

PANTHER PRIDE

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL'S FAMILY NEWSLETTER

2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

ISSUE NO. 1

Vision Statement

All Weston High School students think creatively and critically to problem-solve through project-based, hands-on, applied and relevant learning.



Mission Statement

Weston High School is a diverse school of choice providing innovative learning opportunities that prepares students for college, career and life.

FACING THE "F" WORD: WHY STUDENTS NEED TO FAIL IN ORDER TO SUCCEED BY MS. MCART

The Most successful people in the world have gotten very comfortable with the "F" word – Failure! As basketball great Michael Jordan said, "I've failed over and over in my life. And that is why I succeed." What sets Michael Jordan and other successful failures apart is their resilience, persistence and the fact that they took the time to reflect on their failures and learn from them. They all exhibited something called "Growth Mindset."

To help your student successfully navigate potential failures and move toward success, there are several skills you can model and teach to help your teen strengthen his or her growth mindset.

- Teach them to recognize when they are using a self-defeating,

fixed-mindset voice. (Ex: "I've always been bad at that.")

- Encourage the use of positive growth mindset self-talk (Ex: "I'm not sure I can do it now, but I can learn it with time and effort.")
- Talk about each failure don't avoid
- Discuss what new learning occurred during the failed attempt
- Reflect on any criticisms given and then act on them
- Make a plan for how to make things better the next time
- Identify people to ask for feedback and information
- Identify ways to be open to new ideas

Teens who take the time to reflect on their failures are more likely to

graduate from high school and persist in college and career pursuits. It's like Bill Gates says, "Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose." Clearly, if Michael Jordan and Bill Gates are any indication failure isn't fatal, especially if we help our teens learn to reflect and develop a growth mindset.



YOUR SCHOOL OF CHOICE

"BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE!"



ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

BY MR. NELSON

Thank you for entrusting your students to us at Weston High School. We are excited for this year. Our new staff; Ms. Johnson (Art), Ms. Pounds (Family and Consumer Science), and Mr. Matts (Science and CTE), are working hard, bring quality experience to Weston High School, and a reason to be at school everyday. If you would like to meet them, let us know and we'll gladly introduce you. They would love to meet you.

As you know, Attendance is crucial to student achievement and student growth. Our staff and students rely heavily on parent/guardian and family influence on our students' attendance. Absences matter whether they are excused or unexcused; if a student isn't at school, they are missing crucial learning opportunities. There are new attendance laws that you will want to know. State law now requires that:

- after two unexcused absences, we have a parent/guardian and student conference to discuss the absences and the need to be at school;
- after 5 unexcused absences in a month, or 10 unexcused absences in a year, a petition with the court system is required.

As you can see, it is really important to call when students need to be excused for illness, doctor appointments, court appointments, etc.

Chronic absenteeism is a serious problem and only two or more absences a month lead to chronic absenteeism. A student who misses 10 days or more during a school year is 20 percent less likely to graduate from high school. A high school graduate makes on average \$1 million more than a dropout over a lifetime. If there are barriers to get to school and to stay at school, please, ask your student to talk with Katy Brown, our Counselor.

A NEW WAY TO WIN

BY MS. HERMAN

Confidence is the element that pushes our kids to try something new, to persevere, and to feel ownership in their lives. Real confidence is connected to reality. Those of us who are optimists do not ignore or deny problems—we assume that they are only temporary and will tackle them and prevent them from getting worse. Even recovery from major surgery, dealing with a drastic life change, or dealing with a difficult diagnosis have all been mastered more easily by optimists, according to researchers. Optimists are also more likely to use feedback to improve themselves.

So, how do we build and sustain confidence in our kids?

A major part of building confidence is through responsibility and accountability. We need to build in our kids the courage for them to admit responsibility for their own lives and the choices that they make. Building this responsibility comes through clear and continued "straight talk" about problems and expectations. This straight talk happens through an open dialogue and clear communication about setting clear priorities and focusing on an attention to detail. As parents and guardians, you give your kids feedback on their performance as people while we, as teachers, give them feedback on their performance as students. This feedback, when truthful, does more than build confidence in our kids. It also pushes our kids toward innovation, helping them to seek new solutions to problems they need to tackle.

Weston High School's emphasis on Project-Based Learning (PBL) is the type of experience that provides space for our kids to explore different solutions to problems, and creates an environment for straight talk centered on students unique abilities and interests.

Overall, with "straight talk" at home and at school as we interact with our kids, collaboration and initiative is going to result from the increased and sustained confidence we encourage in them.



COUNSELING CORNER

BY MRS. BROWN

Welcome to a new school year! I hope that you and your families had a nice and relaxing summer. It is my hope that each and every one of our students experiences success this year! Returning this year is our Meals 'til Monday program where students are able to take a bag of food home on Fridays for the weekend. If you'd like to sign your student up for this, please contact me at (360) 618-6346 or kbrown@asd.wednet.edu. Weston offers some great resources to all of our students here during the school day. We have a new mental health counselor team soon along with our new drug and alcohol counselor, Kailee Neumann. If your student has any other needs, please do not hesitate to contact us. We want to ensure that we are providing all students with the tools and support to achieve academic success.

Although June seems far away, it isn't too early to start talking about graduation. I will be working on connecting with students and families to discuss where each of your students is on their path to graduation. If you have any questions, or, would like to set a time to meet, please let me know!

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

BY MR. PEDACK

Everyone in America knows of the Headless Horseman. In fact, most people probably know that he resides in Sleepy Hollow. I would be willing to say many people have seen some sort of interpretation on television, whether it be the TV series Sleepy Hollow (set to premiere later this fall) or the bizarrely colored Tim Burton adaptation of the same name starring Johnny Depp, or maybe if you are a bit older you've seen the old Disney version, narrated by Bing Crosby. But I would be willing to bet big money that most Americans haven't actually read the short story.

Since it is nearing Halloween I thought this would be a great topic to write about. I, in fact, have read the short story by Washington Irving. It is only 25 pages long! Irving wrote this story in 1820 and it was published in a collection of stories that also included Rip Van Winkle, the story of that old dude who fell asleep for a really long time. Both of these stories take place in New York and have a connection to the original Dutch settlers and the American Revolution.

Now the surprising thing about Sleepy Hollow is that it is difficult to read, so I don't blame anyone for not reading it. Even though it is short in length there is a lot of difficult vocabulary, and frankly, a bunch of words that aren't used the same way anymore. I had to highlight and look up words more frequently than I cared to. Here is a sampling: gambol, pedagogue, rantipole, and andirons. Although the words are difficult, the story is well told. The descriptions of the New York countryside and the food are very vivid. From the way it is described I wouldn't mind spending a day in autumnal rural New York during the 1800s.

One common misconception when watching adaptations on TV is that they make the protagonist Ichabod Crane seem like a good guy. In the story, he is detestable. He is greedy, naïve, manipulative and a mean teacher. So when the Headless Horseman, chases him down in the climax, the reader doesn't actually feel bad for the guy. I wanted what was coming to Ichabod and that was for him to get chased out of Tarry Town.

If you find that you or your student is bored come Halloween, pull up a copy of Washington Irving's classic tale, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and give it a chance. You won't be disappointed. And if that doesn't convince you, it is free on the Internet if you type in the title on Google.

“Winners are not people who never fail, but people who never quit!”

District Non-Discrimination Notice Arlington Public Schools provides equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The District will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to individuals with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities.

The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

TITLE IX OFFICER AND COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR

Mr. Mike Johnson
Executive Director, Human Resources
315 N French Ave.
Arlington, WA 98223

360.618.6212

mjohnson@asd.wednet.edu

Revised & adopted October 2016

SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

Ms. Kathy Ehman
Assistant Superintendent
315 N French Ave,
Arlington, WA 98223

360.618.6207

kehman@asd.wednet.ed

Weston High School
4407 172nd Street NE
Arlington, WA 98223
360-618-6340

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