

# WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS REPORT

September 2018



Weston High School

Lisa Deorio, Principal

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## PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE



Weston High School kicked off the school year with our annual Trojan Kickoff on Friday, August 31. The student government organized a terrific pep rally followed by teachers and students taking a unity lap around the track where they formed a "W" on our newly refurbished football field.

We are very excited to announce that our College & Career Center has a new counselor. Ms. Randi Green has an extensive background in the college planning process, having spent 15-years in multiple districts. She is available to guide students through the college process. On September 12 she hosted a senior parent coffee to introduce herself to our community. She will also be a guest speaking at the upcoming PTO meeting on October 5.

Our annual Back to School night will be held the evening of Thursday, September 27. Student schedules will be available in the main lobby at 6:45 p.m. and the first class begins at 7:10 p.m. We look forward to meeting all of our parents. There will be a special *Meet and Greet Your School Counselor* for freshman parents from 6:15 to 6:45 pm. Your students' counselors will be available to introduce themselves during that time.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Writing Center teachers Mrs. Gleason, Mrs. Eisenman, and Mrs. Opidee, visited all English classes to introduce the Writing Center. Students learned how to make appointments and discussed the different ways they could utilize the center. They also reflected on their past successes, as well as their goals for the year. Many seniors made appointments to revise their college essays and will continue to do so all semester. The Writing Center is also coordinating with Structured Study classes to provide additional writing support. We encourage all students to make appointments for help with their first assignments of the year. Use the Writing Center website or the QR code in your planner to book a time as soon as possible.

Sophomore Modern World Studies classes learned about international diplomacy and imperialism through a debate simulation that required students to hone their research as well as their public presentations skills. Students researched how the British government ought to respond to the situation

in the Congo Free State through the lens of specific positions of different members of parliament, and students delivered their speeches in front of their peers in an attempt to sway the class to agree with their argument.

The new Honors Science Research course is up and running, led by science teacher, Ms. Greenberg. Eleven students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, are working on their research plans. We are most fortunate to have a newly outfitted high-tech lab where students will conduct investigations. The following is a sample of their projects: filtering carbon dioxide from car emissions; identifying a molecule that could render a pesticide inert, thereby protecting the environment; and, genetically engineering photosynthesizing bacteria to be more energetically efficient. Applications for admission into this program for the 2019-20 school year will be due in early January.



This summer three teachers attended AP training at Taft School in Watertown, CT. Jennifer Klein was trained in AP US History, Dawn Boulton in AP Environmental Science, and Bill Moeder in AP Micro and Macro Economics.

High School English teacher, Mrs. Eisenman, participated in the Connecticut Writing Project this summer at Fairfield University. The Connecticut Writing Project is connected to the National Writing Project, which was created to study and share best practices in the teaching of student writing. It also encourages educators to take on new leadership roles to enhance student learning. The four-week fellowship in which Mrs. Eisenman participated focused on the teaching and practice of writing. Mrs. Eisenman is excited to share what she learned both in her classroom and in the writing center.

### **AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**

Three seniors, Owen Tanzer, Kayla Zhang, and Carolyn Zech, have been named as semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program. The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. Currently there are approximately 1.6 million entrants each year. High school students enter the National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), and by meeting published program entry and participation requirements.

Senior Kayla Zhang, was selected as a recipient of the Junior Study Abroad Scholarship for her achievement on the National Spanish Examinations in May 2018. She spent two weeks in Spain this past July, studying at University Complutense of Madrid and participating in a number of field trips to other cities. Kayla is pictured below with 23 other students from the US and the program coordinators.



## CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS & ATHLETICS



Fall sports are well under way. Our first home opener was Thursday, September 6, as Pomperaug came to town for girls' soccer, the game ended with a 0-0 tie. Our girls' team won against Pomperaug the following night at an important swim and dive meet; and our football team opened up the season against Friday New Milford and won 35-0. During the pre-season, boys' soccer hosted their annual alumni game. Eight cheerleaders honed their skills at summer camp in preparation for the fall season.



This fall our homecoming game will be against New Fairfield on October 26 at 7:00 p.m.

Weston High School will again host students from Cours St. Charles, a private high school in France as part of our French exchange program. Interested French students will have the opportunity to host an exchange student from November 4-11, as well as the opportunity to travel to France in February. The trip will take place February 14-23, 2019, and will combine a visit to Paris with a homestay with students. Any student interested in participating should email French teacher, Mrs. Del Savio at [lauradelsavio@westonps.org](mailto:lauradelsavio@westonps.org).

Mock Trial auditions were held on Friday, September 12. Any parents with litigation experience who would like to get involved with the team are encouraged to contact Mrs. Del Savio at [lauradelsavio@westonps.org](mailto:lauradelsavio@westonps.org).



Environmental activism is alive and well at Weston High School. Seniors Gabe Toth and Oscar Petersen reclaimed the WHS garden this summer and cultivated vegetables and herbs. On August 31 they gathered their crops and set up a stand at the Lachat Farmers Market. The stand was manned by Gabe, Oscar, Zoe Saldinger, Elliot Metviner, Cade Lahn, and Max Blank. They sold Heirloom tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, rosemary, lavender, dill, basil, and Swiss chard. They raised \$153, which they donated to the Natural Resources Defense Council. These students also donate produce to the Open Door Shelter, a homeless shelter in South Norwalk.

Mindfulness Meditation at the WHS Library Learning Commons: What do LeBron James, Katy Perry, Kendrick Lamar, Martin Scorsese, Arianna Huffington, Jerry Seinfeld, and Misty May-Treanor (beach volleyball) all have in common? They all practice a form of meditation. A lot of people report that by practicing a form of meditation, slowing down, and taking a few minutes to breathe, they find an increase in their creativity, productivity, focus and stamina. And they find a decrease in stress and anxiety.

Mindfulness Meditation will be offered in the Quiet Study Room in the LLC on October 1 between 7:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Students and staff are encouraged to drop in and learn this practice that they can easily incorporate into their lives.

Our annual Club Fair will be held on Friday, September 21, in the old gym. Student representatives from more than 50 student groups were on display, discussing their initiatives and encouraging student participation. From the Animation Club all the way through to the Young Progressives, there was something for everyone! All students are encouraged to get involved with club activities.

The Tri-M Music Honor Society held their kick-off meeting with all 75 members earlier this month. The society discussed several service events such as a community Halloween event, to raise money for the upcoming Music Department trip to Disney, as well as re-establishing Music Mentors for the middle school, a program founded by Weston HS alumni where high school students tutor and mentor middle school musicians. Tri-M has grown and flourished over the last few years, and this year's group is revved up for a musical year!

## ALUMNI NEWS



Congratulations to Max Chayet, a 2018 graduate of Weston High School, who has received a second place scholarship of \$1,000 through the National Spanish Examinations.

Students become eligible for the scholarship by scoring in either the gold, silver or bronze categories on the National Spanish Examinations. Students must then submit an application form along with a sample of their Spanish language writing and speaking. Their written and oral proficiencies are evaluated by a committee. “Earning a scholarship for any student on the National Spanish Examinations is very prestigious,” said Kevin Cessna-Buscemi, National Director of the Exams, “because only 12 students are chosen from among the 150,000 students who take the National Spanish Exams each year.” Students from Weston High School have a long history of high achievement on these exams.

The National Spanish Examinations are administered each year in grades 6 through 12, and are sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.