



September 2017 NEWSLETTER

WHS is committed to providing a safe and intellectually challenging environment that will empower students to become innovative thinkers, creative problem-solvers, effective communicators, and inspired learners prepared to thrive in the twenty-first century.

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE



I would like to welcome all of our families to the 2017-18 school year. This August, before our year began, over forty five students participated in our first ever Aspiring Scholars' Academy. This is a new initiative for our rising freshmen. With the support of our PTO, nine teachers led five days of morning sessions with the goal of preparing students for a smooth transition to high school. The first week of school went smoothly ending with our traditional welcome back pep rally followed by our lap of unity and W that every member of our school made the first

Friday of the year. I would also like to thank the PTO for their generous gift of \$14,000 to refurbish the new space for our Center for Academic Support and Enhancement and Writing Center. We now have flexible dividers, new tables and chairs as well as chrome books for this new space.

There are many events this fall, and I encourage all families to check our school website calendar. Here are a few highlights:

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| September 28 | Freshman 101 for Parents 6 p.m. in the cafeteria
Back to School 7 p.m. |
| October 4 | Concert for Hurricane Relief 7 p.m. in the gym |
| October 6 | Special presentation by College Admissions Representatives from the United Kingdom in the College and Career Center following PTO meeting at 11 a.m. |
| October 7 | Shatterproof Challenge (see Shatterproof section in this newsletter) |
| October 10 | College Admissions Panel 7 p.m. in the auditorium |
| October 11 | PSAT will be administered to all sophomores & juniors during the school day |



Underage drinking and illegal drug use has become a growing concern not only in our community but in society as a whole. One only needs to turn on the news or pick up a newspaper to read about the latest tragedy involving these behaviors amongst our youth. Over the last few years, we have lost several WHS graduates to addiction. Beginning last spring, and under the direction of Superintendent Dr. William McKersie, our district has formed an alcohol and drug task force of which I am proud to serve as co-chair with

Weston Middle School Principal Mr. Doak. It is our goal to partner with the Town of Weston and community organizations, parents, and students in order to ensure the safety and well-being of our youth. If we work collaboratively, Weston's youth will be better equipped to choose a healthy lifestyle that will serve them well as they pursue their preferred futures.



Saturday, October 7th marks the kick off to our initiative. WHS students will volunteer at a special rappel challenge in Stamford, CT. Shatterproof is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to end the stigma and change the conversation about addiction. Funds raised go to life saving prevention, treatment, and recovery programs. We are excited about our participation in this event and invite you to support us.

On October 26th at 7 p.m. in the middle school library there will be a program for all parents where the results from the parent survey conducted by Positive Directions last spring will be shared. You may recall that parents of students in Weston Middle School and Weston High School grades 7-12 were invited to complete this survey sponsored by Positive Directions on behalf of our school district, Weston Youth Services, Weston Social Services, and ADAP. Positive Directions provides treatment, counseling and education programs focused on the prevention and recovery from substance abuse.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

French students have the opportunity to visit France during April break as part of our new partnership with Joel Barlow High School. Last year, Barlow invited Weston to team up with them, and Weston families hosted twelve students from the Cours St. Charles private school in Orléans, France. An informational meeting will be held on September 27 at 7 p.m. in the library for all interested families. Students should contact French teacher Ms. Del Savio.

Writing Center teachers Ms. Gleason and Ms. Davies visited all 9th grade English classes for an orientation to the center. Students learned how to make an appointment, what types of help they can receive. They also reflected on their eighth grade writing portfolio and set goals for this school year. Teachers Mrs. Davies and Mrs. Gleason continue to meet with many 12th grade students on college essays and urge students to make appointments as soon as they can! We look forward to meeting with the 11th grade Social Studies classes later this month to discuss the results from their 10th grade portfolio.



Animal Behavior classes had a presentation from Animal Embassy, a wildlife rescue located in Stamford this month. An alligator, monitor lizard, blind turtle, and African porcupine visited class as part of an adaptation unit. The theme was behavior and how it aligned with adaptations to specific environments.

AP United States History teachers, Mr. Jorge and Mr. Moeder and Social Studies Curriculum Instructional Leader Ms. Conetta, developed a new website for Weston's APUSH students this summer. The website houses important documents from the historical record that accompanies the curriculum taught in the course. With this new resource, our WHS students will have an even richer and more complete understanding of American history.

SCHOOL COUNSELING

The September issue of our school counseling newsletter is available on our school website by clicking [here](#)

I encourage all families to read it as it has detailed information about our fall programs.

Effective Schools Solutions has a monthly newsletter for parents that is now available on our school website. *Solutions* highlights important topics related to our students' mental health issues and provides practical applications for parents in the home environment. The September 2017 issue is entitled Back to School: Back to Basics, is available by clicking [here](#).

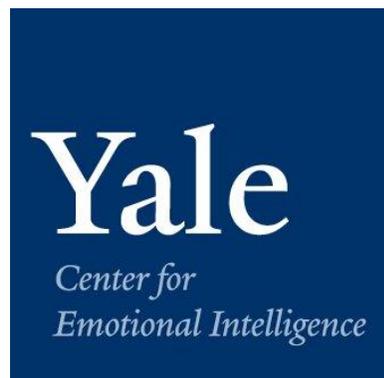


Science Honors Research Seminar is a new proposal that we would like to offer to upper classmen for the 2018-19 school year. I am pleased to announce that under the direction of Superintendent Dr. McKersie and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Craw we have been approved for an Expert in Residence Grant by the Weston Education Foundation to assist us with the development of this program. Mr. Bramante, the instructor for this course at Greenwich High School, will work with curriculum instructional leader Ms. Charles and our science department in this initiative over the school year. Honors Research is a non-traditional, non-lecture course that is designed to allow students to develop problem solving skills, improve techniques in acquiring information from library and on-line sources, discover and use more advanced laboratory techniques, and when appropriate, learn to utilize analytical instrumentation to complete and report a defined research project.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Physics and Project Lead the Way Teacher Mr. Walker was accepted as a participant in a 3-week workshop jointly produced by the American Association of Physics Teachers, the American Modeling Teachers Association, STEM Teachers NYC, and Bootstrap World. The project trained 30 physics and physical science teachers who were already skilled in Modeling Instruction to learn the novel math-based programming approach known as Bootstrap, and to employ these integral tools for exploring and understanding the conceptual models that are at the core of the physical sciences. This working group of expert teachers successfully produced a 1-year curriculum integrating programming and computational modeling skills into an introductory Physics course. During the 2017 - 2018 school year, Mr. Walker will deploy modules from this curriculum to enhance the comprehension and engagement of his Honors Physics classes this year, and will be reporting back to the research team to help facilitate an ongoing study of the curriculum's efficacy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_Zx619e8sY&feature=youtu.be&mc_cid=708ed1cd43&mc_eid=7beb80f232



The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence provided training for our school's Emotional Intelligence (IE) team of Assistant Principal Ms. Givoni, Counselor Ms. Schirizzo, Social Studies/CASE teacher Ms. Swezey and Science teacher Mr. Grace this August. This is the second year of our district partnership with Yale. Throughout the year, our faculty will be trained in IE with the goal of rolling out this initiative to the students for the 2018-19 school year.

I am pleased to share that Social Worker Ms. Skelton has been accepted as one of the 2017 Changemaker Fellows for The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. Ms. Skelton will engage in a 10-month experience spent honing her EI and change making skills in order to develop a community project in Weston to enhance the emotional well-being at our schools, district, and parent community. Fellows will engage with their cohort of like-minded educators, as well as YCEI faculty and staff, and collaborate to envision, craft, and implement an emotionally-intelligent and contextually responsive project for their respective communities. We are very proud of Ms. Skelton who has led this district initiative.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS



On Wednesday, October 4 WHS will have a special concert at 7 p.m. in the gym during its homecoming week with all proceeds going to hurricane relief. Student performers including the band *Orbit* will be showcased. We invite all of our WHS families to this event.



STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Homecoming will take place Monday, October 2nd

through Saturday, October 7. We encourage all of our students to participate in the festivities that range from dress up days, deck the doors and halls, to sporting events and the above mentioned concerts. The home sports schedule for that week is as follows:

- 10/2 Girls' Volleyball vs. Brookfield at 5:30 p.m.
- 10/3 Boys' Soccer vs. Pomperaug at 7 p.m.
- 10/5 Girls' Soccer vs. Kolbe Cathedral at 5 p.m.
- 10/6 Girls Swim vs. Bunnell at 5 p.m., Girls' Volleyball vs. Bethel at 5:30 p.m. and Boys' Football vs. Bethel at 7 p.m.



Our **Captain's Circle**, supported and funded by the WHS Boosters Club, participated in a teambuilding experience on August 23. Students selected the Bike Build for Charity program operated by **Impact 4 Good**, which is a teambuilding company. Working in teams, participants first competed in bike themed challenge activities that earned them the materials needed to build bicycles. Then teams built one bike per team and wrote messages of hope and encouragement for the children who will receive these bikes through the Riverbook Regional YMCA. Our Captains' Circle continues to show

their community that respect, integrity, civility, and social responsibility are characteristics that define their students.

This year all students who serve in a leadership position will be required to sign a **Weston High School Leadership Pledge** that is posted on the front page of our school website. These include all officers of clubs and student government. This pledge aligns with the Captain's Pledge that every captain signs at the beginning of the year.

The new **Mock Trial** case was released by Civics First Organization, and the coaches held an informational meeting and tryouts. We are looking forward to a terrific season under the direction of faculty advisor Ms. Del Savio.



ALUMNI NEWS

This month a very special playground was dedicated in memory of WHS 2011 graduate Victoria McGrath. The Kiwanis Club of Weston, with our PTO President Dawn Egan leading the charge, raised over \$160,000 for Cesar Batalla Elementary School in Bridgeport so that its children could have their very first playground.