

# WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT

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Weston High School

Lisa Deorio, Principal

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## PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE



Student government members planned, organized, and implemented open forums with their entire grade groups in order to address pressing issues within the school. Students solicited their peer's thoughts about school spirit, facility concerns, and general needs from student government. Although the primary point of discussion was vaping amongst the student body, students discussed school climate concerns, building facilities, and the overall welfare of the school. Students brought forward their ideas for how to eliminate vaping in schools, how

to help those who may be addicted, and shared anecdotes of how the vaping of others has impacted their lives. They are looking forward to finding productive ways to tackle the various issue thanks to the input from this discussion. The event served as a wonderful example of collaboration and leadership amongst our students.

WestonArts is coordinating an instrument donation day on February 25 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Weston Public Library. A tax deductible receipt from WestonArts will be provided for the donation.

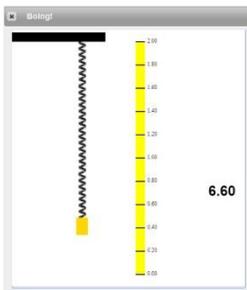
February marks the beginning of our eighth grade transition programming. Eighth grade students and their parents have been invited to attend a ninth grade transition program at Weston High School on February 21 (inclement weather date is February 25). At that time, they will learn about our academic and co-curricular programs, and have the opportunity to speak with student representatives from our various clubs and athletic programs.

On Monday April 1, the date for graduation will be determined and all families will be notified. If we miss school for inclement weather after April 1, the date for the graduation ceremony will not change. Our plan is to have graduation in our air conditioned gymnasium rain or shine. Each graduate will receive six tickets for the ceremony. As you are aware, beginning last year, and moving forward into the future, the school district budget does not provide funding for a tent for graduation.

We understand from the survey recently conducted by the PTO, that the majority of families would like the tent. Therefore, the WHS PTO has graciously offered to handle the collecting of private funds

from the school community. The cost of the tent is \$22,500, and the deadline to raise the funds is Monday, March 8, 2019. [Click here](#) for the PTO website containing additional information. If the funds are not raised, the ceremony will be held in the gymnasium. We look forward to a wonderful graduation for the class of 2019.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



Students in Honors Physics completed a practical midterm assessment in which they used computational modeling skills to complete a simulation of a physical system they had never seen before. Working in groups, they then designed a quantitative lab experiment to understand the real life system. Finally, they compared their lab results to the behavior of their

simulations, demonstrating the data collection, modeling, and problem solving skills that real scientists use when they approach a brand new situation. Students appreciated the opportunity to use computational problem-solving to enhance their learning, made possible by the excellent access to computing resources and physics apparatus maintained by the high school. Great work, physicists!

Three Honors Science Research students attended the Connecticut STEM Foundation's fair on Saturday, February 9.

George Lord, '22 presented a competitive poster in his project, entitled, "Comparing the cost and time efficiency of various IaaS cloud computing vendors for the training of convolutional neural networks."



Makenzie Lehman, '22 presented a competitive poster on her project, "How do Monoglyceride, Sodium Stearoyl Lactylate, and Diacetyl Tartaric Acid Ester of Monoglycerides and Diglycerides Affect the Overall Quality of Baked Goods?"

Grant Kins, '21, presented his project proposal, "Observing the differences in growth, development, and reproduction rate between two fairy shrimp genera, *Thamnocephalus* and *Streptocephalus*."

In other Research news, Isabella Sperry, '20, was one of 16 students out of more than 80 chosen to give an oral presentation on her research at the Connecticut Junior Science and Humanities Symposium March 9 at UConn Health in Farmington. Her project, "The in vitro Effects of Dietary Supplements (Hawthorne, Polyphenol, and Grape Seed Extract) on a Solution of Low-Density Lipoprotein," investigates possible direct interactions between several dietary supplements and LDL cholesterol. These supplements make claims to lower LDL levels in the blood, but have not been tested by the FDA.



The Writing Center had a busy month with 56 students seeking help at the end of semester two and beginning of our new quarter. The Sophomore Writing Portfolio is due May 9, and writing teachers visited classrooms to help students begin thinking about which pieces they would like to submit. Students are encouraged to make an appointment as soon as possible in order to begin revising.

## ATHLETICS

Our cheerleaders kicked off the winter postseason with an amazing routine that earned a 5<sup>th</sup> place finish at the SWC Cheer Championships, which was their best performance at that competition in recent history. Our Boys' and Girls' Indoor Track and Field teams both won gold as SWC Champions at the SWC Championship Meet. We congratulate those three teams and look forward to our other teams striving for the same level of success.

Congratulations to Jillian Belluck and her ice skating team; they won the gold medal at the Eastern Regional Synchronized Skating Championships. The team will compete later this month at the National Synchronized Skating Championships in Michigan.



## AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS



*Filament*, our school's literature and arts magazine, has been selected to receive a rank of **Superior** in the 2018 NCTE Recognizing Excellence in Art and Literary Magazines (REALM) Program. Under the direction of English teacher Mr. Durand, the students work throughout the school year to produce two editions of this magazine. Many students contribute their writing and art. To read this publication online, [click here](#).

The mission of NCTE's REALM Program is to publicly recognize excellent literary magazines produced by students with the support of their teachers. REALM is designed to encourage all schools to develop literary magazines that celebrate the art and craft of writing.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2019 Hudson-to-Housatonic Scholastic Writing Awards. A panel of professional novelists, editors, teachers, poets, librarians, journalists, and other literary professionals selected these works from 2,151 works submitted this year. Noteworthy past recipients include Joyce Carol Oates, Stephen King, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Robert Redford, John Updike, and Lena Dunham. English department teachers would like to celebrate this year's recipients:

### *Silver Key:*

Camden Archambeau, class of 2019, for his poem "Conveyances"

### *Honorable Mention:*

Camden Archambeau, class of 2019, for his poem "New England Diptych"

Hannah Dove, class of 2019, for her poem "Green"

Camille Gitow, class of 2021, for her poem "The Woman of a Thousand Lives"

## CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

The Model United Nations club is engaged in an ongoing simulation about the future of space. During our weekly meetings, students have created a futuristic world set approximately in the year 2101. They have created their own "canon" for this simulation, including the different countries in existence (i.e. the United States of Western Europe). The goal of this crisis committee simulation is to agree

upon a new Outer Space Treaty, which had the students researching and learning about the current treaty that was signed in 1967. Between lunar colonies, a secret Chinese post on Mars, and several nations expressing interest in the moons of Jupiter - the future appears to need the UN just as much as the present day.

In January, the Weston High School Debate Team earned a silver award at the Connecticut Debate Association meet in Wilton. The varsity team of Sean O'Neil and Rebecca Ronai won the highest honors among the 30 varsity teams. Sean was awarded third place as a Speaker and Rebecca received seventh place out of 60 individuals.

Weston also fielded two excellent Novice Teams: Hans Niemann and Jasper Richardson, and Lindsey Greenberg and Knox Watson. Lindsey and Knox won the Novice division with Lindsey scoring as the top speaker followed by her partner Watson in second. Hans Niemann and Jasper Richardson finished ninth in the 32 team division.



In early February the team expanded to 15 members. Pictured are the two varsity teams and three novice teams working on the resolution packet. The debate team is student run and the varsity members coach the novices. Poised to debate are the varsity teams of Sean O'Neil and Carolyn Zech, and Rebecca Ronai and Jane Burdett. The novice teams in their first year of debate are Lindsey Greenberg and Knox Watson, Jasper Richardson and Keona Patel, and Emily Semaya and Sarina Shah.

Weston's First Selectman, Chris Spaulding presented Teen PeaceWorks with a proclamation in honor of February as National Teen Dating Abuse Awareness Month and the club's fundraising efforts. Dr. Spaulding recognized that the establishment of an awareness and prevention month will "benefit young people, their families, schools and communities regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity." The Weston High School Chamber Singers performed for those in attendance.



Our Save the Children Club organized several bake sales over the course of the holiday season. As a result of this fundraising effort and charitable donations from community members, the club is now sponsoring 14-year-old Nicol of Bolivia for the next six months. Sponsorship will help provide needed aid and educational resources for this child. The club members hope to continue to raise awareness and funds in the following months in order to continue their sponsorship throughout the year.



Our Gender Equality Club organized a supply drive for Malta House of Norwalk. Malta House is the only home for pregnant homeless women over the age of 18 in Fairfield County, and one of a limited number of programs for homeless women and their young children. Students and faculty banded together to collect household cleaning items, and much needed baby supplies such as diapers and baby wipes. In the picture, student members with the donations, prior to dropping them off at Malta House.

Three of our Mock Trial teams will compete in the quarter-final round at Quinnipiac Law School this month after successfully winning the regionals competition. The teams that advance will compete in the semifinals. Last year, our A Team advanced to the state level, and we hope to continue that tradition this year.

We have two first place winners at the Annual Sacred Heart University Teen Visions Show this year. Tessa LaPalme for a pen drawing titled 'Snake Girl,' from art teacher Ms. Hawthorn's Advanced Drawing Class, and Lauren Bigelow for an 'Untitled' photograph, in Ms. O'Keefe's Advanced Photography class. The event showcases 100 works of art from 10 local schools.



On Saturday January 26, the Jazz Ensemble traveled to the Berklee College of Music for the 51st annual Berklee Jazz Festival. This is the largest high school jazz competition in the United States. The ensemble did very well with Ethan Klotz winning outstanding musician on saxophone. The group performed two of their three songs by legendary composer and performer, Jens Wendleboe, who also came in to work with the group before the festival. This was our fourth year at

Berklee placing in the top bracket three out of four years. Unfortunately, Berklee also announced that after 51 years, this is the last year of the festival! Look for both of our jazz groups at upcoming performances in February and March.

Students from Weston High School bands, choir, and orchestra will travel to Festival Disney at Walt Disney World the end of February. They will participate in recording workshops with Disney professionals and perform concerts at Disney World.

Student government members organized a food drive in collaboration with Peter's Market to support the Weston Food Bank. Much needed food and monetary donations were contributed by community members, and transported to the food bank by students.

## ALUMNI NEWS

Nicole Murillo, class of 2017, has been named to the University of Richmond dean's list for the fall 2018 semester.

on Weston Road for supporting our schools!