

# PANTHER PRIDE

## WESTON HIGH SCHOOL'S FAMILY NEWSLETTER

2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

ISSUE NO. 10

### 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.

## WHY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE? BY MR. NELSON

Traditional school discipline generally assumes that for every offense there is a corresponding consequence, which penalizes the student for that offense. When we think about the purpose of education, to learn; students have to be in school in order for students to learn. How are the consequences really teaching a student corrective behavior? By following traditional school discipline models, the student could receive a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion. When a student gets into a fight, for example, the student is most often suspended or excluded from school. While that student is suspended or expelled, the student is not learning, deterring from the primary premise of education. Some might argue that the punishment is the learning. However, a day out of school during which learning is not happening and during which the student is hanging out, does not address the offense or the person or community offended. Those hurt feelings continue unresolved.

Students who respond to challenges with the skills they have, and sometimes those skills are not sufficient to handle the challenge, creating an event where students are traditionally disciplined. To keep these events from repeating, teaching the missing skills empowers students to handle those challenges when they arise again, and keeps students from receiving a suspension or consequence resulting from traditional discipline. Students who are suspended are more likely to be suspended again. Searching "Why School Suspensions Don't Work," results in almost 3 million results.

Traditional school discipline has been structured following state and federal laws. Recently, in June of 2016, a new state law regarding school discipline came into effect addressing disproportionality in school discipline, 4SHB1541. This new law:

- Prohibits long-term suspension or expulsion as a form of discretionary discipline, limits all suspension or expulsion to the length of an academic

term, and requires a reengagement meeting that includes the student's family.

- Prohibits districts from suspending the provision of educational services as a form of discretionary action.

Keeping students in school and continuing educational services for excluded students is the trend in education and the law, so students continue learning and staying on track to graduate to become productive citizens. This requires a major shift away from traditional school discipline models. One proven way to approach school discipline is through Restorative Justice practices.

Restorative justice practices, and more broadly restorative practices, use structures and protocols when working in schools. These structures and protocols include using circles and give everyone an opportunity to express their own truths and to actively listen from the heart. These practices can be used to create a greater sense of community and to build closer relationships.

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## YOUR SCHOOL OF CHOICE

### "BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE!"



WHY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?  
CONTINUED  
BY MR. NELSON

These practices enhance a school culture promoting balance and restoration of community.

- 1.) Restorative practices focus on relationships first, and rules second. Staff and students work together in a helpful and nonjudgmental way.
- 2.) Adults and students work to understand the impact of actions on others through collaborative problem-solving and an enhanced sense of personal responsibility.
- 3.) Fair processes that allow everyone to learn from any harm that may have been done. Everyone has a voice.
- 4.) Responses to difficult behavior have positive outcomes for everyone. Strategic plans for restoration and or reparation are mutually agreed on.

This quote by Amos Clifford, Founder and Director of the Center for Restorative Process, sums up Restorative Practices:

*Restorative practices cultivate a culture in which everyone feels like they belong. They build a particular sense of community in which every member – students, teacher, parent, volunteers, aides – feel that they are seen, heard and respected.*

IMPORTANT DATES

April 10-May 12  
CAP 7

May 15-June 20  
CAP 8

May 29, 2017  
Memorial Day – No School

June 14, 2017  
WHS Graduation



EXECUTIVE FUNCTION:

WHAT THE HECK IS IT, AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

BY MRS. SHAUGHNESSY

I recently attended a teacher conference on the subject of Executive Function. In all honesty, I was excited about geeking out with fellow teachers, however, I never expected to leave with a sort of ‘Earth shattering’ moment in my professional career!

**What’s the Big Deal?**

So, let me begin with the definition of Executive Function. Simply put, **Executive Functions are the brain’s awareness of the need to plan.** That’s it. Why is this Earth shattering?? As a teacher, I am often looking for new and innovative ways to teach my students. After teaching for ten years, I know that using my intuition and listening to my students goes a long way toward reaching them, but, like the old saying goes: “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make them drink”. The question I ask myself is: how do I get kids to WANT to learn? This is where Executive Functions come in.

**“What You Want, When You Want It, and How You Can Get It”**

When you teach kids to set a goal for something they want, you are teaching them how to self-determine. For example, if a teenager wants more freedom, as a parent, you can help them set a goal to earn money to pay for Driver’s Education. If they want their license by the time they turn sixteen, this timeline gives them a boundary for when they want to achieve their goal. The next task is for them to decide HOW they will get that license which means, “How will I pay for this?” At this point, they begin looking for a job to help them save up some money. *This only works if they want something bad enough.* In a nutshell, this is Executive Functioning.

**Executive Function in the Classroom**

This conference excited me because it reminded me of how I should be guiding my students. What I came away with is this:

- 1) Your IQ (you know, the measure of your intelligence) isn’t static (you can actually grow your brain);
- 2) Modeling (not on the runway... SHOW kids what you want them to do;
- 3) Instead of doing FOR students, do WITH students;
- 4) To teach studying, question students on what they do, and write this down for them to see;
- 5) Teach kids how to self-regulate (manage themselves) in a way that increases their desire to self-regulate;
- 6) Teach them to have a growth mindset (instead of “I can’t do it” change it to “I can’t do it YET.”); and finally
- 7) Make as many lessons into a game as possible because kids learn best when it is **FUN!**

We use Executive Functions in every area of our lives, so it goes without saying that improving upon them may be the key to a happier and more fulfilling life. If you have any questions about this or any other article I’ve written, please come see me any time.

# WHAT SHOULD MY TEEN DO THIS SUMMER?

BY MRS. HERMAN

While summer is a great time to relax and recharge, being involved in activities during the summer can help your student build motivation and develop key skills that will prepare them for college and career.

Students who are motivated and interested in learning are highly appealing to employers and colleges. If your student keeps busy over the summer, he/she demonstrates the ability to be productive.

How does your teen pick what they should do for the summer? There are a couple of questions that they can ask themselves as they determine the answers to this question. First, "What are my goals for the future?" And, second, "What do I enjoy doing?"

Having a summer job is a valuable experience, but one where your student is going to want to look for opportunities to stick with a job and increase his/her responsibilities to really stand out to future employers. If your student already has a job, then it may be time to ask for a special project from his/her employer or some additional responsibilities.

Finding an internship related to future career interests is also a valuable use of the summer time off, as your student can demonstrate their passions to a future college or employer.

Catching up or advancing with some summer coursework may seem a bit daunting at times, but helps keep your student on track to graduate and allows the development of resilience as your student learns to handle more sustained rigor.

Summer is also a time to build on hobbies or talents. Colleges and employers like to see applicants that can be committed to an activity for a long period of time and show passion and responsibility.

And, my favorite, summer is a great time for volunteer work. Colleges and employers are looking for you to be involved over a long period of time. So, if your student only has the opportunity for a short experience this summer, start thinking thematically. For example, if he/she has volunteered at a daycare or preschool before, finding an experience to volunteer working with young children would be thematic and demonstrate a long-term volunteer commitment.

Let's get out there!

**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  
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Revised & adopted October 2016

#### SECTION 504 COORDINATOR

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