

WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monday, January 27, 2014
Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
Executive Session 5:45 p.m.
Regular Session 6:00 p.m.

- | | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| I. | CALL TO ORDER, VERIFICATION OF QUORUM
Philip Schaefer, Chairperson | |
| II. | EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Discussion of Meghan Daly's Leave of Absence Request
2. Discussion of Meredith Hallgren's Leave of Absence Request | |
| III. | RESUME PUBLIC SESSION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE | |
| IV. | RECOGNITION | None |
| V. | APPROVAL OF MINUTES , <i>pages 1-6</i>
The Board will vote to approve the minutes from December 16 and January 14. | Motion |
| VI. | PUBLIC COMMENT | Information |
| VII. | NEW BUSINESS

1. 2014-2015 Operating Budget Discussion and/or Adoption

2. Gifts , <i>page 7</i>

3. Vote on Meghan Daly's Leave of Absence Request , <i>page 8</i>

4. Vote on Meredith Hallgren's Leave of Absence Request , <i>page 9</i>

5. Discussion and Vote on Reintroduction of Trigonometry Course at Weston High School , <i>pages 10-11</i>
Dr. Craw will discuss a course that has been reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Approval by the full Board will allow the course to be considered for inclusion in the Program of Studies over the next several years pending budget priorities.

6. Discussion and Vote on New Publication Design Course , <i>pages 12-15</i>
Dr. Craw will discuss a course that has been reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. Approval by the full Board will allow the course to be considered for inclusion in the Program of Studies over the next several years pending budget priorities.

7. Weston High School Honors Requirements , <i>pages 16-17</i>

8. Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations , <i>pages 18-21</i>
Mr. Brey will review the following Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations:
A. Policy 6146, Graduation Requirements;
B. Regulation 6146, Graduation Requirements; and
C. Policy 4118.11-4218.11 Non-Discrimination. | Motion

Information

Motion

Motion

Motion

Motion

Information

First Reading |

WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
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- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 9. Presentation on Second Quarter Financials
Dr. Keating will provide a quarterly financial update. | Information |
| 10. Vote on Transfers
Dr. Keating will present account transfers for approval by the Board. | Motion |
| 11. Vote to Give Authority to Superintendent to Approve Emergency Transfers | Motion |
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VIII. OLD BUSINESS | |
| 1. Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations, <i>pages 22-29</i>
Mr. Brey will review the following Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations:
A. Policy 4111, Recruitment and Selection of Certified Personnel;
B. Regulation 4111, Recruitment and Selection of Certified Personnel; and
C. Policy 4211, Recruitment and Selection of Non-Certified Personnel. | Motion |
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IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT | |
| 1. Next Regular Board Meeting Monday, February 24, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. | Information |
| 2. District Update | Information |
| 3. Principals' Reports, <i>pages 30-38</i> | Information |
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X. COMMITTEE REPORTS | |
| 1. Communications Committee - Nina Daniel | Information |
| 2. Curriculum Committee - Ellen Uzenoff | Information |
| 3. Finance Committee - Denise Harvey | Information |
| 4. Facilities Committee - Ellen Uzenoff | Information |
| 5. Policy Committee - Dana Levin | Information |
| 6. Negotiations Committee - Denise Harvey | Information |
| 7. CES - Nina Daniel | Information |
| 8. CAFE - Elise Major | Information |
| 9. Weston Education Foundation - Denise Harvey | Information |
|
XI. ADJOURNMENT |
Motion |

Weston Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting
Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
December 16, 2013

Attendance:

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson	Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent
Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson	Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent
Dana Levin, Secretary/Treasurer	Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Ops.
Nina Daniel	Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources
Denise Harvey	
Elise Major	Absent: Sara Spaulding

III. RESUME PUBLIC SESSION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. RECOGNITION – No Report

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board voted to approve the minutes from November 25 (Ms. Daniel was absent).

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education approves the minutes of the November 25, 2013 Regular and Executive Sessions. Motion by Mrs. Levin, second by Ms. Harvey, 5 in favor, 1 abstain. (5-0-1)

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Darcy Barrera-Hawes, Merry Lane

Ms. Barrera-Hawes spoke against the co-mingling of public offices with our schools. As part of Weston Students First, she met with a representative of Governor Malloy's office to request help in this matter.

Katie Gregory, Farrell Road

Ms. Gregory spoke against co-mingling of public offices with our schools. She cited recent news events involving school shootings.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Gifts

Dr. Palmer, as per Board Policy #3280, accepted with appreciation, the following gifts from the Hurlbutt Elementary School PTO:

- a mascot bee costume (\$110);
- stakes for memorial seating area tables (\$1,264);
- \$12,500 for the LRC reimaging project; and
- square carpets for the first grade (\$3,283).

2. Retirement

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education notes and records the retirement of Sal LaRusso, 1.0 Weston High School Music Teacher, effective June 30, 2014. Motion by Ms. Daniel, second by Ms. Harvey, all in favor. (6-0)

3. Resignation

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education notes and records the resignation of Selina Melnyk, 1.0 Hurlbutt Elementary School Teacher, effective January 1, 2014. Motion by Ms. Daniel, second by Mrs. Levin, all in favor. (6-0)

4. Annual Energy Update

Dave Lustberg provided the annual update on Weston Public Schools energy conservation and savings. Over four years, a net savings of \$1,565,626.50 has been realized. Weston High School was awarded with a certificate for having the greatest energy savings at 31%.

5. Special Education Budget Reforecast

Dr. Keating and Ms. Pernice discussed the special education budget reforecast, indicating a proposed deficit of \$230k and including \$225k in potential out-placements not currently factored into the total net special education budget presented. The district is mandated to provide special education for students from age 3 in preschool through the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 years of age.

6. Discussion and Vote on Request for Supplemental Appropriation

Dr. Palmer summarized key accounts and discussed the need for a supplemental appropriation given the unanticipated expenses of FY 2013-14.

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education formally requests a supplemental appropriation from the Town of Weston in the amount of \$230,000 for the 2013-14 fiscal year. Motion by Mrs. Uzenoff, second by Mrs. Levin, all in favor. (6-0)

7. 2014-2015 Budget Development Update

Dr. Palmer and Dr. Keating updated the Board on development of the 2014-2015 budget. The district is on target to complete the draft budget and deliver it to the Board on December 23.

8. Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations

Mr. Brey reviewed a first reading of the following Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations:

- A. Policy 4111, Recruitment and Selection of Certified Personnel;
- B. Regulation 4111, Recruitment and Selection of Certified Personnel; and
- C. Policy 4211, Recruitment and Selection of Non-Certified Personnel.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations

Mr. Brey reviewed the following Weston Board of Education Policies and Regulations:

- A. Regulation 5118, Non-Resident Attendance and Tuition Fees;
- B. Regulation 5111, Admission/Placement;

- C. Policy 5111, Admission/Placement; and
- D. Policy 1330, Community Relations: Use of School Facilities.

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education approves Regulation 5118, Non-Resident Attendance and Tuition Fees; Regulation 5111, Admission/Placement; Policy 5111, Admission/Placement; and Policy 1330, Community Relations: Use of School Facilities. Motion by Ms. Harvey, second by Ms. Major, all in favor. (6-0)

IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Next Regular Board Meeting Monday, January 27, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. and Budget Workshop #1 Tuesday, January 14, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

2. District Update

Dr. Palmer announced that the last day of school is now June 9 due to the recent snow day. She also discussed the ongoing joint facilities study (options to be reviewed in January, after a security consultant has reviewed the proposals) and the upcoming second meeting of the task force on mandate relief, of which she is a part. Dr. Palmer highlighted the regional symposium on technology and digital learning held by the superintendents of the Southern Fairfield County Superintendents' Association, and the Common Core information and resources posted on the district website.

3. Principals' Reports

Mrs. Kaddis, Hurlbutt Elementary School Principal, highlighted the first grade multi-disciplinary project on community workers, a continued focus on writing, and success in kindergarten writing. Ms. Falber, Weston Intermediate School Principal, focused on AIM units for fourth and fifth grade, professional development in technology, and rolling out Google Docs and Google Drive. Mrs. Watkins, Weston Middle School Principal, discussed the orchestra performance at the CABE Convention, success of the Barnes and Noble fundraiser, the first trimester breakfast for students, and an upcoming SOAR pajama day. Mr. Doak, Weston High School Assistant Principal, commented on winter sports accomplishments, the annual film festival, and musical performances.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Communications Committee

The meeting scheduled for December 17 has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.

2. Curriculum Committee

The following items from the December 11 meeting were discussed by Mrs. Uzenoff: science, tenth-grade writing portfolio, the reintroduction and restructuring of Spanish at Hurlbutt Elementary School for grades K and 1, visit to New Canaan to see their Spanish immersion program, and high school graduation requirements. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 8 at 8:00 a.m.

3. Finance Committee

The following items from the December 5 meeting were discussed by Ms. Harvey: budget development updates, State security grants, the Weston High School windows and doors project, revenue opportunities/foreign students, Mile of Safety payment,

and substitutes for the lower schools. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 14 at 8:00 a.m.

4. Facilities Committee

The following items from the December 3 meeting were discussed by Mrs. Uzenoff: capital projects, the high school windows project, testing/remediation, the cost avoidance report, field lighting and sound, an upcoming visit to Staples High School, and security updates. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 15 at 4:00 p.m.

5. Policy Committee

Per Mrs. Levin, the policies readings from today's agenda were discussed at the December 3 meeting. Graduation requirements will be discussed at the upcoming meeting. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 7 at 8:15 a.m. Dr. Palmer and Mr. Brey added that all policies are in the process of being added to the website in a more easily accessed format.

6. Negotiations Committee

Nothing to report.

7. CES

The following items from the November 2 meeting were discussed by Ms. Daniel: uniform school calendar, job search program, consultants available for evaluations, and a December 5 C.E.S. Foundation event. The next meeting is scheduled for January 8. Ms. Daniel also distributed a flyer for the upcoming CES Board Forum.

8. CABA

Nothing to report.

9. Weston Education Foundation

Ms. Harvey announced that two grants were awarded: a musical composition grant for Jeff Holmes in the amount of \$5,000 to work with a professional composer to create a song, that when performed, will have a special dedication to AJ Cina, and \$2,500 to the middle school Project Lead the Way for their module on energy and the environment. Ms. Harvey also discussed new leadership effective January 1, with Eileen Sawyer serving as the new WEF Chair; new fundraising opportunities; and a presentation by Dr. Craw and Ms. Falber on AIM.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Levin, second by Ms. Daniel, all in favor. (6-0) Meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Markov, Board of Education Clerk.

Minutes reviewed/approved by Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent.

Attendance:

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson	Sara Spaulding
Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson	Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent
Dana Levin, Secretary/Treasurer	Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent
Nina Daniel	Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Ops.
Denise Harvey	Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources
Elise Major	

I. SUPERINTENDENT’S OVERVIEW

Dr. Palmer discussed the budget drivers, cost containments, and efficiencies behind the proposed 4.66% increase over the adopted 2013-2014 budget. Historically, our budget has come in significantly lower than our DRG-A counterparts. Currently, ninety-five percent of the major budget drivers are contractually-obligated and/or state mandated, including employee benefits, salaries, and special education. Enrollment is stable and there are no new “game-changing” efficiencies, such as with FY 2014, that can be used to off-set the FY 2015 budget. Ms. Harvey acknowledged ongoing discussions with the Town Boards concerning special education costs, and Ms. Daniel pointed out ongoing safety and security efforts by the district and supported by the Town.

II. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Dr. Craw framed the current proposed curricular budget, which represents a .30% decrease of the adopted FY 2014 budget. Budget priorities are:

- professional development (curricular instructional leaders and innovative teaching and learning institutes);
- curriculum development (reinstatement of Spanish in grades K-1, a proposed addition of .2FTE to support extension of the orchestra program to fourth grade, and new high-interest computer science opportunities at the high school and middle school);
- internal assessment system (Academic Innovation and Measurement will continue, and writing portfolio projects for grades 2, 5, 8, and 10 with external validation will be implemented); and
- mandates (educator evaluation, common core state standards in literacy and math, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment System).

Dr. Craw also reviewed district accomplishments for the 2013-14 school year in professional and curriculum development, and the next level of work desired for 2014-2015.

III. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Keating discussed the duties, responsibilities, and staff associated with this cost center, and reviewed the proposed changes to non-salary accounts. The budget request for this area is 4.33% lower than the adopted budget for FY 2014.

IV. DISTRICT-WIDE SERVICES

Dr. Keating discussed the categories of expenditures covered in this budget – pupil transportation, the copy center, employee benefits, employee turnover, degree changes, contingency staff, allowance for non-represented salary increases, unemployment, tuition reimbursement, and liability insurance. This budget represents nearly 20% of the total budget, and is proposed at a 9.07% increase from the current adopted budget.

V. INTERNAL SERVICES FUND

Dr. Keating explained the reserve modeling criteria for the internal services fund, which are found on page 142 of the budget book.

VI. TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Haakonsen presented the 2014-2015 budget for technology services, which includes expanding Weston Public Schools' wireless and mobile footprint; replacing end-of-life equipment; enhancing infrastructure for staff, students, and administrators; and completing preparations for mandated State testing. The total technology budget request is a 5.9% increase over the FY 2014 request.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Markov, Board of Education Clerk.

Minutes reviewed/approved by Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent.

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL PTO, Inc.

December 10, 2013

Dr. Colleen Palmer
Superintendent
Weston Public Schools
24 School Road
Weston, CT 06883

Dear Dr. Palmer,

On behalf of the Weston High School PTO, we are pleased to inform you and the Board of Education that our organization would like to present the following gifts to the Weston Board of Education:

Blue Ribbon Banners	Up to \$1500
Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy in-school field trip	\$1,500
24 tablets with own keyboard and stylus and charging cart	\$10,000

It is our hope that we will continue to have tremendous success in our fundraising efforts to support future projects and requests in the school system.

Best,

Caroline Schreder
WHS PTO Philanthropy Chair

CC: Lisa Deorio, WHS Principal
Meghan Couch, WHS PTO President

115 School Road
Weston, Connecticut 06883

December 19, 2013

Dear Dr. Palmer,

I write to request a leave of absence for the 2014 – 2015 school year, due to my husband's employment transfer. My husband is a Special Agent with the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, and is assigned to the New York Office, which is located in New York City. He was recently transferred to FBI Headquarters, located in Washington, D.C., for a pre-determined period of 18 months that begins January 13, 2014. The transfer is necessary within my husband's career track with the FBI. Because the transfer is temporary, during the time that my husband is stationed in Washington, D.C., he will remain a member of the FBI's New York Office, which ensures that he will return to New York City upon completion of the 18 month term in July 2015.

As a wife and mother, it is very important for me, along with my two young sons, to live with my husband in the Washington, D.C. area during the time that my husband is assigned there. If this leave of absence is not granted, I will return for the 2014 – 2015 school year. However, that will be difficult for me both personally and professionally since this will separate my family. I fully intend to return to teaching in Weston when my husband is stationed back in New York City if the leave of absence is granted.

Your attention and consideration is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Meghan Daly

94 Coppermine Road
Oxford, CT 06478

January 7, 2014

Mr. Lewis Brey
Director of Human Resources
Weston Public Schools
9 School Road
Weston, CT 06883

Dear Mr. Brey,

As you are aware, I am currently on child-rearing leave. As I found after my leave with my first child, I again see that the year has allowed me a wonderful insight to the other side of teaching; the parental perspective. When I returned from child-rearing leave, three years ago, I enjoyed the ability to draw on my year at home to better understand the concerns of the parents with whom I worked.

My daughter began preschool, this year, and it has been such a blessing to be able to be a part of her daily activities. Looking ahead to her last year "at home," watching my son grow through all the first year milestones and reviewing our family's needs for the coming school year, I write now to request a second year of unpaid child-rearing leave. After such time, I plan to return to my teaching position for the 2015-2016 school year.

Please contact me should you require any further information to inform your decision. Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Meredith M. Hallgren

cc: Laura Kaddis, Principal

Weston Public Schools
Weston, CT
Office of the Assistant Superintendent
Of Curriculum & Instruction

Course Proposal for 2014-15

This proposal should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent.

School: WHS Proposal Submitted By: Kevin Joyce

Department: Mathematics

1. Name of course or program:

Trigonometry

2. Population to be served:

Junior & senior math students

3. Identify and discuss the need

This is an existing course that was later combined with *Functions* to create the current *Pre-calculus* course. This course would serve as the alternative to *Discrete Math*. Many seniors feel the need to enroll in a college preparatory course, but are not fully prepared for the pace or depth of the pre-calculus course. As a result, they often drop down during 1st quarter or take with the pass/fail option. The one semester course in trigonometry would offer students an opportunity to take a higher level math at a pace appropriate to their learning while preparing them for the challenges of college-level mathematics. This course could also serve as a transitional course prior to *Pre-calculus* or *Honors Pre-calculus*.

4. Impact on other courses / schedules

This course may address some of the shifting of courses during the 1st quarter which often results in unbalanced class sizes.

5. Budget related items MATERIALS ALREADY IN PLACE.

- Staffing (FTE needed) - *in place already*
- Supplies: *in place already (we have the textbooks)*
- Equipment:
- Other (software)
- Estimated Overall Cost of Proposal: \$0.00

6. Evaluation for program success or continuation:

Student enrollment, completion of course, and final grades analysis.

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Of Curriculum & Instruction

7. **Other information for consideration**(optional):
8. **Please attach a description of the course including the units of study.**

The Trigonometric Function

Acute Angles and Right Triangles

Radian Measure and the Circular Functions

Graphs of Circular Functions

Trigonometric Identities

Inverse Trigonometric Functions and Trigonometric Equations

Applications of Trigonometry and Vectors

Complex Numbers, Polar Equations, and Parametric Equations

Weston Public Schools
Weston, CT
*Office of the Assistant Superintendent
of Curriculum & Instruction*

New Course Proposal for 2014-15

This proposal should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent.

School: **WHS**

Proposal Submitted By: **Sydney Girardi & Art Department**

Department:

1. Name Of Course or Program:

Publication Design

2. Population to be served:

Intermediate/advanced art students

3. Identify and discuss the Need

The graphic design courses have consistently been very popular at WHS. One reason for this is that a large percentage of our art students pursue commercial art careers upon graduation; another reason is that our students understand and learn successfully with technology. Yearbook production is an authentic graphic design endeavor providing opportunities for layout design, editorial design, journalistic photography, and writing in a cooperative learning environment. In addition, a high level of responsibility is required to manage the business side of the book production. Ad sales, yearbook sales, supply orders and meeting timely deadlines are all necessary components of producing a \$66,000 publication.

The Heliotrope club has consistently had 30-50 students sign up yearly, most of whom have limited time to engage in production design due to other after-school commitments (including tutoring, work, and sports) and as a result, do not end up participating. A core group of students spend much of their free time in school working on the yearbook rather than coming in after school. Allowing the yearbook to be produced as a course adds a needed dimension to the graphic design courses offered at WHS, gives students the opportunity to contribute even if they have other after school activities, and provides an additional course with which students can earn an art or technology credit towards graduation. In addition, the Publication Design course can provide student expertise for other school publications when needed. Currently, this need is filled with student volunteers when they can be found.

In keeping with current research and school district standards, the Publication Design course (as with the Contemporary Media Design courses) would include components

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of Curriculum & Instruction

of “Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum,” technology standards, and ethical use of technology in addition to the artistic skills included in the course. Graphic design utilizes visual communications but does so in conjunction with verbal communication. In addition, a certain level of technological understanding must be attained before a student can create a successful design. Our goal for this course is to design a student produced yearbook that is artistically and technically superior while providing students with an authentic graphic design learning experience.

4. Impact on Other Courses / Schedules

None – no additional FTE’s are required as they will be reallocated (Advanced CMD and Web Design will be combined into one Advanced CMD class which covers both print and web media - # of sections will be determined by enrollment). The Design Publication course will also be a semester course; students will be able to sign up for multiple semesters so that the course will span the year for interested students.

5. Budget Related Items MATERIALS ALREADY IN PLACE.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| - Staffing (FTE needed): | No additional |
| - Supplies: | No additional |
| - Equipment: | No additional |
| - Other (software): | No additional |
| - Estimated Overall Cost of Proposal: | No additional |

6. Evaluation for Program Success or Continuation:

The enrollment will show interest level; amount of out of class work will show effectiveness of course set up; final product(s) will show success of curriculum.

7. Other Information for Consideration (optional):

This course is aligned to the following Connecticut Standards for Visual Art 9 – 12 (and the same National Standards for Visual Arts):

1. Students will understand, select and apply media, techniques and processes.
2. Students will understand and apply elements and organizational principles of art.

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3. Students will consider, select and apply a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.
4. Students will reflect upon, describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate their own and others' work.
5. Students will make connections between the visual arts, other disciplines, and daily life.

This course is aligned to the following Connecticut Computer Technology Competency Standards for Students (K-12):

1. Basic Operations and Concepts
 - Students are proficient in the use of technology
2. Social, Ethical and Human Issues
 - Students understand the ethical, cultural, and societal issues related to technology
 - Students practice responsible use of technology systems, information, and software
 - Students develop positive attitudes toward technology uses that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits, and productivity
3. Technology Productivity Tools
 - Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity
 - Students use productivity tools to collaborate in constructing technology-enhanced models, preparing publications, and producing other creative works
4. Technology Communications Tools
 - Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences
 - Students use a variety of media and formats to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences

8. Please attach a description of the course including the units of study.

A series of exercises and projects emphasize specific art elements and principles of design, requiring creative, advanced use of the Adobe software including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. Students will execute digital artwork in response to authentic problem solving scenarios, analyze their own and others' work, and synthesize the learning acquired in the classroom into actual publications for school. This is an advanced level course and advanced level work/exploration is expected. (See sample unit attached.)

Weston Public Schools
Weston, CT
*Office of the Assistant Superintendent
of Curriculum & Instruction*

Units of Study:

Cooperation and Planning
Publication Design
The Business of Book Publication
Awesome Photography
Text talks!
Video Adds Interest
Distribution Event Planning



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.

Weston High School Honors Requirements

Student placement is based on the successful pattern of achievement in these disciplines. Questions should be directed to the appropriate curriculum instructional leader.

ENGLISH

English - Honors Criteria

Student must score at the top level on a matrix comprised of:

- Degree of Reading Power (DRP) - Score of 85 or higher
- Successful pattern of achievement on Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Writing and Reading Comprehension Scores
- Placement test score (a proctored, written response to literature)
- An A- or better in grade 8 English/Language Arts
- Teacher Checklist - Expression of ideas/Demonstration of initiative, task commitment, self-reflection to improve, ability to draw significant connections

ENGLISH CURRICULUM LEADER: Ms. Christine Cincotta christinecincotta@westonps.org

MATH

Algebra II – Honors Criteria

- Placement test score of 85% or better (with 80% or better in reasoning and problem solving section)
- Two of the following: 87% average in Algebra 1, 87% final exam in Algebra 1, 87% average in Geometry

Geometry – Honors Criteria

- Placement test score of 30 out of 40 AND 87% average in Algebra 1
or
- Placement test score of 26 out of 40 AND 90% average in Algebra 1

MATH CURRICULUM LEADER: Mr. Kevin Joyce kevinjoyce@westonps.org

SCIENCE

Biology 1 – Honors Criteria

- A composite score of 50 out of 60 based on the following six components. Each component represents 10 points:
 - Standardized Test of Logical Thinking
 - Standardized Test of Intellectual Processing Skills
 - Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) math computation score
 - Degree of Reading Power (DRP)
 - Science grades in grade 8
 - Teacher Checklist

SCIENCE CURRICULUM LEADER: Ms. Darcy Ronan darcyronan@westonps.org

WORLD LANGUAGE

Although there are no honors level courses in world languages for freshmen, the following information is used for placement. It should be noted that students are normally encouraged to continue the study of the language that they have started in middle school. High school offerings include Mandarin Chinese and Latin, in addition to Spanish and French.

Spanish 3

- Students must have a “B” average (83%) or better in 8th grade Spanish and demonstrate proficiency on an in-class performance assessment. Students who do not meet these criteria and who wish to continue to study Spanish may be recommended for Spanish 2.

French 2

- Students should have a “C” average (73%) or better in 8th grade French and demonstrate proficiency on an in-class performance assessment.

Instruction

Graduation Requirements

Graduation from ~~our~~ Weston Public Schools implies (1) that students have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of study for the several grade levels in accordance with their respective abilities to achieve; (2) that they have satisfactorily passed any examinations and/or standards established by the faculty and approved by the Board of Education; and (3) that they have fulfilled the legally mandated number and distribution of credits required to graduate from high school. ~~Graduation shall not be held until 180 days and 900 hours of actual school work are completed.~~

The Board of Education's standards for graduation meet or exceed the state law regarding credits for graduation from high school at all times.

~~The Board of Education, in recognition of its responsibility for the education of all youths in the school system, including those who drop out of school, shall make available to all the school district's youths alternative programs for meeting standards that will enable them to acquire a high school or vocational school diploma.~~

~~(cf. 5121—Examination/Grading/Rating)~~

~~(cf. 6146.2—Statewide Proficiency/Mastery Examinations)~~

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

~~10-14n Statewide mastery examination. Conditions for reexamination.
Limitation on use of test results~~

~~10-161 Length of school day~~

10-221a High School Graduation Requirements

Policy adopted: March 5, 1991

Revised : _____

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WESTON, CONNECTICUT

Instruction

Graduation Requirements

Graduation from ~~our~~ Weston Public Schools implies (1) that students have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of study for the several grade levels in accordance with their respective abilities to achieve; (2) that they have satisfactorily passed any examinations and/or standards established by the faculty and approved by the Board of Education; and (3) that they have fulfilled the legally mandated number and distribution of credits required to graduate from high school. ~~Graduation shall not be held until 180 days and 900 hours of actual school work are completed.~~

The Board of Education's standards for graduation meet or exceed the state law regarding credits for graduation from high school at all times.

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~~(cf. 5121—Examination/Grading/Rating)~~

~~(cf. 6146.2—Statewide Proficiency/Mastery Examinations)~~

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

~~10-14n Statewide mastery examination. Conditions for reexamination.
Limitation on use of test results~~

~~10-161 Length of school day~~

10-221a High School Graduation Requirements

Policy adopted: March 5, 1991

Revised : _____

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WESTON, CONNECTICUT

Personnel - Certified/Non-Certified

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Board of Education will not make employment decisions (including decisions related to hiring, assignment, compensation, promotion, demotion, disciplinary action and termination) on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status (including civil union partners), sexual orientation, [ethnicity](#), [ancestry](#), national origin, ~~or~~ [learning disability](#), [past or present history of mental disability](#), [intellectual disability](#), [physical disability](#), [pregnancy](#), [genetic information](#), [gender identity and expression](#), [transgender status](#), or [any other basis prohibited by state or federal law](#), except in the case of a bona fide occupational qualification.

[It is the policy of the Board of Education that any form of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, marital status \(including civil union partners\), sexual orientation, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, learning disability, past or present history of mental disability, intellectual disability, physical disability, pregnancy, genetic information, gender identity and expression, transgender status, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law is prohibited, whether by Board employees, the Board, students, or third parties subject to the control of the Board. The Board's prohibition of discrimination or harassment in its educational programs or activities expressly extends to academic, nonacademic and co-curricular activities, including athletics. It is also the policy of the Board of Education to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics listed above.](#)

[For the purposes of this policy, "genetic information" means the information about genes, gene products, or inherited characteristics that may derive from an individual or a family member. "Genetic information" may also include an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.](#)

[For the purposes of this policy, "gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related](#)

identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.

Legal References:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.*
Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.*
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 USCS § 1681, *et seq.*
Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 621
Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794
Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, Pub.L.110-233, 42 USC 2000ff; 34 CFR 1635
Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-60
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-153. Discrimination on basis of marital status
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-81a Discrimination on basis of sexual orientation: Definitions
Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-81c Sexual orientation discrimination. Employment.
Public Act 05-10: An Act Concerning Civil Unions
Public Act 11-55, An Act Concerning Discrimination.

Policy References:

Policy and Regulation 4111, Recruitment and Selection, Certified
Policy 4111.1, Minority Staff Recruitment
Policy 4211, Recruitment and Selection, Non-certified

Policy Adopted: July 16, 1990
Policy Revised: February 24, 1992
Policy Revised: October 6, 2005
Policy Revised: November 21, 2005
Policy Revised: December 15, 2008
Policy Revised:

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Weston, Connecticut

Personnel – Certified

Recruitment and Selection

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and/or his/her designee to determine the personnel needs of the school district and to locate suitable candidates for employment.

The schools shall engage in fair and sound personnel practices in the appointment of all district employees. The administration shall be responsible for establishing recruitment, selection and appointment procedures consistent with Board of Education Policy and Administrative Regulations. The Superintendent is authorized to employ non-administrative, certified employees on behalf of the Board of Education subject to state law and all applicable Board of Education policies and administrative regulations. All administrators must be appointed by the Board of Education.

Every effort will be made to recruit and hire an outstanding and diverse professional staff. The Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer.

Legal Reference: ~~Connecticut General Statutes~~

Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-151 Employment of teachers. ~~Notice and hearing on termination of contract.~~

Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-153 Discrimination on ~~account of~~ the basis of sex, gender identity or expression or marital status prohibited

Conn. Gen Stat. Sections 10-153a through 10-153n Rights concerning professional organization and negotiations

Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 46a-60 Discriminatory Employment Practices Prohibited

Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.

Policy Reference: Policy 4111.1, Minority Staff Recruitment

Policy 4118.11, Non-Discrimination

Policy adopted: July 16, 1990

Policy revised: _____

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Weston, Connecticut

Personnel – Certified

Recruitment and Selection

Every effort will be made to recruit and hire an outstanding and diverse professional staff. [The Weston Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer.](#) Consideration will be given to the long range as well as the immediate needs of the district.

Recruitment Procedure

1. A notice of job vacancy including job specifications will be developed for every staff vacancy and used as guidelines for hiring. It is not intended to be the sole basis for employment.
 - A. The Board of Education will develop the job specification for the Superintendent of Schools.
 - B. The Superintendent [and/or his/her designee](#) will develop the specifications for [all other positions within the Weston Public Schools.](#)~~principals and other certified central office staff. At the building level, the principal and immediate supervisor will be responsible for developing the specifications for each certified and non-certified position. Multiple certification should be considered.~~
 - C. The Superintendent ~~and Board~~ must approve all job specifications.
2. The administration will seek to develop a broad pool of candidates from which to choose. Such contacts may include but are not limited to:
 - A. Personal contact of current staff members;
 - B. [Attendance at recruiting fairs;](#)
 - C. Postings in Weston ~~S~~[schools](#) [buildings;](#)
 - D. [Posting on the Weston Public Schools' website;](#)

- E. [Posting with online job boards;](#)
- F. Newspaper advertisements;
- G. Placement offices;
- H. Contacts with private or parochial schools;
- I. Neighboring school districts;
- J. Consultants.
- K. [Other sources that become available, as appropriate.](#)

4111(b)

Recruitment and Selection

Applications

The ~~Superintendent or~~ [respective principal, and Director of Human Resources, and/or other appropriate administrators](#) will review and screen all resumes and applications using the specifications developed. Each applicant selected for an interview will complete an application. ~~and the final applicant will also be required to write a 250-word statement in response to a selected educational topic. Topics will be developed by the Superintendent and principal.~~

Interview

Initial interviews [of teachers](#) will be conducted either at the central office or building level, when possible. Where it is appropriate, supervisors, ~~department heads~~ or other teachers may be involved in the selection process. The Superintendent will interview prospective candidates who are selected for consideration. Any candidate employed must ~~be~~ [have been](#) interviewed by more than one administrator. [When hiring for an administrative position, the administration will develop an interview process appropriate for the vacant position.](#)

Reference Check

The Superintendent, [Director of Human Resources, and/or](#) building principal will conduct reference checks before offering the position to the candidate. Such reference checks may include, but are not limited to, the following sources:

- A. Former administrators;
- B. Former colleagues;

- C. Students and parents of students who know the candidate.

Every effort is to be made by the ~~Superintendent and~~ the respective principal and/or other appropriate administrators to observe the performance of all staff to be hired. Performance observations may be made in, but are not limited to, the following places:

- A. In the former school;
- B. As a substitute in Weston;
- C. In demonstrating lessons in Weston;
- D. Student teaching.

~~Notes of the observation will be added to the candidate's file.~~

4111(e)

~~Recruitment and Selection~~

Selection Criterion and Procedures

1. In the employment of teachers and other certified personnel, special consideration is given to professional training, teaching experience, and personal characteristics desirable in good teachers/administrators. Each candidate will:
 - A. Submit evidence of meeting the certification requirements of the state.
 - B. Submit official college and post-graduate transcripts to the ~~Superintendent's~~ Human Resources office.
 - C. Submit a record of teaching and other work experience to the ~~Superintendent's~~ Human Resources office. Salary increments are based upon years of creditable service as provided by the terms of the contracts with the certified bargaining groups.
 - D. ~~Appear for~~ Complete a personal interview(s).
2. Some of the criteria to be considered in professional staff selection are:
 - A. Subject matter of undergraduate major;

- B. A solid record of academic achievement at both the undergraduate and graduate level;
 - C. Background of experiences which demonstrate the dynamics and growth potential of the candidate;
 - D. Prior successful experience in education;
 - E. Flexibility to handle other grade levels and disciplines in the elementary and secondary level, as appropriate;
 - F. A thorough understanding of children's growth and needs at different age levels;
 - G. Potential for contributions to the school beyond the classroom.
3. The Superintendent, Director of Human Resources, or principal will verify the credentials of the person recommended to be hired. A position may be offered pending satisfactory completion of all documentation.

4111(d)

Recruitment and Selection

Selection Criterion and Procedures—(continued)

4. All recommendations for employment will be submitted in writing to the ~~Superintendent~~ Human Resources office.
5. Administrative procedures will assure the timely recruitment and selection of superior teachers. When hiring for an administrative position, Before the meeting at which the Board is to act upon a recommendation, the Superintendent shall submit background information to the Board on the proposed candidate before the meeting at which the Board is to interview the candidate and/or act upon the Superintendent's recommendation. Such information should include, but not be limited to, the candidate's educational background as well as his or her record of professional accomplishments.
6. When hiring for an administrative position, T~~he~~ Superintendent will notify the candidates that the appointment must be made by the Board of Education.

7. Every effort will be made to fill all staff vacancies by June 1 each year. A projection of anticipated total certified staff necessary should be completed by ~~December~~ January 15 of each year for the following year.
8. Permanent substitutes recommended for positions covering more than a quarter of the year shall be subject to the same screening and hiring process as teachers being proposed for full-time positions.

Legal Reference: ~~Connecticut General Statutes~~

[Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-145](#) Certificate necessary to employment

[Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-151](#) Employment of teachers

[Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-153](#) Discrimination on basis of sex, gender identity or expression or marital status prohibited

[Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections 10-153a through 10-153n](#) Rights concerning professional organization and negotiations

[Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 46a-60](#) Discriminatory Employment Practices Prohibited

[Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et. Seq.](#)

Policy Reference: [Policy 4111.1, Minority Staff Recruitment](#)

[Policy 4118.11, Non-Discrimination](#)

[Policy 4111.3, Background Checks](#)

Regulation approved: July 16, 1990

Regulation revised: _____

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Weston, Connecticut

Personnel – Non-Certified

Recruitment and Selection

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and ~~of persons designated by the Superintendent~~ and/or his/her designee to determine the personnel needs of the school district and to locate suitable candidates ~~to recommend~~ for employment ~~to the Board of Education~~. The Superintendent, and/or his/her designee, is authorized to employ non-certified employees on behalf of the Board of Education subject to all applicable Board of Education policies and administrative regulations.

Every effort will be made to recruit and hire an outstanding and diverse professional staff. The Weston Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer.

~~Prior to initial employment, a physician shall certify to the Superintendent of Schools that said employee is in good health and in fit condition for service.~~

~~(cf. 4212.4 – Health Examinations)~~

Legal Reference: ~~Connecticut General Statutes~~

Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 46a-60 Discriminatory Employment Practices Prohibited

Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.

Policy Reference: Policy 4111.1, Minority Staff Recruitment

Policy 4118.11, Non-Discrimination

Policy Adopted: July 16, 1990

Policy Revised: _____

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Weston, Connecticut

WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT

January 27, 2014



Weston High School

Lisa Deorio, Principal

*In this issue... Principal's Update
Academic Programs
Co-Curricular Program
Clubs*

Principal's Update

The Connecticut State Department of Education has named Weston High School one of the top schools in the state. In the state's annual performance report issued in December, WHS was classified as excelling and was one of 52 schools in the state named as a School of Distinction for high overall performance.

In preparation for our upcoming midterm assessments, the National Honor Society held their freshman/sophomore study night on Monday, January 13. In addition, the library was open three other nights before midterms to provide students with a collaborative environment in which to prepare for these important assessments.

Many of you may recall that Positive Directions, also known as the Center for Prevention and Recovery Treatment Center, in collaboration with Weston Public Schools and the Weston Youth Services administered a survey last spring to a sampling of middle and high school students in grades 7-12 regarding drug and alcohol usage and related topics. Additionally, there was a similar parent survey that was made available online during that period of time. The results of both surveys will be shared at a public meeting scheduled for February 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Weston Middle School library. Archie Swindell, Ph.D., from Positive Directions will share the results of the surveys, which will include a comparison to the survey administered in 2008. Following the presentation, a panel of staff from the district and the town will provide comments and be available to answer questions that the public may have regarding the results. This event is open to all community members.

Academic Programs

The Arts

Music

The WHS choir adopted an elementary classroom in Bridgeport last month. Students sent over holiday gifts and videotaped a special performance for the children.

Physical Education/Health

This quarter our sophomore health classes have focused on the dynamics of teen dating relationships. All classes viewed a segment from the television investigative news program 48 Hours entitled *Loved to Death*, which resulted in serious discussions and provided students with the knowledge, awareness, and resources to aid in the prevention of teen dating abuse.

Science/Technology

Students in Animal Behavior

Artist, writer, and naturalist James Prosek shared a presentation on eels, their migration and conservation, and a short documentary of them. Herpetologist, Peter Taylor, returned to WHS with live reptiles and amphibians from Animal Embassy. He reinforced the connections between habitat, anatomy, and behavior with live specimens.

The technology department is expecting a new 3D printer. Makerbot, a leading company in the rapid prototyping industry, has been on a mission to place 3D printers in schools across the country. Through generous donations, the addition of a second 3D printer in our classrooms will be up and running soon.

Social Studies

This past month the ninth-grade World Studies students hosted an Enlightenment School Fair in their classrooms. Students had to research one of the Age of Enlightenment's great thinkers, scientists, philosophers, or inventors, and learn about that person's discoveries and contributions to modern thought/science. Based on that research, they then had to design a school based upon their thinker's ideas and work. Students had to be creative, and made many connections applying the principles of the Enlightenment to their newly created schools. To see how their school would be received, the students had to create a brochure to attract potential students to enroll at their Enlightenment educational institution. Much thanks to Mrs. Snaith, Library Media Specialist, and Mrs. Garone, Library Technician, for collaborating with the World Studies teachers to ensure this was a meaningful learning experience for our students.

World Language

Students of Spanish 1, Spanish 4Honors and 5Honors are registering this month to take the National Spanish Exam (NSE) between March 1 and April 10. The National Spanish Exam is given voluntarily by over 3,800 teachers throughout the United States to measure proficiency and achievement of students who are studying Spanish as a second language. Students may earn bronze, silver, or gold medals and certificates in accordance with national percentiles.

Co-Curricular Program

Athletics

Winter sports are in full swing and working hard to get their games and practices in around all of the weather we have been having. Indoor track and field competed at Wesleyan in an SWC meet and had many athletes qualify for the SWC and state championship meets. Boys basketball won the Fairfield County Holiday Basketball Tournament with an impressive win over Stamford High School in the championship game.

Clubs

National Honor Society

The National Honor Society is sponsoring a book drive in support of the African Library Project. This organization coordinates book drives in the U.S. to start libraries in rural Africa. As volunteers, the NHS collects gently-used books and modest funds (for shipping expenses) then sorts and packs the books to reach our partners in Africa. The African Library Project has donated over one million books to 985 libraries in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Cameroon, Lesotho, Nigeria, Botswana, Swaziland, Malawi, and Ghana.

Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA)

GSA members organized and ran an afterschool bake sale this month to raise donations for the Ali Forney Center in New York City. Established in 2002, this is largest organization in the country dedicated to serving the homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth.

Class of 2017

Taking cue from the success of last year, the class of 2017 has worked with the Weston Senior Center to provide tech workshops for the town's senior citizens. The sophomore class representatives are helping with anything from iPad tutorials to computer troubleshooting. Workshops are held on designated Wednesdays once a month after school in the high school library.

Inlook, the WHS literature and arts magazine, distributed class sets of its winter edition, "Inspiration," to all English classrooms. These class sets will be available to students who want aesthetic refreshment and inspiration during midterm exams.

Weston Middle School

Amy Watkins, Principal

In this issue... Students Take the Challenge & Participate in "Hour of Code"

Unveiling of Student Art Gallery

Alan Moskin Speaks to Grade 8 Students

SOAR Door Decorating

National Geographic Bee

Drug and Alcohol Youth Survey Results

Students Take the Challenge and Participate in "Hour of Code"

December 9-13 was Computer Science Week.

In celebration of this, we offered two opportunities for students to learn more about code, what it means, and how to write it.

Beginning with the website www.code.org, students began writing basic objects. An overwhelming number of students stayed after school on Thursday and returned the follow day during their lunch period (after eating-much to their chagrin). We also had new

students join us on Friday during each lunch period, who were either unable to come after school or had heightened interest due to the feedback from their peers. Based on its popularity, we are exploring offering coding to students two Fridays a month. In addition, students interested in coding and other digital tools should speak to Mrs. Shuhart and learn more about Digital Warriors.



Unveiling of Student Art Gallery

Mrs. Fogarty and her students have been busy preparing art for the new WMS student art gallery. With the generous support of the WMS PTO, we have added art rails to one of the main walls in our front hallway. Students watched the unveiling through a video feed that was taken to honor the artists and display their



artwork. We look forward to adding additional art rails to select hallways in the building to showcase our students' talent.

Alan Moskin Speaks to Grade 8 Students

On Thursday, December 18, eighth-grade students had the opportunity to learn about the horrific experiences from WWII and of freeing Jews from concentration camps. Alan Moskin was a liberator in WWII and spoke to the need for society to have a renewed focus on human spirit. After listening to Mr. Moskin share his experiences, students had the opportunity to further the discussion and ask thoughtful questions about Mr. Moskin's experience and message. He began his message by sharing his experience and the pride felt when he learned he was drafted. As his message unfolded he told students, "When I'm gone, I need you to bear witness," reminding student there are still people who choose to debate that the Holocaust occurred adding, "You're the last generation to hear this story from the first source...someone who was there." Several messages resonated with the eighth-grade students as a result of his visit. "Choose goodness," "I don't want you to be bystanders...Stand up," "indifference and inaction are the same as consent," "be the change," and "hugs, not hate" were just a few that students are still talking about. Afterward, students who had elected to complete additional reading about the Holocaust or had a natural interest in learning more about this period in history ate lunch with Mr. Moskin to allow them more time to learn from him through a question and answer session.



SOAR Door Decorating

Two weeks ago, period one classes gathered during our SOAR Advisory time to review what they have learned through the SOAR lessons and then subsequently develop a theme to artistically communicate the meaning of SOAR to others. On Monday, December 16, all period one classes took this vision and made it a reality. At the conclusion of the judging, three classrooms, one per grade, received the honor of Best Representation of the Meaning of SOAR. The winners were for sixth grade: Mrs. Peterson's class, seventh grade: Mrs. Holmes' class and eighth grade: Ms. Mulcahey's class. Runners-up included: grade 6: Mr. Rosvally and Ms. Schindler; grade 7: Ms. Fuchs and Mrs. McConnell; grade 8: Mrs. Quaintance and Mrs. Geel. Congratulations to all students and teachers for their dedication, teamwork, good sportsmanship, and demonstration of their understanding of SOAR. Winning classes received a hot cocoa treat delivered to their classrooms during period one on Thursday, December 19.

National Geographic Bee

On Thursday, January 9, a total of four student representatives from each grade level demonstrated their geography skills for the National Geographic Bee. Prior to break, students answered questions designed by the National Geographic Bee board to test their knowledge of geography around the world. The entire student body participated in their social studies class. Twelve finalists answered rounds of questions until there were only two.



In the final round between Daniel Curtis and Niall Taylor the final winner was named. Congratulations to Niall for taking first place in this year's contest. Niall will move forward to the next round and complete a written portion to decide if he will move on further. Congratulations to all students who participated. The twelve finalists are named below. Thank you to Brian Scott, Social Studies Curriculum Instructional Leader and all of our social studies teachers.

Grade 8

Niall Taylor**
Daniel Curtis
James Joyce
Avery Lum

Grade 7

Zoe Saldinger
Ben Rosenberg
Bruno Navarrese
Adam Levin

Grade 6

Aidan Cornelius
Mason Asphar
Connor Golden
Jake Jones

**2014 School Winner

Drug and Alcohol Youth Survey Results

In the spring of 2013, Positive Directions, also known as the Center for Prevention and Recovery Treatment Center, in collaboration with Weston Public Schools and the Weston Youth Services administered a survey to a sampling of middle and high school students grades 7-12 about drug and alcohol usage and related topics. There was additionally a similar parent survey that was made available online during that period of time. The results of that survey will be shared at a public meeting scheduled for February 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Weston Middle School library. Archie Swindell, Ph.D., from Positive Directions will share the results of the survey which will include a comparison to the survey administered in 2008. Following the presentation, a panel of staff from the district and the Town will provide comments and be available to answer questions that the public may have regarding the results. This event is open to all community members.

Weston Intermediate School

Pattie Falber, Principal

In this issue...

*Grade level News
December Assembly
Student vs. Staff Volleyball Game
Winter Chorus Concert
School Spirit
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Professional Development*

Grade Level News

Third Grade

Over the last month, students have been reading a wide variety of traditional tales including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures. Throughout the unit, students learned to analyze the elements of tales in order to synthesize cultural perspectives and messages within them, and discover that each element of a tale is important to conveying the author's purpose and message. Students also crafted their own fictional stories that were written to convey a message to an audience.

Fourth Grade

Fourth graders applied their knowledge of fractions and whole numbers to build and decorate edible houses in December. The students had to begin the project by first determining the fraction of graham crackers they would need to build their house and then calculate the fraction of the base the house would sit on. The students then chose the candies they would use to decorate their house and determine the fraction of the whole for each type of candy. Although my guess is that some of the candy didn't make it onto the houses, the students created very colorful and architecturally unique dwellings while applying their mathematical knowledge to real world applications.



Fifth Grade

The week before the winter break in fifth-grade reading/language arts was more informative than The Learning Channel. As part of their nonfiction unit, students were asked to independently identify, research, and present a *How-To* project to their teachers and peers. Topics truly represented our students' interests and ranged from how to save the blob fish to how to survive alone in the wilderness. There were also a variety of presentation techniques including live demonstrations, PowerPoints, posters, and videos. Not only did students practice their nonfiction reading and writing skills, they also broadened their knowledge about many fascinating topics.



December Assembly

Each year before we leave for the December Break we come together as a school to sing and celebrate. Prior to the day of the assembly, the music teachers worked with the students to prepare a few songs to sing, and each grade level performed them during the assembly. The songs come from many parts of the world, and the students sing in English as well as Spanish and Hebrew. Students and staff are also treated to a performance by a small choral ensemble composed of members of our faculty. The assembly is a fun time for all, and culminates in a joyous all-school sing-along.



Students vs. Staff Volleyball Game

Another tradition at this time of year is the annual "Staff vs. Fifth-Grade Students" volleyball game. As a culminating activity to the volleyball unit in P.E., the fifth-grade students challenge the teachers and staff to a volleyball game. This year over 100 fifth graders and 15 staff members participated in a high-spirited game, with the remainder of the fifth graders cheering them on. The student players took the challenge seriously, meeting before school for early morning



practice sessions to hone the skills they had learned in class and to form teams. Webster, the WIS Wolf, even got into the action making a surprise appearance to join the students' teams in playing against the staff. It was a fun event and a good time was had by all.

Winter Chorus Concert

Excitement was in the air as the students of the fourth- and fifth-grade choruses gave their debut concert on Thursday evening, January 9. Almost 100 students participated in the concert, singing a variety of songs that focused on winter nights and sleigh rides. The fourth graders began the evening with a beautiful song called, "The Path to the Moon." The fifth-grade chorus echoed this theme with, "Circle Round the Moon," and finished with "Kalinka," a traditional Russian folk song sung in Russian. At the end of the concert, the two choruses came together and performed a very moving version of "Light a Candle," followed by a high spirited song entitled, "Ready, Set, Snow."



School Spirit

To set the tone for the new year, our first all-school assembly in January focused on acts of kindness. The assembly was a morning meeting and began with students greeting each other in three different languages. Following the greeting, Mrs. Wilhelm read the book; *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud. This book encourages positive behavior through the rewards of daily kindness, and helps students understand the effects of their actions and words on the well-being of others and themselves. Following the reading, Mr. Cannito's third-grade class presented a follow-up activity for all classes to engage in.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

On Friday, January 17, WIS students paid academic homage to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our third graders engaged in a biographical timeline of the significant events of Dr. King's life. Fourth graders viewed a movie about Dr. King's life followed by a discussion about his impact on their lives. And, finally, fifth graders read, analyzed, and discussed Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech to further their understanding of his quest.



Professional Development

Our professional development continues in the area of literacy. We have focused on our reading assessment, the DRA, in order to enhance our ability to differentiate our instruction and ensure that each and every child is reading just right books. On January 21 we spent the morning analyzing research on bands of texts and enhancing our understanding of these bands. We are planning individual instruction as well as small group instruction based on this information as well as many other data points we gather about our readers. Our teachers worked together to analyze their student data and plan their instruction. The afternoon was devoted to the teaching of writing. We looked again to the Common Core State Standards to further develop our understanding of the standards in writing. The teachers analyzed student work and used rubrics in order to develop and understand the continuum of writing skills. With a concentration on our writing instruction we are working to enhance our writers in their narrative, persuasive, and informational writing understanding and skills.

*In this issue... **Hurlbutt Celebrates a Positive School Climate**
Teaching and Learning
Parent Involvement
Links to the Community*

Hurlbutt Celebrates a Positive School Climate

Before the winter break, our students gathered as a community to sing winter and holiday songs under the direction of Luke Henderson, our music teacher. Mr. Henderson integrated movement and rhythm activities into the sing-along, which supports our music curriculum. With the technology we have been provided, even our youngest learners were able to follow along with the lyrics through a PowerPoint presentation created by Mr. Henderson. These community events contribute to a positive school culture and teach our students that although the holiday season has a different meaning for each of us, we are all part of the Hurlbutt family.



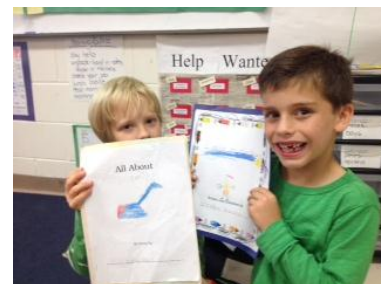
Teaching and Learning

Kindergarten

During reader's workshop our teachers have been increasing the amount of time the students read independently and with partners. On average, our kindergarteners are sustaining independent reading for fifteen minutes a day. The strategies and skills they practice during this time support the development of reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and background knowledge. Research indicates that the amount of time students read independently is one of the greatest predictors of reading achievement.

First Grade

Our first-grade students recently finished their realistic fiction writing unit. Young children love to tell stories, share stories and use their imagination, and the Hurlbutt students were captivated by this unit. Our first-grade faculty led students through the writing of a series. By studying what makes a story exciting, our students used the many crafts of authors to bring their stories to life in a workshop setting. They successfully described the actions, feeling and thoughts of their characters while including dialogue, setting and an interesting beginning, middle, and end to their stories. By writing a series, the students began to delve



into the work of developing a character's traits. The most rewarding part of this unit for our staff was to watch the excitement and energy our students brought to the unit. They have truly embraced the fact that they are indeed authors of stories. We often hear a 'hooray' when writing time begins or a sigh of disappointment when time comes to a close. As our students now move into a non-fiction unit of writing, we are witnessing the transfer of writing skills across units. We look forward to sharing with you their next creations.

Second Grade

Students participated in a mock Caldecott election. The Caldecott Medal is awarded annually to the illustrator of the most distinguished picture book for children (published in the U.S. by a U.S. illustrator). Second graders examined the criteria that a book must meet to win the Caldecott Medal by exploring previous winners. Next, students analyzed nominees selected for the Hurlbutt election (actual nominees are not made public). Working collaboratively, groups of students created campaign materials including, billboards, campaign buttons, and commercials to persuade their classmates to vote for a particular title. As a culmination, classes used an "old fashioned" mechanical voting machine to cast their votes. This experience was implemented by the classroom teachers and the Hurlbutt librarian, and integrated the following second grade units: Picture Book Study, Persuasive Writing, Government/Democratic Process.



Parent Involvement

Through the generous support of our PTO, Hurlbutt families in cooperation with Weston Social Services, supported Weston families during the holidays by filling baskets with food and gift cards. These items helped our neighbors enjoy a festive holiday.

Links to the Community

For the fourth year, Weston Service Center applied for and received a grant for Hurlbutt Elementary School through the ExxonMobil Educational Alliance Program. Jordan Ranney, manager of the Weston Service Center recently presented us with a \$500 check. For the past eleven years, the ExxonMobil grants have been used to enhance math and science programs across the United States. We are grateful to the Weston Service Center for their continued support of our educational programs.