

# PANTHER PRIDE

WESTON HIGH SCHOOL'S FAMILY NEWSLETTER

2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR

ISSUE NO. 7

## 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.

## HOW WESTON IS DIFFERENT BY MRS. SHAUGHNESSY

Alternative school? School of Choice? Everyone comes to Weston for different reasons. Some come here because they are credit deficient; others come here because they've heard it's "easier". Other students say they come here because it's a smaller school, but what does Weston do differently that sets them apart from Arlington High School or Stillaguamish Valley Learning Center? One word: flexibility.

### What we offer:

•**Online learning:** Weston offers APEX courses for students who are able to be self-motivated and work online. This gives students the ability to retrieve credits more easily if they were deficient. Online learning is definitely not for everyone, though! If you struggle to stay motivated or you need a teacher to explain things, this is not the path for you.

•**Project Based Learning (PBL):** You may have heard about our 'school-wide project' on Water Quality, recently. This is a PBL project where teachers pose a question and

students find solutions and demonstrate their learning through projects that they present to the community. It's a way of learning that lets students have a voice and a choice over their learning.

"Studies have proven that when implemented well, project-based learning (PBL) can increase retention of content and improve students' attitudes towards learning, among other benefits"(Vega, pg1). Even better news for Weston students: PBL will be done in most classes during second semester!

•**7-period days:** Some people may groan over taking seven classes per day, but this schedule allows students another opportunity to make up additional credits more easily. With the new graduation requirements of 24 credits to obtain a high school diploma, you need all of the classes you can get (and pass)!

•**Smaller School:** Weston is a small school (~140 students) when compared to a traditional high school. This allows for all teachers to know all

students and create a caring relationship that helps students to succeed.

Students do better when they know that staff cares about them and their success!

•**STEM School:** Weston is considered a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) school. What this means is we provide class options in these subject areas where students can apply knowledge in a meaningful way. This translates to the 'real world' by providing students with real world knowledge in these areas, so careers in areas such as Aerospace, Mechanics, and computers are possible, and our students are more marketable!

If you still aren't convinced on the benefits of Weston High School, please stop by our office to speak with our amazing staff on how Weston serves your child!

## YOUR SCHOOL OF CHOICE

## "BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE!"



## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE BY MR. NELSON

From the book, *Restorative Justice* by Howard Zehr, we find that Restorative Justice is an approach to achieving justice that involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense or harm to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible. Restorative Justice requires, at minimum, that we address the harms and needs of those harmed, hold those causing harm accountable to “put right” those harms, and involve both of these parties as well as relevant communities in this process. Meyers and Evans also state the following key characteristics of schools using restorative practices:

- There is a positive school climate inclusive of all students, where students have a strong sense of belonging rather than being at risk for expulsion.
- Students experience positive learning relationships with adults and one another, feel safe, have high regard for their school community, and are given the opportunity to make things right when things go wrong.
- Culturally responsive methods underpin the schools approach to diverse populations.
- Staff focus on students' strengths, reject deficit explanations for failure, and take agency for successful educational outcomes for children and youth.
- Families feel welcome in the school, participate in activities designed for parents, regularly receive information about how their young person is doing, and are involved in supporting their child's education as appropriate including collaborating actively to address problems.
- Average daily attendance is high, all absences must be excused for valid reasons, and there is timely, daily follow-up by teacher and school when students are absent or tardy.
- Students receive support and encouragement meeting their educational and socioemotional needs, including positive classroom relationships with peers, teachers with high expectations, and teaching that enable them to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Reasonable and well-understood behavior expectations for children and youth are agreed upon, specified, and shared across the school community.
- A comprehensive system of schoolwide restorative discipline policies and practices with clear definitions of behavior and consequences is in place and communicated widely throughout the school and with families.
- Ongoing backup supports are in place – including threat assessment, crisis management, and in-school suspension to deal with severe problems.
- Restorative practices and mutual respect are the foundations for interactions across members of the school community, not retribution and punishment.

Schools that are attributed with these characteristics would be difficult to argue against. Restorative Justice practices provide schools with the tools to engage students in the processes of restoring justice through relationship building.

There are seven staff members from Weston High School attending a two-day training session in Seattle on March 1st and 2nd. We look forward to being able to share our learning through our Parent Newsletter. We welcome your thoughts on Restorative Justice; to share your thoughts via email to our principal, Mr. Nelson, at [wnelson@asd.wednet.edu](mailto:wnelson@asd.wednet.edu).



Traditional school discipline excludes students from education as consequences for certain behaviors and actions. Monitoring data of exclusions from school districts across the state, the State of Washington has determined that there is disproportionality with school discipline in Washington State. Disproportionality means that a disproportionate (or larger percentage) number of students in some subgroups monitored by the state. The State of Washington has enacted new school discipline laws that went into affect this year that promote alternative discipline models to encourage school systems to keep students in school. Restorative Justice practices is a model that Weston High School is researching to address the new discipline laws and that has been known to integrate well with Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), which Weston High School adopted two years ago as a method for encouraging and rewarding positive behavior.

“Fundamentally, restorative school practices recognize that schools are educational institutions, so policy and practice should be educative for individual children and the school community. Because schools are educational institutions, the school’s response to children’s behavior should be consistent with education’s goals of supporting teaching and learning – not punishment, retribution, and exclusion” (Meyers and Evans, 1989).

## WINTER WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSURE BY MR. NELSON

The season of inclement weather is upon us. Please check FlashAlert.net for the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding school closures and delays. You can set up an account on FlashAlert.net and request email or text messages when the District posts a notice.

Additionally, the District will send a School Messenger phone and email message to families and staff when there is a school closure or delay.



## IMPORTANT DATES

February 2, 2017  
End of 1<sup>st</sup> Semester

February 3, 2017  
No School – Inservice Day

February 6, 2017  
Beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester and  
CAP 5

February 15, 2017  
Early Release

February 20, 2017  
No School - President's Day

## YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM BY MRS. ARNOLD-GRINDY

I recently attended a training regarding youth practitioners' role in preventing suicide among adolescents by the Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP) in Seattle. Some of the takeaways from the training I believe are helpful for any adults working with youth, including parents.

### Youth Suicide Facts:

- An average of 2 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 die by suicide each week in Washington State.
- 16% of Washington 8th graders, 20% of 10th graders, and 18% of seniors reported considering suicide in the last year.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Washington state youth.
- Suicide rates are higher among students of color and more than 50% of transgender youth will have had at least one suicide attempt by their 20th birthday; more than 30% of LGBTQ youth reported at least one suicide attempt within the last year.
- Means restriction is one of the MOST EFFECTIVE ways of preventing suicide. If you have a gun or pills in your home, lock them up!
- Most youth who attempt suicide survive.

### Suicide Intervention Tips:

- Show you Care; don't leave them alone.
- Ask the question! "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"; "Are you thinking about committing suicide?"
- Call for help! Crisis lines available for immediate assistance –
  - The National Suicide Hotline – 1-800-273-TALK
  - Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQ – 1-866-488-7386
  - Crisis Text Line – Text "Start" to 741-741
- Watch for Warning Signs – **FACTS**
  - F** – Feelings – Sad, lonely, hopeless, in pain, moody, irritable, increased depression
  - A** – Actions – Pushing away from friends/family, giving away important possessions, using alcohol/drugs, making unsafe decisions, making or researching suicide plans, making art or writing about death, saying goodbye
  - C** – Changes – Changes in school performance, appearance/hygiene, personality or attitude, just not seeming like themselves
  - T** – Threats – Saying they're going to kill themselves, saying goodbye
  - S** – Situations – Has the person had a crisis or trigger situation, especially in the last couple of weeks?

# INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTER SCIENCE

## BY MR. HAUK

Students in the 2nd period Intro to Computer Science class have been working very hard and learning a lot about different programming languages. The introduction to computer science class teaches the foundations of computer science and basic programming, with an emphasis on helping students develop logical thinking and problem solving skills.

Students have been working on codehs.com for their daily lessons, project creation, and class assessments. CodeHS is very engaging and provides a number of supports and resources to assist the students as they explore more about computer science. We started working in a basic language called Karel that teaches the fundamental commands, syntax, and structure of a programming language. We are now working primarily in JavaScript, but have taken time to examine Python, SQL, and HTML languages as well.

Currently, a new computer science course, AP Computer Science Principles, is being proposed for next year. This is the first year that the College Board has offered AP CS Principles and we are hoping to be able to offer it to our students as a follow up to our Intro class. AP CS Principles provides a broad-based overview of many different facets of computer science including web development, programming, basic data structures, digital information, and the Internet.

If your student is currently taking the Intro to Computer Science class, please ask them to show you around our codehs.com class site. If your student is currently not enrolled in Computer Science please talk to our counselor about getting enrolled for next year's classes.

**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](mailto: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](mailto:kehman@asd.wednet.ed)

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