

WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, January 29, 2015
Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
6:30 p.m.

Revised Agenda

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|
| I. | CALL TO ORDER, VERIFICATION OF QUORUM
Philip Schaefer, Chairperson | |
| II. | PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE | |
| III. | ELECTION OF OFFICERS | Motion |
| IV. | RECOGNITION | None |
| V. | APPROVAL OF MINUTES, <i>pages 1-8</i>
The Board will vote to approve the minutes from December 8.

The Board will vote to approve the minutes from December 15.

The Board will vote to approve the minutes from January 13. | Motion |
| VI. | PUBLIC COMMENT | Information |
| VII. | NEW BUSINESS | |
| | 1. Discussion Regarding Shared Space at Hurlbutt Elementary School | Motion |
| | 2. Discussion on Response to Board of Selectmen's Questions Regarding District Facilities Utilization | Information |
| | 3. FY 2016 Operating Budget Discussion and/or Adoption | Motion |
| | 4. Approval of Authorization to Apply for a State of Connecticut Technology Grant
Mr. Haakonsen, Director of Technology, will discuss a grant for technology upgrades to support transition to the new standards offered by the State of Connecticut. | Motion |
| | 5. Resignation, <i>page 9</i> | Motion |
| | 6. Fourth FY 2015 Financial Update and Approval of Transfers, <i>pages 10-18</i>
Dr. Keating, Director of Finance and Operations, will provide a monthly financial update. | Motion |
| VIII. | OLD BUSINESS | None |
| IX. | SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT | Information |

1. Next Regular Board Meeting is Tuesday, February 24, 2015, at 7:30 p.m.
2. District Update
3. Principals' Reports, *pages 19-28*

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. WHS Student Representatives' Report - Jackson Marvin, Jack Seigenthaler | Information |
| 2. Communications Committee - Nina Daniel | Information |
| 3. Curriculum Committee - Ellen Uzenoff | Information |
| 4. Finance Committee - Denise Harvey | Information |
| 5. Facilities Committee - Ellen Uzenoff | Information |
| 6. Policy Committee - Dana Levin | Information |
| 7. Negotiations Committee - Denise Harvey | Information |
| 8. CES - Nina Daniel | Information |
| 9. CAFE - Elise Major | Information |
| 10. Weston Education Foundation - Denise Harvey | Information |

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Weston Public Schools
Board of Education Work Session
Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
December 8, 2014

Attendance:

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson	Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent
Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson	Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Ops.
Dana Levin, Secretary/Treasurer	Erik Haakonsen, Director of Technology
Nina Daniel	Lisa Deorio, Weston High School Principal
Denise Harvey	Amy Watkins, Weston Middle School Principal
Sara Spaulding	Pattie Falber, Weston Intermediate School Principal
Elise Major	Laura Kaddis, Hurlbutt Elementary School Principal
Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent	<i>Absent:</i> Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources

I. Discussion of District Vision, Goals, and Core Values

Dr. Palmer summarized the work of the Master Planning Team thus far, and the Principals summarized the discussions on vision and core values held with their respective schools.

The Board discussed numerous concepts that describe Weston Public Schools, including the following:

- Rigorous
- Cutting-edge
- Innovative
- Students that are socially responsible
- Continuous improvement
- Adaptive, flexible, dynamic
- Small, personal
- Inspires life-long learners
- World-class

The Board discussed what sets our schools, staff, and students apart from those in neighboring districts:

- We know our students
- Students know we care and therefore feel supported and have more confidence
- We care for every child
- We cultivate the potential of each student so they are able to reach a greater level of success
- Students feel safe and inspired in their learning environment
- Weston Pubic Schools enables students to recognize and pursue their strengths
- “Smallness” means more opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities of interest, leadership development, and other personal development
- What we say we are doing, we are doing, not just saying it

- There is a sense of community, belonging, and personal responsibility
- Faculty are innovating as educators to lead the way as educators, even beyond our district
- We foster student adaptability/resilience/perseverance/grit/tenacity
- Students are creative/innovative
- Students exhibit tolerance and self-advocacy
- The level of interaction between students and faculty builds confidence that extends into higher learning
- Students feel prepared for and excel in highly rigorous programs at top institutions of higher learning

The Board discussed thoughts to consider in crafting a vision statement:

- We provide the tools to achieve success
- Many school districts will share a common vision of where they want students to go, the difference is in multiple pathways to success
- We should distinguish ourselves from our competition
- Students must feel comfortable and safe in order to push them to their intellectual best
- Configuration and budget changes do not affect the vision, but the delivery will change
- Key definitions must be given, such as “mission” versus “vision” and “individualized” versus “personalized”

The Board discussed revisions to the draft vision statement that was created by the Master Planning Team, including: it should be in the future tense as it is a goal and we are not there yet; and a strong action verb is needed to define us. The Board discussed possible phrases for inclusion in the revised vision statement: “awaken a love of learning for every child,” “shed light on the complexities of the world they will inherit,” and “independent, inquisitive, and innovative learners.”

II. Discussion of Future Outlook

The Board discussed trends it needs to be mindful of as it considers its future in 5-10 years, including enrollment, changing needs of higher education, technology, fiscal resources, and special education. It reviewed enrollment data and discussed the possible transition of grade 2 to Weston Intermediate School.

III. Next Steps

After notes from the meeting are synthesized, Board volunteers will meet with the Administrative team to revise the draft vision statement.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the 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 Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting
Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
December 15, 2014

Attendance:

Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson	Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Ops. (departed 9:00 p.m.)
Dana Levin, Secretary/Treasurer	Jackson Marvin, Student Representative
Denise Harvey	Jack Seigenthaler, Student Representative
Sara Spaulding	
Elise Major	Absent: Philip Schaefer, Chairperson
Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent	Nina Daniel
Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent	Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources

I. CALL TO ORDER, VERIFICATION OF QUORUM
Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Uzenoff announced a change to the agenda: Item 1, WHS Student Representatives Report, under section IX, Committee Reports, will be the next item on the agenda.

WHS Student Representatives Report

Mr. Seigenthaler and Mr. Marvin commented on the Shine a Light campaign's December-January fundraising for the Wounded Warrior Project, a win for the mock trial team, and the return of period "x" for the holidays, in which teachers host an activity for their students.

III. RECOGNITION – No report

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board voted to approve the minutes from November 17. Mrs. Uzenoff was absent.

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education approves the minutes of the November 17, 2014 Regular Session. Motion by Mrs. Levin, second by Ms. Major, 4 in favor – Mrs. Levin, Ms. Harvey, Ms. Major, Ms. Spaulding; 1 abstained – Mrs. Uzenoff. (4-0-1)

V. PUBLIC COMMENT – No report

Mrs. Uzenoff announced a change to the agenda: Item 3 Principals Reports, under section VII, Superintendent's Report, will be moved to the first item under section VI, New Business.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Principals' Reports

Mrs. Kaddis, Hurlbutt Elementary School Principal, highlighted first-grade student writing and second-grade student Hour of Code participation. Ms. Watkins, Weston Middle School Principal, requested community volunteers for this year's mentorship program and reported on the Veterans Day celebration; a visit from Alan Moskin, a World War II liberator; and the Cardboard Challenge. Mrs. Deorio, Weston High School Principal, discussed the rescheduling of the annual financial aid seminar, announced Thursday's junior planning seminar, and highlighted the annual film analysis unit, salsa dancing in physical education classes, a technology workshop for the senior center, student of the month recognition, and the alumni update. Mrs. Falber, Weston Intermediate School Principal, was not in attendance.

2. Retirements

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, announced the retirement of two employees that have been with Weston for many years, and thanked them for their years of service.

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education notes the retirement of Nancy St. Clair, 1.0 FTE School Counselor for Weston High School and Arline Beckoff, 1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher for Hurlbutt Elementary School, effective June 30, 2015. Motion by Ms. Harvey, second by Mrs. Levin, all in favor. (5-0)

3. Approval of Substitute Pay Proposal

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, discussed the draft proposal to increase substitute pay beginning January 1, 2015, as a pilot program, including an additional adjustment for substitutes at Hurlbutt Elementary School and Weston Intermediate School after the completion of 10 days of service. Dr. Palmer expressed concern over the difficulty of securing qualified substitute teachers and substitute paraprofessionals for Hurlbutt Elementary School and Weston Intermediate School. Dr. Keating, Director of Finance and Operations, discussed the possible funding of this initiative through the existing substitutes account. Discussion by the Board followed.

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education approves the proposal concerning substitute pay dated November 14, 2014. Motion by Mrs. Levin, second by Ms. Spaulding, all in favor. (5-0)

4. Third FY 2015 Financial Update and Approval of Transfers

Dr. Keating, Director of Finance and Operations, provided a monthly financial update. We are currently trending below the claim forecast in the Internal Services Fund. There were no transfers to present and no motion was required.

5. Update on Budget Development

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, spoke about factors that influence budget numbers, including general enrollment trends, staffing levels, salary and benefits increases due to union contractual obligations, food service bids, transportation contracts; the need to maintaining the integrity and quality of our educational system while maintaining fiscal responsibility; a district-wide focus on five key areas of work

(writing, math, STEM, pathways to success, and healthy learning environments); and the reframing/leveraging of technology within those areas. Dr. Palmer also discussed the capital budget, including the systems failures that are starting to emerge due to a slower repair schedule than what is recommended in the Kastle Boos study, and underground oil tanks that must be removed. Mrs. Uzenoff, Board of Education Vice Chairperson, discussed the recent meeting of the Capital Advisory Committee, and the district's need to have a refreshed study completed in order to stay on top of the stewardship of our facilities. Discussion by the Board followed.

6. Discussion and Possible Vote on Moving Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences from May to March

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, discussed moving the May 7 and 8 spring parent-teacher conferences to March 26 and 27 to align the conferences with progress reports. If this adjustment is successful, a proposed adjustment to the 2015-16 calendar would be brought forward in April. Discussion by the Board followed.

Motion: Moved that the Weston Board of Education approves moving the May 7 and 8 parent-teacher conferences to March 26 and 27. Motion by Mrs. Levin, second by Ms. Spaulding, all in favor. (5-0)

VII. OLD BUSINESS – No report

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Budget Workshops are on Tuesday, January 13, 2015; Tuesday, January 20, 2015; and Thursday, January 22, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. Next Regular Board Meeting is Monday, January 26, 2015, at 6:00 p.m.

2. District Update

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, announced preparations for a visit from the Tri-State Consortium, commented on STEM work and student achievement in the district, and thanked the Board for its work on vision and core beliefs at the recent workshop.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Uzenoff congratulated the Weston Trojans Youth Cheer Gold Team on their national championship.

1. Communications Committee

Ms. Spaulding reminded the Board of the upcoming January Realtors Open House.

2. Curriculum Committee

Dr. Craw, Assistant Superintendent, discussed the following topics from the December 10 meeting: updates on math and writing initiatives, a Tri-State visit in March to evaluate our math program, the writing portfolio project for tenth and eighth

grade, high school graduation requirements, an update on STEM and robotics clubs at the middle school and intermediate school, and National Computer Science Education Week. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 14.

3. Finance Committee

Ms. Harvey discussed the following topics from the December 4 Finance Committee meeting, in addition to those covered previously on the agenda: fundraising to replace the pole vault and high jump pits and working with the Boosters to replace signage on the lower field. Dr. Palmer announced that Weston was awarded a security grant and thanked the Weston Police department for their assistance with the application. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 9.

4. Facilities Committee

Per Ms. Major, there is nothing to report beyond what was discussed previously on the agenda. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 12.

5. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee did not meet in December. The next meeting will be in January.

6. Negotiations Committee

Per Ms. Harvey there is nothing to report.

7. CES – No report

8. CAFE

Per Ms. Major there is nothing to report.

9. Weston Education Foundation

Ms. Harvey discussed the following topics from the December meeting: the new website has been launched and annual letters have been sent out.

X. ADJOURNMENT

*Motion: Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Levin, second by Ms. Major, all in favor. (5-0)
Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.*

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Markov, Board of Education Clerk.

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

Weston Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting – Budget Workshop #1
Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
January 13, 2015

Attendance:

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

CALL TO ORDER, VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson

Mr. Schaefer announced that there will be two televised work sessions at 6:00 p.m. next week, prior to each Board workshop, to discuss long-term planning for facilities utilization and possible use of district facilities by the Town.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. SUPERINTENDENT'S OVERVIEW

Dr. Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, discussed the 2016 fiscal plan goals, budget drivers, cost containments, and efficiencies behind the proposed 3.17% increase over the adopted 2014-2015 budget. Approximately \$1.5 million of the budget comes from the major budget drivers of contractually-obligated salaries and benefits, software, and contracts. She explained why the budget increases with decreasing enrollment, how the district has downsized staffing, and why, historically, our budget has come in significantly lower than most of our DRG-A counterparts. Dr. Palmer stressed that this budget speaks to how technology is going to transform our district, and outlined information technology and educational technology roles. Discussion by the Board, Town officials, and administrators followed.

Arne de Keijzer, Salem Road. Mr. de Keijzer requested points of clarification within the budget book.

Dan McNeill, Steep Hill Road. Mr. McNeill asked about the threshold for enrollment and the possibility of only decreasing 1.0FTE in kindergarten. He also commented on enrollment cohorts increasing.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Dr. Craw, Assistant Superintendent, framed the current proposed curricular budget, which represents a 6.29% increase of the adopted FY 2015 budget. The increase reflects adding a Director of Digital Learning and Innovation and reallocating the technology

integrators to this cost center. Budget priorities are professional development (facilitated by curricular instructional leaders) and literacy, math, and STEM initiatives.

Dr. Craw also reviewed district accomplishments for the 2014-15 school year in professional and curriculum development, and the next level of work desired for 2015-2016. Discussion by the Board, Town officials, and administrators followed.

IV. DISTRICT-WIDE SERVICES

Dr. Keating, Director of Finance and Operations, discussed the categories of expenditures covered in this cost center – pupil transportation, the copy center, employee turnover, degree changes, negotiations, allowance for non-represented salary increases, liability insurance, employee benefits, and the internal services fund. Discussion by the Board, Town officials, and administrators followed.

Dan McNeill, Steep Hill Road. Mr. McNeill asked questioned about the model we are using for health insurance and alternatives.

V. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Keating, Director of Finance and Operations, discussed the duties, responsibilities, and staff associated with this cost center, and reviewed the proposed changes to non-salary accounts, including legal fees and materials. Discussion by the Board followed.

VI. TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Haakonsen, Director of Technology, presented the 2015-2016 budget for technology services, which includes replacing an aging mobile fleet of computers; leveraging software purchases and enhancing automation; updating infrastructure for staff, students, and the Town; and a department reorganization. The total technology budget request is an increase of \$79,487 over the FY 2015 request. Discussion by the Board, Town officials, and administrators followed.

VII. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

There were no additional questions or comments beyond what was discussed previously.

ADJOURNMENT

*Motion: Motion to adjourn by Ms. Harvey, second by Mrs. Levin, all in favor. (6-0)
Meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.*

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Markov, Board of Education Clerk.

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

RECEIVED

JAN 14 2014

OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT

94 Coppermine Road
Oxford, CT 06478

January 7, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Brey,

The year I began my teaching career in Weston, I was the only new classroom teacher at Hurlbutt Elementary School. In the ten years between my inaugural class and today, I have been fortunate to forge life-long friendships and meaningful collegial relationships, build strong parent bonds and watch former students grow beyond my classroom. I have met and married my husband, been blessed with two children and, most generously, been granted leave years from my teaching position to be home with them during their formative years.

After my first child-rearing leave, I returned to teaching and loved watching the child's world from two perspectives; parent and teacher. As the end of my second child-rearing leave nears a close, my husband and I have evaluated what is best for our family and have determined that to be my remaining at home with the children.

While I cherish my days with my own children, after ten years of professional relationships, it is with very mixed emotions that I write to resign my teaching position in Weston. I know that, with Wyatt still working in the system, my Weston family will never be far away and I look forward to being back in touch with you when the time comes for my return to teaching.

My very best to you and the Weston administrators, faculty and staff for a wonderful 2015!

Sincerely,



Meredith M. Hallgren

cc: Laura Kaddis, Hurlbutt Elementary School Principal

Weston Public Schools
Financial Report #4
FY 2015

The attached financial report reflects year-to-date expenditures and encumbrances through December 31, 2014, for the General Fund Operating Budget. The financial information presented in this report includes the adopted budget, budget transfers, the revised budget, actual year-to-date expenditures, encumbrances and the remaining budget balance. As part of the FY 2016 budget preparation process, the Director of Finance and Operations will analyze each account and develop a full-year forecast for FY 2015. This analysis will project actual expenditures as compared to budget. The full-year forecast will be completed in January and will be reflected in subsequent Financial Reports, with the addition of a column titled "Anticipated Expenditures."

The following transfers are reflected in this report:

To: Weston High School – Professional Technical Services	1,285
From: Weston High School – Salaries Co-Curricular Stipends	1,285
An outside contractor provided the audio for the Laramie Project.	
To: Weston High School – Materials Library	5,000
From: Weston High School – Equipment Library	5,000
To update the library collection as recommended by the CES study.	
To: Curriculum & Instruction - Equipment	5,656
From: Curriculum & Instruction – Professional Technical Services	4,906
From: Curriculum & Instruction - Materials	750
Additional Vex Kits needed for the Robotics Program to accommodate student participation.	
To: District Administration – Miscellaneous	310
From: District Administration - Materials	310
Funds needed to pay for administrative requirements.	
To: Facilities – Equipment Repairs	4,455
From: Facilities – Materials	3,900
From: Facilities – Professional Technical Services	555
Funds needed to pay for repairs on snow removal equipment.	
To: Facilities – Miscellaneous	600
From: Facilities – Professional Technical Services	600
Additional funds needed for employee uniforms.	
To: Facilities – Contracted Services	45
From: Facilities – Professional Technical Services	45
To pay for repairs.	

The following report reflects the financial transactions for the Internal Services Fund for Health Benefits through January 20, 2015. Claims continue to trend below forecast. As a result, the fund balance has increased. However, historically the district's claims increase in the second half of the year, which will impact the balance.

	Actual 2015
Fund Balance - July 1, 2014	1,693,288
Revenues:	
General Fund Appropriation (July - January)	3,988,394
Contributions:	
Employee Cost Sharing	332,363
Retiree/COBRA Contributions	190,973
State Teachers Retirement Reimbursement (TRB)	32,744
Stop Loss Settlement	130,700
Total Contributions	686,780
Total Revenue {A}	4,675,174
Expenditures	
Aetna Medical & RX:	
Claims	2,689,899
Administrative Fees	56,699
Stop Loss	184,254
District Portion of H.S.A. Deductible	587,714
Delta Dental:	
Claims	186,833
Administrative Fees	8,914
Medical Supplement/Other Costs	25,008
Total Health Plan Costs {B}	3,739,321
Net Change {A-B}	935,853
Fund Balance – January 20, 2015	2,629,141

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FINANCIAL REPORT #4**

July 2014 - December 2014

Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month		FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015 Expended	FY 2015 Encumbered	FY 2015 Expended & Encumbered	Balance
			Budget	Adjustments					
Certified Salaries	23,053,111	-98,118	-1,285		22,954,993	10,436,134	11,871,340	22,307,474	647,519
Non-Certified Salaries	6,060,278	103,573	0		6,163,851	3,265,813	2,709,404	5,975,217	188,634
Employee Benefits	9,329,354	-5,000	0		9,324,354	4,831,837	2,262	4,834,099	4,490,255
Total Employee Cost	38,442,743	455	-1,285		38,443,198	18,533,784	14,583,006	33,116,790	5,326,408
Professional Educational Services	832,000	-8,164	0		823,836	260,728	316,103	576,831	247,005
Professional Technical Services	721,405	-4,167	-4,821		717,238	346,682	183,989	530,671	186,567
Utilities	119,078	0	0		119,078	63,104	52,645	115,749	3,329
Contracted Services/Maint. Projects	2,526,480	-673	45		2,525,807	1,293,020	968,092	2,261,112	264,695
Equipment Repair/Rental	700,774	3,945	4,455		704,719	233,129	70,650	303,779	400,940
Communications	117,837	0	0		117,837	66,179	12,306	78,485	39,352
Other Insurance	204,558	4,543	0		209,101	209,101	0	209,101	0
Postage/Advertising/Printing	59,003	0	0		59,003	17,997	5,146	23,143	35,860
Out-of-District Tuition	1,767,043	0	0		1,767,043	1,084,284	666,742	1,751,026	16,017
Training & Reimbursable Expenses	83,310	0	0		83,310	46,531	4,302	50,833	32,477
Energy	1,109,253	0	0		1,109,253	476,064	314	476,378	632,875
Materials	1,231,219	-2,503	40		1,228,716	746,947	89,261	836,208	392,508
Books	190,011	2,337	0		192,348	139,260	13,150	152,410	39,938
Equipment	53,874	3,390	656		57,264	9,901	802	10,703	46,561
Dues & Fees	94,490	0	0		94,490	52,655	1,216	53,871	40,619
Miscellaneous	20,500	837	910		21,337	19,344	1,829	21,173	164
Total Non-Salary Accounts	9,830,835	-455	1,285		9,830,380	5,064,926	2,386,547	7,451,473	2,378,907
General Fund Budget	48,273,578	0	0		48,273,578	23,598,710	16,969,553	40,568,263	7,705,315
Fees/Gate Receipts/P&R	-161,927	0	0		-161,927	-80,988	0	-80,988	-80,939
Excess Cost Grant/Tuitions/Rev.	-746,795	0	0		-746,795	-99,569	0	-99,569	-647,226
Total General Fund & Grants	47,364,856	0	0		47,364,856	23,418,153	16,969,553	40,387,706	6,977,150

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FINANCIAL REPORT #4**

July 2014 - December 2014

Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month Budget Adjustments	FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015		FY 2015		Balance
					Expended	Encumbered	Expended	Encumbered	
Hurlbutt Elementary School									
Certified Salaries	2,679,700	82,746	0	2,762,446	1,220,799	1,504,786	2,725,585	36,861	
Non-Certified Salaries	319,000	0	0	319,000	160,765	156,183	316,948	2,052	
Professional Technical Services	850	0	0	850	0	0	0	850	
Equipment Repair/Rental	3,740	0	0	3,740	579	0	579	3,161	
Postage/Advertising/Printing	1,000	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	
Reimbursable Expenses	250	0	0	250	0	0	0	250	
Materials	65,604	0	0	65,604	49,609	3,802	53,411	12,193	
Books	17,350	0	0	17,350	9,292	4,547	13,839	3,511	
Equipment	909	2,000	0	2,909	1,000	583	1,583	1,326	
Dues & Fees	1,817	0	0	1,817	354	0	354	1,463	
	3,090,220	84,746	0	3,174,966	1,442,398	1,669,901	3,112,299	62,667	
Weston Intermediate School									
Certified Salaries	3,554,330	-68,673	0	3,485,657	1,555,636	1,889,268	3,444,904	40,753	
Non-Certified Salaries	250,406	1,861	0	252,267	128,415	123,852	252,267	0	
Professional Technical Services	900	0	0	900	240	0	240	660	
Equipment Repair/Rental	3,220	0	0	3,220	512	0	512	2,708	
Postage/Advertising/Printing	1,220	0	0	1,220	176	0	176	1,044	
Reimbursable Expenses	250	0	0	250	0	0	0	250	
Materials	42,058	0	0	42,058	24,619	1,775	26,394	15,664	
Books	41,185	0	0	41,185	24,381	2,458	26,839	14,346	
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Dues & Fees	1,239	0	0	1,239	637	130	767	472	
	3,894,808	-66,812	0	3,827,996	1,734,616	2,017,483	3,752,099	75,897	

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FINANCIAL REPORT #4**

July 2014 - December 2014

Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month Budget	FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015		FY 2015		Balance
					Expended	Encumbered	Expended	Encumbered	
Weston Middle School									
Certified Salaries	4,345,812	-82,171		0	4,263,641	1,917,254	2,227,572	4,144,826	118,815
Non-Certified Salaries	193,337	-2,421		0	190,916	89,926	87,631	177,557	13,359
Professional Technical Services	19,160	0		0	19,160	105	343	448	18,712
Equipment Repair/Rental	7,655	500		0	8,155	1,845	550	2,395	5,760
Postage/Advertising/Printing	3,452	0		0	3,452	510	1,238	1,748	1,704
Reimbursable Expenses	550	0		0	550	0	0	0	550
Materials	88,551	75		0	88,626	47,527	6,459	53,986	34,640
Books	21,858	-575		0	21,283	9,795	1,691	11,486	9,797
Equipment	13,200	0		0	13,200	471	0	471	12,729
Dues & Fees	5,064	0		0	5,064	2,149	0	2,149	2,915
	4,698,639	-84,592		0	4,614,047	2,069,582	2,325,484	4,395,066	218,981
Weston High School									
Certified Salaries	5,408,346	-8,480		-1,285	5,399,866	2,441,661	2,871,453	5,313,114	86,752
Non-Certified Salaries	188,227	560		0	188,787	96,021	92,210	188,231	556
Professional Technical Services	15,495	1,285		1,285	16,780	2,619	0	2,619	14,161
Equipment Repair/Rental	13,829	0		0	13,829	3,751	600	4,351	9,478
Postage/Advertising/Printing	13,976	0		0	13,976	7,605	89	7,694	6,282
Reimbursable Expenses	3,090	0		0	3,090	0	0	0	3,090
Materials	163,116	1,500		5,000	164,616	110,531	11,334	121,865	42,751
Books	29,973	0		0	29,973	17,820	4,454	22,274	7,699
Equipment	10,445	-5,000		-5,000	5,445	1,038	0	1,038	4,407
Dues & Fees	13,191	0		0	13,191	9,832	650	10,482	2,709
Parking Fees	-30,000	0		0	-30,000	-21,000	0	-21,000	-9,000
	5,829,688	-10,135		0	5,819,553	2,669,878	2,980,790	5,650,668	168,885

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month		FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015 Expended	FY 2015 Encumbered	FY 2015 Expended & Encumbered	Balance
			Budget	Adjustments					
Athletics									
Certified Salaries/Coaches Stipends	480,615	0	0	0	480,615	244,906	61,194	306,100	174,515
Non-Certified Salaries	116,251	-4,543		0	111,708	48,414	19,961	68,375	43,333
Professional Technical Services	77,696	0	0	0	77,696	24,519	7,915	32,434	45,262
Police/Fire Services	4,300	0	0	0	4,300	1,117	1,270	2,387	1,913
Insurance	10,400	9,516		0	19,916	19,916	0	19,916	0
Transportation - Extra Curricular	79,534	0	0	0	79,534	29,661	24,358	54,019	25,515
Materials	57,750	0	0	0	57,750	27,786	8,189	35,975	21,775
Equipment	2,000	0	0	0	2,000	0	0	0	2,000
Dues & Fees	15,455	0	0	0	15,455	10,000	0	10,000	5,455
Participation Fees/Gate Receipts	-91,904	0	0	0	-91,904	-52,999	0	-52,999	-38,905
	752,097	4,973		0	757,070	353,320	122,887	476,207	280,863
Special Education									
Certified Salaries	3,412,614	-52,530		0	3,360,084	1,495,219	1,710,401	3,205,620	154,464
Non-Certified Salaries	1,407,109	53,951		0	1,461,060	772,265	651,478	1,423,743	37,317
Professional Educational Services	780,000	-8,164		0	771,836	260,728	316,103	576,831	195,005
Professional Technical Services	170,800	0	0	0	170,800	46,355	36,984	83,339	87,461
Equipment Repair/Rental	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	0	359	359	4,641
Tuition Out-of-District	1,767,043	0	0	0	1,767,043	1,084,284	666,742	1,751,026	16,017
Reimbursable Expenses	3,000	0	0	0	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
Materials	39,350	0	0	0	39,350	16,668	1,884	18,552	20,798
Books	5,900	0	0	0	5,900	1,315	0	1,315	4,585
Equipment	15,000	0	0	0	15,000	7,392	219	7,611	7,389
Dues & Fees	2,000	0	0	0	2,000	835	0	835	1,165
Excess Cost Grant/Pre-School	-746,795	0	0	0	-746,795	-73,800	0	-73,800	-672,995
	6,861,021	-6,743		0	6,854,278	3,611,261	3,384,170	6,995,431	-141,153

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Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month		FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015 Expended	FY 2015 Encumbered	FY 2015 Expended & Encumbered		Balance
			Budget	Adjustments				Expended	Encumbered	
Pupil Personnel Services										
Certified Salaries	1,654,592	1,700		0	1,656,292	733,766	891,989	1,625,755		30,537
Non-Certified Salaries	699,065	9,369		0	708,434	354,127	332,408	686,535		21,899
Professional Technical Services	206,000	6,464		0	212,464	90,699	95,557	186,256		26,208
Equipment Repair/Rental	1,603	0		0	1,603	833	0	833		770
Postage/Advertising/Printing	7,535	0		0	7,535	1,803	2,000	3,803		3,732
Reimbursable Expenses	1,500	0		0	1,500	0	0	0		1,500
Materials	16,543	0		0	16,543	11,516	196	11,712		4,831
Equipment	0	0		0	0	0	0	0		0
Dues & Fees	575	0		0	575	0	0	0		575
	<u>2,587,413</u>	<u>17,533</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>2,604,946</u>	<u>1,192,744</u>	<u>1,322,150</u>	<u>2,514,894</u>		<u>90,052</u>
Curriculum & Instructional Improvement										
Certified Salaries	833,718	-15,680		0	818,038	425,869	388,289	814,158		3,880
Non-Certified Salaries	58,282	1,312		0	59,594	34,381	25,213	59,594		0
Professional Educational Services	52,000	0		0	52,000	0	0	0		52,000
Professional Technical Services	131,100	-10,916		-4,906	120,184	83,499	17,829	101,328		18,856
Training & Reimbursable Expenses	58,170	0		0	58,170	36,686	4,302	40,988		17,182
Materials	8,725	-2,896		-750	5,829	3,507	682	4,189		1,640
Books	73,745	2,912		0	76,657	76,657	0	76,657		0
Equipment	12,320	6,390		5,656	18,710			0		18,710
Dues & Fees	25,349	0		0	25,349			0		25,349
	<u>1,253,409</u>	<u>-18,878</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>1,234,531</u>	<u>660,599</u>	<u>436,315</u>	<u>1,096,914</u>		<u>137,617</u>

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month		FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015 Expended	FY 2015 Encumbered	FY 2015 Expended & Encumbered	Balance
			Budget	Adjustments					
Technology									
Certified Salaries	124,304	0	0	0	124,304	52,534	70,828	123,362	942
Non-Certified Salaries	485,236	40,298		0	525,534	293,965	226,388	520,353	5,181
Professional Technical Services	66,820	0	0	0	66,820	51,889	14,931	66,820	0
Equipment Repair/Rental	423,864	0	0	0	423,864	95,790	2,092	97,882	325,982
Communications	23,400	0	0	0	23,400	4,920	12,300	17,220	6,180
Reimbursable Expenses	3,000	0	0	0	3,000	1,750	0	1,750	1,250
Materials	27,025	0	0	0	27,025	23,128	2,781	25,909	1,116
Software	271,593	3,500		0	275,093	214,891	30,438	245,329	29,764
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dues & Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1,425,242	43,798		0	1,469,040	738,867	359,758	1,098,625	370,415
District Administration									
Certified Salaries	579,968	24,082		0	604,050	348,490	255,560	604,050	0
Non-Certified Salaries	357,399	7,709		0	365,108	204,963	149,959	354,922	10,186
Professional Technical Services	97,500	0	0	0	97,500	66,559	13,195	79,754	17,746
Equipment Repair/Rental	1,000	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	1,000
Postage/Advertising/Printing	13,750	0	0	0	13,750	1,590	1,819	3,409	10,341
Reimbursable Expenses	10,500	0	0	0	10,500	6,434	0	6,434	4,066
Materials	20,385	-310		-310	20,075	10,016	1,006	11,022	9,053
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dues & Fees	29,320	0	0	0	29,320	28,368	436	28,804	516
Miscellaneous	6,500	237		310	6,737	4,830	1,829	6,659	78
	1,116,322	31,718		0	1,148,040	671,250	423,804	1,095,054	52,986

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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July 2014 - December 2014

Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month		FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015		FY 2015		Balance
			Budget	Adjustments		Expended	Encumbered	Expended	Encumbered	
Facilities										
Non-Certified Salaries	1,689,562	-6,746	0		1,682,816	904,432	724,981	1,629,413		53,403
Professional Technical Services	8,480	-1,000	-1,200		7,480	3,600	3,880	7,480		0
Utilities	119,078	0	0		119,078	63,104	52,645	115,749		3,329
Contracted Services	1,138,700	-673	45		1,138,027	634,825	324,157	958,982		179,045
Maintenance Projects	0	0	0		0	0	0	0		0
Equipment Repair/Rental	93,096	3,445	4,455		96,541	41,021	23,855	64,876		31,665
Communications	94,437	0	0		94,437	61,259	6	61,265		33,172
Property Insurance	98,231	0	0		98,231	98,231	0	98,231		0
Reimbursable Expenses	3,000	0	0		3,000	1,661	0	1,661		1,339
Materials	264,668	-4,372	-3,900		260,296	154,268	20,663	174,931		85,365
Equipment	0	0	0		0	0	0	0		0
Dues & Fees	480	0	0		480	480	0	480		0
Miscellaneous	14,000	600	600		14,600	14,514	0	14,514		86
In-Kind Revenue from Parks & Rec.	-40,023	0	0		-40,023	-6,989	0	-6,989		-33,034
	3,483,709	-8,746	0		3,474,963	1,970,406	1,150,187	3,120,593		354,370
Energy Management										
Non-Certified Salaries	42,241	950			43,191	24,918	18,273	43,191		0
Energy	1,109,253	0	0		1,109,253	476,064	314	476,378		632,875
	1,151,494	950	0		1,152,444	500,982	18,587	519,569		632,875
Transportation										
Non-Certified Salaries	193,863	1,273	0		195,136	122,038	73,098	195,136		0
Contracted Services	1,230,550	0	0		1,230,550	604,015	611,662	1,215,677		14,873
Equipment Repair	20,000	0	0		20,000	15,415	4,076	19,491		509
Auto Insurance	8,410	0	0		8,410	8,410	0	8,410		0
Materials (fuel & Misc. Mat.)	151,980	0	0		151,980	46,443	0	46,443		105,537
Equipment	0	0	0		0	0	0	0		0
Revenue	0	0	0		0	0	0	0		0
	1,604,803	1,273	0		1,606,076	796,321	688,836	1,485,157		120,919

**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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July 2014 - December 2014

Descriptions	FY 2015 Adopted Budget	Cumulative Budget Adjustments	Current Month		FY 2015 Revised Budget	FY 2015 Expended	FY 2015 Encumbered	FY 2015 Expended & Encumbered	Balance
			Budget	Adjustments					
District Wide									
Liability Insurance	87,517	-4,973	0	0	82,544	82,544	0	82,544	0
Regular Education - Tuition	0	0	0	0	0	-25,769	0	-25,769	25,769
Staffing Allowance	61,824	-61,824	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Degree Changes	41,140	-41,140	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salary Allowance	49,500	-49,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turnover Savings	-173,352	173,352	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	66,629	15,915	0	0	82,544	56,775	0	56,775	25,769
Employee Benefits									
Health Benefits	6,837,247	0	0	0	6,837,247	3,418,624	0	3,418,624	3,418,623
Social Security	490,505	-25,925	0	0	464,580	251,380	0	251,380	213,200
Medicare	423,060	-25,926	0	0	397,134	189,526	0	189,526	207,608
Workers Compensation	167,021	51,851	0	0	218,872	218,872	0	218,872	0
Unemployment Compensation	70,000	0	0	0	70,000	18,133	2,262	20,395	49,605
Early Retirement	4,759	0	0	0	4,759	4,759	0	4,759	0
Pension Program	843,835	-5,000	0	0	838,835	417,307	0	417,307	421,528
GASB 43/45	250,000	0	0	0	250,000	250,000	0	250,000	0
Tuition Reimbursement	70,000	0	0	0	70,000	0	0	0	70,000
Life Insurance	84,790	0	0	0	84,790	50,356	0	50,356	34,434
Disability Insurance	16,313	0	0	0	16,313	8,730	0	8,730	7,583
Sick Bank	61,824	0	0	0	61,824	0	0	0	61,824
Management Services	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	4,150	0	4,150	5,850
	9,329,354	-5,000	0	0	9,324,354	4,831,837	2,262	4,834,099	4,490,255
Copy Center									
Non-Certified Salaries	60,300	0	0	0	60,300	31,183	27,769	58,952	1,348
Equipment Rental	127,767	0	0	0	127,767	73,383	39,118	112,501	15,266
Postage	18,070	0	0	0	18,070	6,313	0	6,313	11,757
Materials	13,871	0	0	0	13,871	6,438	52	6,490	7,381
	220,008	0	0	0	220,008	117,317	66,939	184,256	35,752
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WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT

January 26, 2015



Weston High School

Lisa Deorio, Principal

In this issue...

- Principal's Message*
- Academic Program*
- School Counseling Department*
- Co-Curricular Program*
- Alumni Update*

Principal's Update

The second semester is underway, and events are planned for early February including our annual Winter Spirit Week, which will run from the tenth through the thirteenth. Course registration for the following year also begins the first week of February. On Thursday, February 12, at 7:00 p.m. we invite all eighth graders and their parents to join us for an evening presentation about our high school. Student athletes and club representatives will also be present so that the Class of 2019 will be well informed about our academic and co-curricular programs. Detailed information on course selection will be sent out shortly.

Academic Program

The Arts

WHS sophomore Gilbert Tsui, a member of the WHS Symphonic Orchestra, was a finalist for a concerto competition sponsored by the Greater Bridgeport Youth Orchestra this month. Gilbert is a highly talented, classically trained musician who plays both the violin and piano.

Eight of our music students attended the 2015 Connecticut Western Region Music Festival this month. They were selected as being amongst the top musicians in the western region of Connecticut through an audition process in November. These students also qualify to audition for the 2015 CMEA All-State Festival.

Art teachers Ms. Girardi, Ms. Hawthorn, Ms. Arena, and Ms. O'Keefe will select 10 pieces of student work to be exhibited at the Jerry's Regional High School Juried Art Exhibition at Sacred Heart University at the end of this month. The exhibition will take place in February.

Our Animal Behavior and Painting/Advanced Painting classes worked on a collaborative project that connected these two disciplines. Painting students were given the task of creating a visual for a species designed by Animal Behavior students. Both classes attended a presentation by writer, artist, and naturalist James Prosek. Mr. Prosek shared his travel experiences as they related to migration, classification, and conservation through the eyes of an artist.

School Counseling Department

The deadline to participate in our senior internship program is February 27. Applications are available on the WHS school counseling website and in the school counseling office. Seniors who have an

interest in participating in the program but do not have a specific placement in mind should email their counselors with their area of interest as soon as possible. This will allow sufficient time to locate a sponsor within the community that meets the students' interests.

College and Career Center

Beginning the end of January, all juniors will attend a planning meeting with CCC Director Mrs. Moks. The purpose of these meetings is to familiarize our juniors with CCC resources and college searches through Naviance. Appointment cards with specific meeting dates and times were distributed through junior English classes on January 21 and 22. Students who are unclear as to the time of their appointment are asked to stop by the CCC as soon as possible.

Social Studies

Working in collaborative teams, Introduction to Economics students finished their competition in the Stock Market Game against schools across the State and the Country. Students explored the fundamentals of personal finance and investing, while practicing content and skills in math, English language arts, and economics. The school's highest scoring team finished with a portfolio valued at \$116,398.75 which is 10.9375% better than S&P 500's growth over the same period of time. Congratulations to all of the teams that participated.

Superintendent Dr. Colleen Palmer visited American Government classes and spoke about the practical applications of how administration uses Supreme Court Cases such as Tinker v. Des Moines, New Jersey v. TLO, Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier, Morse v. Frederick, Santa Fe Independent School District v. Jane Doe, and Grutter v. Bollinger to guide decisions regarding students' rights.

Co-Curricular Program

Last month WHS held its annual hour-long activity period for students and staff to participate in a variety of activities to help build communities. Students enjoyed baking, meditation, knitting, karaoke, Zumba, cupcake decorating, and playing a variety of sports led by adult advisors. Traditionally this has been a highlight of the week before vacation.

Student Government has been busy working on planning our Winter Spirit Week and continuing our Shine a Light initiative. The purpose of Shine a Light is to raise awareness and support for local and national charities similar to our Pink Aid effort in the fall. In collaboration with our athletic teams, students are sponsoring different organizations at various events. Upcoming competitions include the varsity boys' basketball Wounded Warriors sponsored by girls' field hockey on January 27 and the varsity girls' basketball Wounded Warriors sponsored by boys' football on February 3. We invite the community to attend.

On February 7, WHS is pleased to serve as the site for the South West Conference Cheerleading Competition. This is our first time hosting this event, with 14 teams competing for the SWC crown.

Alumni Update

Brian Lamy, WHS Class of 2012 and Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) Class of 2016, visited our AP Studio Art classes last month to share his portfolio and experience at SCAD. Brian will be a summer intern for Target in Minneapolis this summer. Filipe Messeder, also a student at SCAD and WHS 2012 graduate, spent his fall semester studying in Hong Kong.

Sarah Levin, WHS Class of 2013, was just named Internal Philanthropy Chair for the Chi Omega sorority at the University of Miami. In that capacity, she is responsible for organizing the sorority's annual fundraising efforts for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, including a major event this winter. Sarah is also on the editorial staff of the *Ibis* yearbook, which is no surprise after her great work on our WHS yearbook.

Samantha Rehr, WHS Class of 2011, directed her first play, *Trust*, at the University of Michigan last month. Samantha is also pictured in the prospective student brochure promoting the fine arts program.

Ana Babinec, WHS Class of 2013 and a sophomore at Boston University, spent her fall semester studying at the University of Madrid.

Weston Middle School

Amy Watkins, Principal

In this issue...

Student Government Association Holiday Drive

TEDx WMSbethechange 2014

Celebrating the Season Through Music

National Computer Science Week

PBIS: Weston Middle School's Giving Tree

WMS 'Chat and Chew'

WMS Robotic Club Takes Off

Short Wharf Prepares for The Music Man Junior

Student Government Association Holiday Drive

The SGA would like to sincerely thank the generous Weston Middle School community for the amazing and wonderful support of our Holiday Toy Drive this year, benefitting Columbus Annex School in Bridgeport and Weston families in need. It was our best year thanks to all of your support. Our seventh-grade was particularly active this year in supporting and collecting gifts for our drive through their giving tree activity. On Wednesday, December 17, just under 800 toys and gifts were delivered to Columbus Annex School. The students and staff were so grateful to the Weston community. We also collected over \$100 in monetary and gift card donations for Weston Social Services to provide to families in need this year.



TEDx WMSbethechange 2014

WMS eighth graders participated in a research unit that was driven by the question, "What don't you like about our world?" It culminated in TED talks about the various topics and issues. Our finalists presented their talks to the entire grade and wowed the audience. Their passion, depth of knowledge, understanding, and overriding message of empowerment was truly moving. Congratulations to all of our eighth graders for reinforcing the need for change and doing their part to ensure a brighter tomorrow.

Celebrating the Season Through Music

The performances of the Weston Middle School band, orchestra, and chorus this past season were outstanding. Over 160 band students began our winter concert series on December 4 to an overflowing auditorium of friends and family. Our sixth-grade band set the bar high for the other ensembles when they started off the evening with their amazing performance of the “Starsplitter Fanfare” followed by two holiday classics, “Fum, Fum, Fum” and “Sleigh Ride.” The seventh-grade band lived up to the title of their first piece “All Star” and left us wanting more after their final performance of “Chanukah Celebration.” The eighth grade demonstrated their mature sound and intonation with an arrangement of Modeste Mussorgsky’s “Great Gate of Kiev.” Many of the audience members were humming along to their final selection “A Cartoon Christmas,” featuring holiday classics as “Frosty the Snowman” and “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer.” The Select Jazz Lab Band and Jazz Ensemble concluded the evening with familiar jazz standards such as “Strike Up the Band,” “Baggy Pants Blues,” and “Straight No Chaser.” Our band directors Ms. Soboleski and Mr. Holmes brought out the best in our young musicians this evening with a varied selection of repertoire, high expectations, and continuing to foster the love and appreciation for music.



On December 9 the baton was passed on to the orchestra, who impressed the audience and left them wanting more. Under the direction of Miss Meghan Smart, the WMS orchestra students demonstrated their musicianship, tenacity, and thirst for learning in their successful musical concert. The sixth grade showcased their large cello and bass sections with a piece called Cello Squadron: a piece that quotes Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyrie. The seventh grade demonstrated their mastery of major versus minor tonalities with a Bach concerto and an original composition that had completely opposing musical characters. The WMS Chamber orchestra and eighth grade orchestras showed off their musical maturity with pieces such as “Cincopations” by Richard Meyer (a piece with asymmetric rhythm) and an arrangement of Gustav Holst’s “Jupiter” from *The Planets*. These students represent a growing strings program in Weston and their performance suggests that they enjoy playing tremendously.



Our chorus continued the high level of musicianship with another exceptional concert on January 15. Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Moretti shared the stage with the middle and intermediate school choruses in a combined concert featuring our students in fifth through eighth grade. The performing ensembles included all of the grade level choruses and the WMS Chamber Singers. Our chorus members delighted family and friends with beautiful songs of the season, warming the hearts of the audience with pieces like “Please, Let it Snow,” “Starry Night of the Winter,” and “Once Upon A December.” A special selection was chosen to close the concert featuring a brass quartet and all of the ensembles singing “Ode to Peace,” based on the finale from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in D minor. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Mrs. Moretti, who graciously filled in for Mrs. Morris while she was out on maternity leave.



National Computer Science Week



In December, we participated in National Computer Science Week by inviting students to participate in a variety of coding/programming experiences. In an after-school workshop, 40 students worked in the program Scratch to look at how variables work in the coding world. Matt Smith, a WMS parent, led this popular workshop. The 20 students who participated in the lunchtime programs worked in Scratch to design basic animations in the form of a holiday card. Additional resources were provided to students including Code.org, CodeAcademy, Tynker/KidsWorld, and Tynker. We are

exploring other opportunities for students to continue this work with coding and programming.

PBIS: Weston Middle School's Giving Tree

Students at WMS really made December a season of giving. During our small-group SOAR Time, students had the opportunity to talk about what the holiday season means to them and brainstormed selfless acts of kindness and how to give back to our Weston community and beyond.

During the week of December 15, our 2014-2015 giving tree was featured in the front lobby at WMS to showcase the acts of kindness from each advisory group. Student representatives from each grade level also made an appearance on the Morning Show to share with the school how they will carry out their ideas. To highlight a few examples, some advisories committed to supporting the SGA holiday drive for both Weston families and K-8 students at Columbus Annex in Bridgeport. Other groups wrote letters to troops overseas and to children at a local area hospital. Some donated books, coats, and other items to various shelters in our area and another SOAR group became “listeners” to elementary student readers at Hurlbutt on December 17. Included is a photo of our students hanging their leaves on the WMS giving tree. Featured is Vanessa Sparagna in grade six who is part of Mrs. Desposito’s SOAR Time group. Her group collected and donated supplies for the DAWS Animal Shelter in Danbury.



WMS “Chat and Chew”

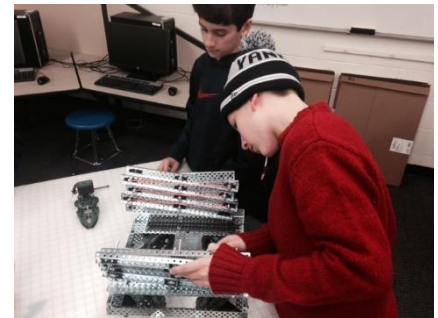
WMS “chat and chew” book clubs are a popular way for students to gather together and discuss current books from the popular Nutmeg Book Award program. Students are invited to bring their lunch and informally talk about a variety of books from the list. Some of the titles discussed so far include *Liar and Spy* by Rebecca Stead, *Shadow* by Michael Morpurgo, and *The False Prince* by Jennifer Nielsen. Upcoming titles include *Insignia* by S. J. Kincaid and *Walls Within Walls* by Maureen Sherry.

WMS Robotics Club Takes Off

The WMS Robotics Club began meeting in early December. The meetings have been brimming with energy and enthusiasm as teams prepare their robots for the VEX Robotics Competition. In this year's game-based engineering challenge, students are faced with the task of designing, building, and programming a robot that will score points by moving colored cubes around a 12' x 12' playing field, and placing them on floor goals and posts that reach as high as five feet. Throughout the process, students are applying knowledge from all STEM disciplines and building 21st century skills.



Over 60 students are divided among eight teams, with each team preparing its own robot for competition. Individuals have stepped up to the plate as leaders, mechanical engineers, programmers, and negotiators as they collaborate to build a successful robot. Along the way students have explored the mechanical and electrical systems necessary to design and build the robot, and learned the language required to control it. Designs are developing, prototypes are being built, and code is being written as we prepare for our first competition at Danbury High School on Saturday, February 7.



Here are what some of our roboticists have to say about their experience:

"It's trial and error. You can't give up. You have to keep at it."

"It takes a tremendous amount of teamwork and focus."

"Teamwork is everything."

"Computer coding has to be precise and it has to compliment the building process."

"Collaboration is important and difficult."

"Everything has to be precise. If you are off by a small amount, the robot will fail."

"It is very important to plan and design before building."

"We have gone through many prototypes to get here."



Short Wharf Prepares for *The Music Man Junior*

WMS Short Wharf presents...

MEREDITH WILLSON'S
**THE
MUSIC MAN
JUNIOR**

Friday, January 30, 2015, 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 31, 2015, 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 1, 2015, 3:00 p.m.

Weston High School Auditorium

Tickets can be purchased online at: www.whscompany.com.

Tickets also available at the door.



In this issue...

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Student v. Staff Volleyball Game
Holiday Gift Baskets
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Grade Level News**Third Grade**

This month, third graders have begun a new social studies unit that has them learning about the town of Weston. Students are studying the Town's history and geography, as well as hearing about some of the important people who helped found and shape our Town. The students are also talking to their families to find out what brought them to Weston, as well as to America. Students will be visiting the Weston Historical Society later in the year to hear more about the founding of Weston and to view firsthand the many artifacts that have been used throughout the history of our town.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade, the students began their science unit on magnetism and electricity. They are learning that electricity in circuits can be transformed into light, heat, sound, and magnetic effects, as well learning that magnets can make objects move without direct contact between the object and the magnet. Students are learning to construct closed and series circuits, and will explore the role of electrical and magnetic energy in our world.

Fifth Grade

Fifth graders have been working in an informational text unit, specifically studying non-fiction structures and features. As they wrap up the unit, they are using their reading skills and strategies to look closely at current event articles and develop their knowledge of the world. Students have accessed information through both digital print as well as publications such as *Time for Kids*.

**All-School Sing-Along**

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 work with the students so that each grade level has several songs that they can perform during the assembly. The songs come from many parts of the world, and the students sing in English as well as in Spanish and Hebrew. This year, two very talented student musicians joined the singers and performed during the assembly on piano and violin. The students and staff were also treated to a

performance by a small choral ensemble composed of faculty members. The assembly was a fun time for all, and culminated in a joyous all-school sing-along with students and staff joining together to share our love of singing and being together.

Staff v. Students Volleyball Game

Also before leaving for the break, our fifth graders and staff participated in the annual “staff v. fifth-grade students volleyball game.” As a culminating activity to the volleyball unit in P.E., the fifth-grade students put their newly developed skills to work as they challenged the teachers and staff to a competitive game. The student players took the challenge seriously, meeting before school for early morning practice sessions, and honing their skills of working together as a team. Their hard work paid off and yielded a high-spirited game that had everyone cheering and having fun.

Holiday Gift Baskets

In the spirit of the season, each class put together a basket for a family in need. Our students and families contributed food, gift cards, and donations to purchase a holiday meal. All the baskets were overflowing when turned over to Weston Social Services in hopes of helping make the holidays a special time for these families. The generosity of our families never ceases to amaze everyone involved.

Chorus Concert

On Thursday evening, January 15, our fourth- and fifth- grade chorus joined the Middle School choruses for a joint winter concert. Our students sang beautifully, to a standing-room only audience, and were then able to watch the older students, before joining them in a final song. It was a very special evening for students and families.



School Spirit



Our assembly this month focused on altruism and empathy. Some students from Mrs. Balzi’s fifth-grade class talked to the students about what it means to be altruistic and fourth graders from Mrs. Verdi’s class shared their ideas about empathy. The student council also shared that WIS would be doing something to give back to our greater community: third graders are donating pet supplies to a local shelter, fourth graders are donating food to the Weston Food Pantry and fifth graders are donating toiletries to help our troops. The teachers and other staff members will be reviewing these concepts with the students for the rest of this year and helping the students to find examples within their own lives.

Parent Presentation on Internet Safety

In December, the PTO offered a very informative internet safety presentation for parents. The presentation was led by Sergeant Matt Brodacki and Officer Joe Mogollon of the Weston Police Department. The officers spoke to the parents about the numerous venues for online predators and highlighted the need for parents to help their child learn to navigate the Internet safely. They also spoke about the devastating effects of cyberbullying and shared some strategies to help guide families through the challenges of online communication.

*In this issue...****Hurlbutt Celebrates a Positive School Climate******Celebrating the New Year******Professional Development******Teaching and Learning******Spanish******Health******Parent Involvement and Links to the Community***Hurlbutt Celebrates a Positive School Climate

We celebrated winter and the holiday season with an all-school sing-along. Hurlbutt students and staff were treated to the performance of a few songs by the WIS fourth- and fifth-grade choir. We enjoyed seeing former students, and they loved seeing their past teachers. These all-school events contribute to our positive school climate and help us build a sense of community. Having WIS join us this year extended that community into a preK-5 community.

Celebrating the New Year

Walk the halls of Hurlbutt Elementary School and you will see many New Year's resolutions adorning our walls. Our students set goals in reading and writing so this practice was very familiar to them.

Professional Development

The early dismissal professional development days provide valuable time for our teachers to further their knowledge and expertise with the curriculum and pedagogy. Kindergarten and second-grade teachers spent the afternoon as a grade level delving deeper into strategies for their current writing unit. Teachers shared best practices and also problem-solved areas in need of differentiated instruction. The teachers then determined how to target those areas in small group instruction so that all children demonstrate growth and development in their writing. Our first-grade teachers learned about the data team process and had a rich conversation about the use of data which then guided our instruction. Feedback from the teachers on the professional development day was very positive. "Helpful and insightful. The work sparked good conversation, helped us set goals and reflect on our practice."

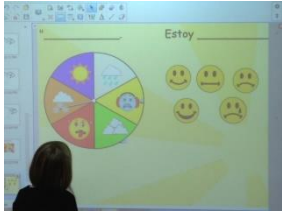
Teaching and Learning

Our kindergarten students continue to grow in their reading and writing stamina. The kindergarten teachers just launched their first informational writing unit of the year. We were amazed at the skills and strategies that our students have carried over from the previous units. They are drafting their "How To" books



and are choosing their own topics. In January, our first graders launched their non-fiction unit. They are so excited to teach their readers about a topic that they know a lot about.

Spanish



Our students recently learned how to describe the weather. They also finished a unit on feelings. To review, they combined the two units and told how they felt about the weather. The interactive smart board brought the activity to life as students activated a virtual spinner. The arrow landed on one of the weather icons and the students constructed a sentence in Spanish. The lessons continue to be taught entirely in Spanish. We are so proud of the enthusiasm and energy our students bring to this program. Muy bien, amigos.

Health

Germs have been the topic of conversation in our health classes. Our students are learning to keep healthy by washing hands, sneezing into their elbows, and keeping their hands away from their faces. They also learned that getting enough sleep and healthful eating helps keep their bodies strong and the germs away. We intergrate literature into the unit with the story, *Those Mean Nasty Dirty Downright Distugting but Invisible Germs* by Judith Ann Rice. Second graders even learned the differences between viruses and bacteria.

Parent Involvement and Links to the Community

Our school community participated in the annual holiday basket drive organized by our PTO. Families were very generous in donating food items and gift cards to Weston families who needed a helping hand over the holidays. It truly was a season of giving at Hurlbutt.

