

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT

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Weston High School

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PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE



Our music students participated in Festival Disney 2019 from February 28 through March 4. During their time at Disney World, Ms. Morris' choir students worked with a former Broadway/Actor's Equity musician to put together the soundtrack to the *Lion King*, which was then set to a short film featuring scenes from the original animated film. Mr. Fasoli's Band students worked with a professional saxophonist in their workshop, learning to sight-read scores on the spot, and finishing with a recording of a *Moana* score, set to scenes from the movie! Ms. Stewart's orchestra students worked with a Disney composer/conductor on their skills as an ensemble before setting scenes from *Beauty and the Beast* to a live-recorded score! In addition, each ensemble gave a spectacular performance on the Disney Springs Amphitheater Stage for families, Disney guests, and for their peers! In between performances and workshops, the students, along with their chaperones, enjoyed a little down time and had a lot of fun at the Park.

[Click here](#) to view a PowerPoint presentation that has some wonderful pictures from the trip.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

As always, the Writing Center had a busy month, working with 60 students in individual conferences. Teachers worked with juniors who need to resubmit their portfolios for grading and visited many classes discussing the Sophomore Portfolio. The Sophomore Writing Portfolio, which is a graduation requirement, is due May 9. Sophomores will be given time in their English and social studies classes to begin revision this month.

Ms. Balouskus' physics students had the opportunity to Skype with research scientist Dr. Susanna Finn, of UMass-Lowell as part of their unit on gravitation. As an astronomer, Dr. Finn works on a variety of research projects aimed at expanding knowledge of the Earth, stars, and galaxies. She works on, and collects data from, a tool that is currently gathering data while it orbits Earth. Students planned questions ranging from how we know so much about exoplanets, to what motivates her to study space.



Four WHS students attended the Connecticut Junior Science and Humanities Symposium at UConn Health in Farmington on Saturday March 9: Isabella Sperry, Thomas Brentano, Wesley Patel, and Tobey Bill. Bella Sperry gave an oral presentation on her Honors Science Research



project: *HPLC Analysis of a Solution of Low-Density Lipoprotein after Interacting in vitro with Dietary Supplements (Grape Seed Extract, Hawthorn, and Polyphenol)*. Our students, along with research teacher Stacey Greenberg, participated in a variety of events, including the keynote talk concerning genetic causes of cancer, a health careers panel run by undergraduate, graduate, and medical students, a gene editing and bioethics discussion, and an introduction to human genome analysis.

Latin students participated in the National Latin Exam this month, testing their knowledge of grammar, reading comprehension, history, culture, and word derivation. Results and awards will be announced in April.

Educators from The Rowan Center (formally known as The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis and Education) worked with senior students from our Health class. The motto for The Rowan Center is: "Empower, Educate, Eliminate." The Rowan Center prevention education programs (K-12) are designed to raise awareness about sexual violence, signs of perpetrator behavior, and symptoms of trauma. Most importantly, they provide students with the tools necessary to know what to do if they or someone they know have been affected by this crime.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Latin teachers Ms. Guadagnoli and Ms. Telford attended the Classical Association of New England annual meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts, where they met with teachers and professors of the classics from around the area and discussed scholarship and strategies to improve teaching and learning in the Latin classroom.

Mrs. Benson and Mrs. Charles attended a science workshop at the New England Institute of Technology in Rhode Island that focused on defining, evaluating, and developing three-dimensional science assessments: *How can we make sure students are making sense of a phenomenon using the three dimensions of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) when engaging in an assessment task? How can we insure that tasks are accessible, appropriate, and cognitively*



demanding for all learners? By investigating these questions, they learned valuable takeaways that will help students be better prepared to succeed in the new world of the NGSS.

English teachers Mrs. Holmes, Mrs. Cincotta and Weston Middle School English teachers attended a workshop titled "Teaching Through Hope: Building Your Holocaust Instructional Materials" at Cooperative Educational Services. "The purpose of this workshop was for teachers to work cooperatively within and across districts to explore, curate, and plan sets of Holocaust and genocide awareness resources to use in their classrooms. Blending nonfiction texts, resources from Echoes and Reflections, and museum artifacts, teachers will engage with the history of the Holocaust and frame literacy experiences that "teach through hope" and support the development of literacy skills in social studies and ELA classrooms." Grade 8 and grade 9 English teachers are working together to create units related to these topics that build both awareness and empathy in our students.

ATHLETICS

Another successful winter season has come to an end. Boys and Girls Indoor Track and Field, and Boys and Girls Ski Teams won SWC Championships. Our Girls Ski Team was crowned Class S State Champions, which was their second in a row. The initial season for JBWA (Joel Barlow, Weston & Abbott Tech) Ice Hockey was very successful. The team was Conference runner-up.

Athletes of the Month were Lauren Harris for Ski Team, and Parker Smith for Swim and Dive. Lauren completed a great skiing career by helping her team win both the SWC Championship and the Class S State Championship, as well as being crowned the Individual Champion at the State Open Ski Race. Parker won every diving competition in the month of February, including setting the six-dive school record and 11-dive school record, and was crowned the SWC Dive Champion.



The best racers in Connecticut competed in two tryout races for the Team CT this month. The first race was a Giant Slalom at Mt. Southington and the top 30 finishers were invited back to the SL. Team CT was chosen from the combined times of both races. Four racers from Weston, out of total of 12 girls and 12 boys, were named to Team CT this year and represented CT at the Eastern High School Championships at Attitash Mountain, NH this month. We are so proud of Emma Nelson, Lauren Harris, Chris Amato and Doug Phillips.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Congratulations to Aaron Miller, Adrik Scaramuzza and Dean Reiferson for receiving an Honorable Mention in this year's nationwide C-Span Documentary competition. Their video was chosen in the top 120 out of 3,000 student entries. Students in grades 6-12 were asked to create short (5-6 minute) video documentary on a topic related to the new 2019 competition theme, "What does it mean to be American? Choose a constitutional right, national characteristic, or historical event and explain how it defines the American experience." Aaron, Adrik, and Dean chose the Pentagon Papers and freedom of the press as their topic. The video can be viewed using the following link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m-W626lnhJ8WQ26BRVK6DIBkhYjmQO1O/view?usp=sharing.](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m-W626lnhJ8WQ26BRVK6DIBkhYjmQO1O/view?usp=sharing)

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

The Young Progressives Club ran "Cozy Collections," a clothing drive for the Bridgeport Rescue Mission Homeless Shelter. Weston High School upper-classmen drove to approximately 50 houses of Weston High School students to pick up clothes. They collected way more than they expected—upwards of 300 pounds!

On March 6, freshmen volunteers worked at the Star Foundation, "Galaxy of Gourmets" held at the Aitoro Appliance store in Norwalk. The Star Foundation is in need of a large number of volunteers for the Star Foundation 5K on May 5, 2019. If students are interested in helping out, please contact advisor Kara Swezey or ninth grade student government President, Carly Rutsky.



On Tuesday evening, April 9, at 6:30 PM, the WHS Mock Trial team will hold its second annual awards banquet in the High School Cafeteria. With four teams entering competition, the team had outstanding results with three teams advancing past Regionals. The Blue team made it through to the Round of 16, White team advanced to Quarterfinals, and the Red team competed in state Semi-finals. Despite their loss, the Director of Civics First wrote a letter to faculty adviser, Ms. Del Savio, commending our students.

"Although all of our participating students represent the best that their communities have to offer in terms of academics and civic

engagement, your Red Team from the last two years in particular has been the most exceptional group of students I've seen in my years of doing this as both a volunteer and an administrator. ... After I announced the results, some team members actually went out of their way to thank me for the last few years while on their way to the bus. That took exceptional grace and maturity beyond their 17 years, and I think it shows that your community really is doing something right with your kids. They've all got bright futures ahead of them, and I hope my own six-year-old son turns out like them when he's a high school senior himself. Although I'm looking forward to the next groups of Weston students, I will truly miss working with this team—until they return to the Connecticut legal community seven or eight years from now." Graduating members of the team include Owen Tanzer, Carolyn Zech, Beck Reiferson, Brendan Moore and Abigail Glasberg. Other team members, Chelsea Greenberg and Knox Watson will lead the Red team next year as they pursue another successful season. Coaches Kate Moore and Carl Bernstein will continue to lead this team next year.

WHS in collaboration with Joel Barlow High School, will be hosting French exchange students from April 3-12. Weston will welcome seven students from Cours St. Charles, a private high school in France. During the exchange, French students will spend time at WHS, attending classes with their host students. This is the second exchange this year. In November, French teacher, Madame Del Savio, coordinated an exchange with Lycee Emile Duclaux from Aurillac, France, welcoming 24 French students and two teachers.

ALUMNI NEWS

Class of 2017 Alum, Christopher Hover, a member of the Keene State College Owls Men's Basketball Team, had the honor of participating in the opening games of the 2019 NCAA Division III Men's Basketball Tournament. Chris is an exercise science major, with a coaching minor, at Keene State.