nature's Classroom
Technology and Engineering Update
Orchestra Performs Spooky Tunes
Sixth Grade Students Visit SoundWaters
Engineers Teaching Algebra
Seventh Grade Snack Tectonics Lab
Eighth Grade Writing Portfolio
Honoring Veterans
Professional Development

Student Government Update

SGA students had a busy October. The SGA's annual food drive was an incredible success. The Weston Pantry is now filled thanks to the generous donations of students and their families. A big thank you to all who participated in this year's food drive. The SGA also hosted the first WMS social of the year. Sixth grade students showed off their best costumes, played games in the gym, and danced the night away at the Halloween themed event. Thank you to all parents and staff who helped organize this fun evening for our sixth graders! Upcoming events for the SGA include a U.S.A. Spirit Day in November, the annual holiday toy drive, and a PJ Day Fundraiser in December.



Eighth-Grade Students Visit Boston

On October 22 and 23, the eighth grade took an exciting field trip to Boston. Students saw reproductions of the Mayflower, Plymouth Colony and a Native American village. In addition, a Boston Duck Tour showed off the rich history of this American city.

Nature's Classroom



Sixth-grade students spent three days and two nights at Camp Jewell in Colebrook, CT. In addition to hands-on learning related to science and social studies curricular goals, our students challenged themselves to work cooperatively with their peers, to problem solve, take risks, and become more independent.



Technology and Engineering



Seventh-grade students in Design and Modeling can be seen in the photo launching their skimmers at the end of a unit focused on measurement and workmanship. They have moved on to a furniture design project. Sixth-grade computer programming students have learned to code a video game using the programming language, Scratch, which was developed by the MIT Media Lab. Eighth-grade robotics students are learning to build gear mechanisms and can be seen in the last

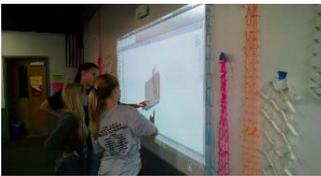


photo exploring a 3D model of a project using the new interactive whiteboard.

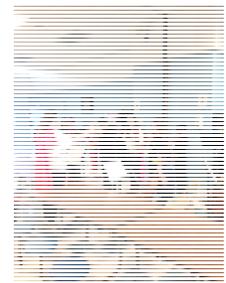


Orchestra Student Perform for Halloween



At the end of October, the Weston Middle School Chamber Orchestra performed some spooky, Halloween-themed repertoire to spread ghoulish cheer at Weston Middle School and Weston Intermediate School. This talented group of students pushed themselves to learn holiday-themed music *on top of* their regularly programmed repertoire, to help brighten the school

community through a shared love of music. Their Halloween selections included themes from *Harry Potter*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Munsters*, *The Addams Family*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, and *Jaws*. The Chamber Orchestra is looking forward to their winter concert on December 8 where they will play works by Ralph Vaughn Williams and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra.



Sixth-Grade Students Visit SoundWaters

Sixth-grade students had the pleasure of going to SoundWaters in Stamford, CT and getting to investigate Long Island Sound's ecosystem. They also enjoyed





SoundWaters coming to WMS and conducting filtration and pH indication activities. The in-school portion of this experience was funded by our Weston Middle School PTO.



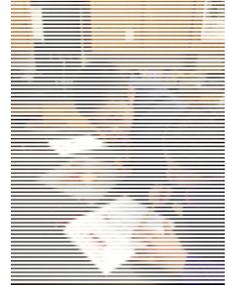
Engineers Teaching Algebra

Mark Love, an engineer based in New Hampshire, returned once again to present his hands-on problem-based instruction during which he challenged students in Algebra 1 and Math 8-1 to design traffic flow at a busy intersection. This enrichment session was funded by a generous grant from the Weston Middle School PTO.

Seventh Grade Science Snack Tectonics Lab



Students were given the challenge to create a model that illustrates plate tectonic motions. They were given graham crackers, frosting and fruit roll-ups that they had to correlate to the asthenosphere, oceanic crust and continental crust, showing how plates interact at their boundaries.



Eighth-Grade Writing Portfolio

This month, our eighth-grade English teachers will introduce the Grade 8 Writing Portfolio to all students. Creating a writing portfolio allows students to demonstrate their abilities in writing, thinking, and learning. Students will review major writing assignments from all classes in grades seven and eight and make choices about which pieces represent them best as writers. Students will then revise these pieces so it showcases their strongest work.

Building the portfolio will give students the opportunity to present themselves outside of the typical classroom context and to receive personalized feedback on strengths and goal areas from writing experts both within and outside Weston Middle School. In these ways, a portfolio approach enhances how we already assess students, and is a natural outgrowth of the existing writing curriculum they have already experienced in Weston.

Veterans Day

Weston Middle School held a celebration honoring our Veterans on November 11. To begin their morning with us, veterans enjoyed a light breakfast and music performed by students. We then held an all school assembly. Immediately following the assembly, we held a living museum where veterans shared their experiences in the armed forces. We had a special station this year: WHS graduate Christine Peyreigne gave a presentation on our national bird: the bald eagle. All eighth-grade classes had a chance to visit each station. After the town ceremony, veterans were invited back for a special lunch in the WMS cafeteria. Students dined with them and enjoyed time talking with them in small groups. A video honoring Veterans was shown during lunch.

Professional Development

Over the next few months, sixth- and seventh-grade math teachers will be working with outside consultants from Metamorphosis Teaching and Learning Communities to help support the changes we have made in the structure of our math program. The essential question surrounding this work will be: "How do we best plan and implement lessons that will meet the needs of a diverse group of learners?"

The time with the consultants will involve several cycles of lesson planning, implementation, and reflection.

In this issue...

- Grade Three Bar Modeling***
- Grade Five Social Studies***
- Run for Life***
- Halloween***
- Halloween Concert***
- Veterans Day***
- Fifth-Grade Student Council***
- Parent Workshop***
- Professional Development***

Grade Three Bar Modeling

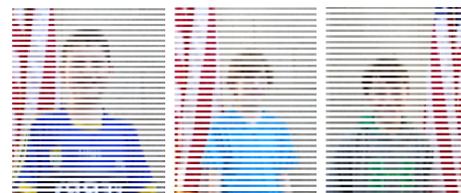


Students in every grade have been deeply involved with mathematical problem solving this month. In these pictures, some third graders are using the strategy of bar modeling. Drawing bar models helps students to visualize and make sense of the relationship between the numbers given in these real-life problems. Drawing a diagram like this to represent the problem becomes a helpful strategy for students to use for many types of problems.



Grade Five Social Studies

Fifth graders have been studying the American Colonial period and why different groups of people decided to come to the colonies. This has created an interesting backdrop for students as they are exposed to current presidential campaigns through articles in *Time for Kids*, and the constant media coverage they are exposed to outside of school. Our fifth graders are very curious and engaged with making connections from the past to the present. To capitalize on their heightened interest, students in several classes have been challenged (optionally) to learn America’s presidents from Washington to Obama. Many students have enthusiastically taken on the challenge and several have already been deemed ‘Presidential Scholars.’



Run for Life

WIS families and friends came together for our annual run/walk/jog event to promote cardiovascular fitness and the effect it has on our physical and mental well-being. The weather was perfect for early mornings at the track so we were joined by many students and their families. Students continued to

accrue laps and miles during their physical education classes. This is an exciting event for all as we begin our mornings as a community promoting our physical health.

Halloween

The day was filled with a variety of fun activities. Many of the classes used their imagination to write Halloween stories and poems, and to creatively decorate pumpkins. The fourth graders took part in “Pumpkin Mania,” an annual event that incorporates math, science, art, and physical movement into many different activities with pumpkins. The students learned about symmetry, measurement, and building, along with taking part in activities outside that stretched both their muscles and their thinking. Each of the grade levels were able to show off their costumes in parades throughout the building. Overall, it was a fun day from start to finish.



Halloween Concert

Spooky music and ghostly tunes swept through the halls last Friday as students from the middle school String Ensemble greeted everyone with a medley of Halloween-inspired melodies. Students and staff alike enjoyed excerpts from familiar tunes such as “*The Addams Family*”, “*Thriller*”, and “*Phantom of the Opera*.” What a wonderful way to begin our day.

Veteran’s Day

On Wednesday, November 11, we took time to come together as a school to remember and honor our Veterans and the men and women who serve our country. Each grade level sang songs to commemorate the day, and many students shared poems that they had written in honor of this day. We were fortunate to have three veterans with us for the assembly. They shared their experiences and allowed the students time to ask some questions. We also created a bulletin board in honor of Veteran’s Day: “WIS Remembers its Veterans.” Our staff shared pictures of their family members who have served our country. Many students and staff members stop to read and learn about our WIS veterans.



Fifth-Grade Student Council

This month fifth graders from the student council launched a school-wide community service project to provide food and supplies for the Weston Food Pantry. Learning that the shelves were almost bare, the students sprang into action, encouraging every student at WIS to bring in at least one can of food which would result in over 550 new cans of food for the Pantry. The Drive will run for another week so items can be delivered and shelved in time for Thanksgiving.



Parent Workshop

This month, Carolyn Vinton, Curriculum Instructional Leader for math and science, led two parent workshops on Bar Modeling, a problem solving strategy unique to the Singapore approach. The workshop was designed to give parents a better understanding of how students are learning to solve problems pictorially in class. The workshops were interactive and gave parents a hands-on experience with Bar Modeling so that they could support their child's learning at home.



Professional Development

Our Teachers College staff developer, Simone Fraser, visited our school again this month, and worked with our teachers to analyze student writing and develop individualized and small group lessons based on that analysis. Teachers worked together to use a strategy that supports planning and instruction. The teachers were



involved in the classrooms with Simone coaching them as they taught small groups of writers and tried out their new learning. The students are currently writing informational and opinion pieces and enjoying this second genre of the year. Simone has given us goals to work on as a staff to ensure that our Professional Development carries over and is school wide.



Hurlbutt Elementary School

Laura Kaddis, Principal

In this issue...

*Halloween at Hurlbutt
Shoot for the Cure
Teaching and Learning
School-Wide Celebration for PBIS*

Halloween at Hurlbutt

It was another exciting Halloween at Hurlbutt. Our students and staff enjoyed dressing up for our annual parade. All students in preschool through second grade participated in this event and it is one of the highlights of the year. Horace, the Hurlbutt Honeybee, led the parade with our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Colleen Palmer. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten parents were invited, and filled the inner circle of the bus loop to watch, snap pictures, and cheer for our students while they walked and showed off their Halloween costumes. This year the entire Hurlbutt staff dressed up as Waldo from the popular childrens' books, *Where's Waldo?* We had fun spotting Waldo all over the building throughout the day.

Shoot for the Cure

Hurlbutt staff participated in our annual Shoot for the Cure event to support breast cancer awareness. Staff arrived at school early to join a team of colleagues to shoot baskets in the North House gym. Both past and current staff joined in and raised \$483 for breast cancer research. Paraprofessionals June Smith and Connie Shine led this annual event.



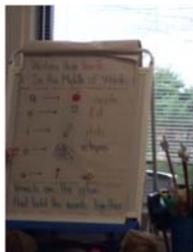
Teaching and Learning

Our kindergarten classes went on their first science field trip this year to support our curriculum. They visited Blue Jay Orchards in Bethel. The activities enjoyed at the orchard correlate to the Living and Non-Living and Seasons units of study in science. The students toured the orchard and learned about apples and pumpkins. They learned about a working apple orchard and enjoyed a pumpkin wagon trip through the pumpkin patch. This ride through the fall foliage sparked many conversations and observations about the change of seasons.

Through the generous support of our PTO, we continue to host scientists from the High Touch High Tech science program. This program provides enrichment to our science curriculum through hands-on experiments. Our first graders recently participated in The Shadow Knows program and learned about light and shadows. They investigated how shadows form and how cool they are. Students used shadows to learn about the motion of the sun. The session concluded with each little scientist making a working sun dial to take home.

Our amazing kindergarten authors have already gained much stamina already with their writing this year and are drafting three-page stories with pictures and letters, words, or sentences. Through the workshop model, students at all developmental stages can tell exciting stories about things they do, people they know, and places they go. Our current unit of study, Writing for Readers, teaches our young writers how to make stories easier to read by teaching specific strategies. They have learned

how to stretch out words, write sight words in a snap, and to use all the resources in their environment such as word walls, checklists, and writing buddies. One of the hallmarks of the workshop model is the development of strong storytelling words as students ‘touch and tell’ their stories across pages by touching each page to orally rehearse their story. Our writers have learned to make their pictures clearer too by adding labels, additional characters, and detailed settings.



The young writer pictured here is adding details to her “story” to make her picture clearer for the reader.

Our immersion Spanish program continues to foster a strong understanding of the language for our students. Since the beginning of school, our kindergarteners have been learning through highly engaging lessons that are connected to our Social Studies curriculum. Most recently they have been studying *Celebraciones*. Our students can identify family members, holidays, and food that we eat for Thanksgiving. They are rapidly acquiring vocabulary and are able to listen to and respond to more complex questions everyday. Our first and second graders are building on their knowledge of the language through lessons that connect with the social studies and health curricula. They have been identifying places in our community and are comparing our community to Madrid. Our students are already understanding and using the verbs jugar, comer, comprar and visitar.

School-Wide Celebration for PBIS

Our school-wide focus in the month of October was bucket filling. Inspired by the popular children's books *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* and *Bucket Filling from A to Z* by Carol McCloud, we explored the many ways to demonstrate kindness. Students learn that everyone carries an invisible bucket with them throughout the day. Being a "bucket filler" means showing kindness towards others in words and deeds. Each class was given a letter of the alphabet to develop ideas around and visually represent with a poster.

These posters were part of our Bucket-Filling A to Z parade of kindness at the assembly. Mr. Guertin's class brainstormed ideas for the letter V which represented all of the ways we could volunteer to do work. We loved seeing volunteer to vacuum on their list. We hope some of these ideas will transfer to habits at home! Our main hallway is now lined with tons of bucket filling ideas.

