

# WHS Newsletter

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*“Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody.”  
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

## Principal’s Message:

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The curriculum in our high school is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the schools 21<sup>st</sup> century learning expectations as described in our Program of Studies. Each department has its own unique mission statement and set of learning expectations that are aligned to these learning expectations. This issue of the WHS Newsletter provides just a glimpse of some of the ways in which our departments are meeting these learning expectations.

**The WHS 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Expectations include:**

### Academic Competencies

1. **Evaluate:** Comprehend essential information, context, point of view, and meaning in a variety of media (fiction, non-fiction, film, music, internet sources) in different forms (print, performances, and digital forms).
2. **Think and Solve:** Identify and comprehend questions, issues, and problems through appropriate methodology and focused analysis; create solutions by applying previous knowledge, logical reasoning, and creative thought.
3. **Communicate: Share Authentic Ideas:**
  - a. Writing follows a defined format, style, and structure to its purpose.
  - b. Speaking/Presenting demonstrates proper tone, volume and understanding of purpose
  - c. Creative products are purposeful, high quality, and effective.

### Personal/Social Competencies

**Stand up:** As a member of our community, accept personal responsibility for completing tasks by deadlines, with authentic effort; be accountable for behavior, actions and products, and practice self-reflection.

### Civic Competencies

**Contribute:** Engage in school and community activities to improve our school, local community, and world.

## Business Curriculum News

- Automated Accounting was added to the Accounting curriculum this year. Students use their devices to go through the Accounting Cycle. Students enjoyed the opportunity to engage in real-world Accounting.
- The PENTA Marketing Mentorship Scholar Program is in its third year. This program is designed to bring together high achieving high school business students seeking to experience and explore the management facets of real-world companies. Students also see the involvement of government in business, supporting the concepts taught in business classes, but at a deeper level.

This year we have visited PENTA Communications, and Columbia Tech.

- Increase in students taking Macro Economics
- Budgeting Project incorporated the cost of college into the budget. This was eye opening to the students. This project also opened up a dialog at home with parents.
- Once again business students are doing great in the Stock Market game; there are 500 teams across the state with everyone working individually.

## Computer Science Curriculum News

- Exploring Computer Science 1 - Implemented an Independent Honors Project Semester long Guided Inquiry project developed as part of our PD with Anita Cellucci. Students independently investigated and researched a topic of interest related to computer science. The culminating project was a website sharing their research. Some of the topics students explored were Cybersecurity, Trends in Web Design, Employment Automation, Bitcoin, Medical Applications, Algorithmic Filtering, Hyperloop, and Effects on Daily Life.
- This semester there were 5 sections of Exploring Computer Science 1 with 56 students opting to take it for honors credit.
- The Girls Who Code Club has been meeting twice a month this fall. On February 13, Mary O'Connor from Dell will be speaking at our monthly meeting.

## Math Curriculum News

### **Algebra 1 L4 was added to the Program of Studies.**

Previous to the current school year, there was no path for students in "Grade 8 Math" to move into honors level math for their freshman year. Students who completed "Grade 8 Math" had the option to enroll in Algebra 1 (level 3) or to study the remaining units in the Algebra 1 curriculum independently/with a tutor and take a summer exam. Students who were successful on this exam then enrolled in Geometry (level 3) as freshmen.

As a result of changes in the middle school math curriculum, there was a growing group of students who had a strong performance in "Grade 8 Math" and for whom Algebra 1 was not a challenging course. Ten years ago, there were only 2 - 3 students each year that fell into this category; in each of the past few years there were 20 - 30 students. For these students we have developed the Algebra 1 Honors course. The course eliminates the need for strong "Grade 8 Math" students to study independently over the summer, while providing students with:

- A rigorous math course for their freshman year
- A stronger foundation in Algebraic skills and concepts to build upon in subsequent math classes

- A path to Precalculus Honors in their senior year which is increasingly becoming an admission requirement for many college programs.

### **The curriculum for Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry has been revised.**

In prior years the class was taught as a sequence of separate, distinct units. The course now focuses on an integration of units in order to emphasize underlying patterns of behaviors in the functions being discussed. As a result, student performance has increased and students' comprehension of the concepts appears to be have deepened.

## **Social Studies Curriculum News**

With the advent of the 2017-18 school year, the Social Studies department is now fully implementing use of our own lab. Students in all our core courses are manipulating and assessing artifacts, some close to 500 years old, as supporting evidence while cooperatively evaluating historical time periods.



Seen here are Grade 9 students examining artifacts from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

We are continually impressed by the development of our hallway - wrapping mural of iconic American images and quotes. Inspired by a former member of the department, this years' long project has so far drawn on the talent of more than 13 students over the last 4 years. The mural is serving as a learning tool and students have driven the choice of items and expression applying their learning from the classroom. Seen below is one of our students working on a depiction of Lewis and Clark.



Within the curriculum the department continues to emphasize skills surrounding perspective, evaluating the reliability of sources, posing good questions, defending positions with evidence and civic responsibility.

Rich electives such as *Legal Studies*, *Current Affairs*, *Special topics in Psychology*, and *The World since 1989* promote experiential learning while expanding cultural literacy and civic engagement.

Seen below is our Legal Studies Mock Trial held at the Knight of Columbus Hall. This trial pits 2 sections of the course against each other after weeks of trial preparation. Students work with lawyers, local police officials, and faculty experts in developing their line of questioning and then execute the trial with a jury of community members - many who are retired Westboro teachers.



## Library Curriculum News

The WHS Library Makerspace is continuing to progress. Our first community challenge has been a “Stick Together” collage. Individual challenges, collaborative challenges and integration into curriculum are on the implementation plan.

The American Association of School Librarians has released new standards. The standards contain these [common beliefs](#) that inform the shared foundations and competencies to guide the librarians and educators. A one page information sheet for parents can be found [here](#).

Resources are always available:

[WHS Library website](#)

[WHS Library LibGuides for research projects](#)

**Please contact: Ms. Anita Cellucci, Library Teacher, with any questions. [cellucci@westboroughk12.org](mailto:cellucci@westboroughk12.org)**

**Twitter: [@LibraryWHS](#)**

**Find us on Facebook**

**Instagram: [WestboroughHSLibrary](#)**

## School Counseling

The School Counseling Department has been growing its program to provide more differentiation and choice for students and their unique paths toward life after high school.

New to our program this year, counselors have started offering themed lunch groups twice a month to provide greater access to the School Counseling Curriculum. This is an opportunity for students to look deeper into topics they have already covered in a relaxed, low pressured environment. Themes are chosen based on what is relevant at the time of year and are planned to include topics for all grade levels. Some topics include: Scholarships, Resume Writing, SAT/ACT Testing Plans, and Stress Management.

To help guide juniors through the college application and post-secondary planning process, counselors will soon be meeting with their students in small groups, followed by one-on-one conferences with each student to help them take the next steps toward their future. This year we are facilitating their individual plans by offering the opportunity to explore a wider variety of post-secondary options during the research segment of the small-group sessions. Counselors are developing guided research and reflection prompts on College Characteristics, the Military, Technical/Trade Schools, Gap Year Programs and School-to-Work paths. With these available, students will have the choice on which topic to focus on while support of their counselor is close by.

Career Exploration Seminars are kicking off for sophomores. In these workshops, students will learn about how their own individual characteristics can match to different careers, as well as details on specific career characteristics, such as work tasks, necessary skills and education, and salary information to name a few. They will also be introduced to different resources to help them find more information as they continue their personal exploration. During this seminar, students will choose from three different career assessment activities based on what appeals to them most. Activity choices will connect career information to their Personality, their Interests, or their Skills and all activities will be available for additional exploration in the future.

## **Important Dates:**

April 16-20 – Spring Break – No School

April 26 – WFAEA Gala

May 11 – Half Day Students

May 11 – Junior Prom – Pleasant Valley

May 17 – Mr. WHS

May 19 - [Lisa Kaplan 5 K Fundraiser](#) – Follow link for flyer

May 23-24 – MCAS Math

May 28 – Memorial Day Holiday – No School

May 29 – Junior College Fair - Gyms

May 29 – Senior Ball – Boston Aquarium

May 31 – Awards Night

June 1 – Senior Breakfast, Graduation Rehearsal

June 1 – Baccalaureate

June 2 – Graduation

June 6-7 MCAS STE

[Westborough High School Website](#)