Update from the Waterford Board of Education

The State of Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) has set forth new graduation requirements for school districts to implement by August of 2019. To comply with this mandate, the Waterford High School administration and Waterford Board of Education Policy Committee have worked collectively to revise and finalize graduation requirements and policies that are currently followed in the district. The following are a few of the coursework and credit graduation requirements that have been set forth by the CSDE beginning with the Class of 2023, the incoming Freshman Class at Waterford High School. There will be an adjustment to the number of credits required - an increase from 24 to 26 credits and there will also be a revision to the World Language credits as well as the addition of a Health and Wellness credit as part of the Physical Education requirement. The CSDE has also added a capstone project for upper-class students that is highlighted below.

Board of Education proposed Policy #8021 outlines information for the upcoming Capstone Project. “In addition to meeting the coursework and credit graduation requirements...to graduate high school, each student must demonstrate proficiency in the transferable skills through completion of a Capstone Project in either their Junior or Senior year.”

We are excited to implement the new requirements set forth by the CSDE in the upcoming school year. We are confident that the revisions will benefit our students and better prepare them for their post secondary experiences in the future.

Community Event - Marine Science Day

On May 31st students from Quaker Hill Elementary and Waterford High School, along with many community partners participated in Marine Science Day, an exciting event at Waterford Beach organized by the Marine Science Department at Waterford High School. Groups from the United States Coast Guard, Project O, Mystic Seaport, Seaview Scuba, New England Sailing and Science and many community and parent volunteers setup Marine Science Learning Stations for students to visit. Stations included Whale Exploration, Team Sandcastle Building, Orienteering, Marsh Study, Scuba Diving, Touch Tanks, Project O Seine Nets, NESS Rockin Coast, Millstone Lobster Study, and Remote Operated Vehicles. Over 350 students participated in this hands on learning environment that was made possible by the numerous WPS staff and students, parent volunteers and community members.
Anti Defamation League Training

All students at Clark Lane Middle school recently attended an assembly led by Mr. Kevin Booker of the Anti-Defamation League that focused on being an agent of change and making a difference by acting as an ally to those around you. The theme “Step Up!: Building a School of Allies” encouraged our students to recognize the impact that their words and actions had on others. Students had the opportunity to share their experiences in school, some as ones who had been discouraged by others actions and others who had been bystanders and didn’t provide support to classmates in need. Mr. Booker led a dynamic presentation that included student testimonials from across the country who had experienced discrimination, racism and bullying in many forms, providing our students real life scenarios that they could relate to. Following the testimonials, he encouraged and inspired our students to show respect to everyone and step up to be an ALLY. Mr. James Sachs, Principal at Clark Lane Middle School, noted that through this presentation “students learned how to be an ally for each other, a similar message our Wingman program teaches. We continue to be proud of our students who stand up for one another to their peers.”

"The greatest potential for learning occurs when an individual’s SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, and academic needs are met" -- excerpt from the Waterford Public Schools Mission Statement.

As noted in the section of our Mission Statement above, Waterford Public Schools is committed to enhancing the social-emotional learning of our students and provide opportunities for students to develop strong interpersonal skills that will promote inclusion, respect and acceptance in our district. A Social Skill outlined in the District’s Academic, Social and Academic Skills, states that students will “recognize, respect, and value individual, cultural and racial diversity”. Through programs such as the Anti defamation League’s Step Up!: Building a School of Allies referenced above as well as Say Something, Start with Hello, and Second Step, schools are working intently to provide avenues for students to become positive and compassionate members of our district and the community.

Recently Waterford High School, in conjunction with the Brian Dagle Foundation and East Lyme High School, hosted an assembly for students featuring writer, comedian, and mental health activist Kevin Breel. Through an inspiring and honest message, Mr. Breel discussed topics of depression, mental illness and suicide, while providing hope, promise and new beginnings. Mr. Andre Hauser, Principal at Waterford High School, stated that “[Kevin] provided a great message about being brave enough to ask for help with mental health issues, or to be a friend in need”.

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Congratulations to Zaya Haglund, grade 5 student at Quaker Hill, for winning the Creative Writing Contest sponsored by US Representative Joe Courtney’s office! Zaya’s essay on Debi Thomas was chosen from over 180 submissions. A special thank you to Representative Courtney for taking time for a Q and A session after the award ceremony.

Congratulations to Jada Collins whose invention of an edible straw earned her the privilege of participating at the NATIONAL INVENTION CONVENTION held recently in Michigan. There were 108,000 students who participated nation-wide this year and Jada was one of only 500 chosen to compete at the national level.

Mission of the Avery Point Transition Program: A commitment in providing purposeful work experiences and job exploration while integrating a postsecondary education to prepare individuals in effectively contributing to our society.
The Waterford High School National Art Honor Society participated for the third year in the Memory Project, “a charitable nonprofit organization that invites art teachers, art students, and solo artists to help cultivate global kindness by creating portraits for children around the world who have faced substantial challenges, such as violence, war, extreme poverty, neglect, and loss of parents” [https://www.memoryproject.org/]. This year the NAHS completed portraits of the Rohingya refugee children, an ethnic minority group who fled genocide in Myanmar, where the military was murdering them and burning their villages to the ground. On the news these children have been referred to as the “most unwanted” and “most friendless” group of people on earth. This group now lives in the world’s largest refugee settlement in Bangladesh, where they are slowly learning to smile again. Our students’ goal was to help to create portraits to show these children that they have friends in us and that the world remembers them. This year the NAHS had 27 participants who completed amazing works of art for these children.

For the first time at the culmination of the 2018-2019 school year, three National Art Honor Society scholarships of $250 each were awarded to three WHS Seniors. The recipients were Hannah Ward, NAHS President and Anneliese Adams, NAHS Vice-President and Brandon Cable, Model NAHS Member. The WHS NAHS was very excited to be able to honor their students and assist them in achieving their post secondary aspirations.

Ms. Concascia’s Contemporary Crafts art students and National Art Honor Society students spent six weeks designing and making large mosaics to be permanently installed as a walkway in a large cognitive garden at the Avery Point campus in Groton. Students worked hard to create over 100 mosaics to become the walkway of a labyrinth in the garden. This will be a one of a kind installment that will be enjoyed for years to come. Thank you to Ms. Annette Montoya for giving our students the opportunity to be a part of such a project. Check out the blog to see the gardens progress at cognitivegarden.averypoint.uconn.edu.
Clark Lane Middle School hosted its third annual “SMARTS Night” (SCIENCE . MATH . ARTS . TECHNOLOGY) on May 21st. During this informative evening, the electives and extra-curricular opportunities at Clark Lane Middle School were celebrated and highlighted. Students, parents and the community enjoyed musical performances by the CLMS band, chorus, orchestra, and Ukelele Club as well as drama productions throughout the evening. Some of the extra curricular activities and clubs that were highlighted included Robotics, Hip Hop, Archery, Rubik’s Cube, Wingman, Ecology, and Hogwarts Club to name a few. The event was attended by more than 300 people that enjoyed the many interactive exhibits and performances and was a great way for attendees to witness the many ways that Clark Lane staff engage our students.

With grants from the Barnes Foundation, the Connecticut Office of the Arts, and the OSO, all grade levels at Oswegatchie Elementary School were able to experience an artist-in-residence this school year. The Artist-in-residence project can be in the form of Theater, Poetry, Visual Arts, or Music and are designed to integrate the arts into the classroom. This year the following artists worked with a specific grade level in their field of expertise:

- Kindergarten and Grade 1- L’Ana Burton, dance
- 2nd Grade- Carol Glynn, play writing and dramatic performance
- 3rd Grade- Sally Rogers, songwriting and fairy tales
- 4th Grade- Flock Theater, shadow puppet plays on the history of slavery
- 5th Grade- Songwriting with Chuck Costa and Mira Stanley

The Artist-in-Residence program has provided our students with wonderful insight into the arts and expanding their creativity to exciting new levels.

All-State Musicians at WHS

Three Waterford High students auditioned and were selected to perform in the 2019 Connecticut All-State Music Festival. Chloe Wilson and Ryan Dombroski performed in the All-State Orchestra, and Jenna Milukas performed in the All-State Chorus. The festival was held at the Hartford Convention Center and was a great event. To be eligible to audition for the All-State festival, students had to audition and perform in their respective regional festival. Students then had to go through a rigorous audition for the All-State festival. Congratulations to Chloe, Ryan and Jenna!
Waterford Rotary recently recognized students in all of the Waterford Public Schools who have exemplified leadership qualities as well as community service. The Waterford Rotary, founded in 1973, is part of an International service organization that prides itself on the motto “Service Above Self.”

One student from each elementary school, one student from each team at Clark Lane Middle School, and one student from each grade level at Waterford High School received the Rotary Student of the Year Award. Four WHS Juniors received the Rotary Scholar Award.

Elementary
- Great Neck ~ Maria Campo
- Quaker Hill ~ Ellie Alexander
- Oswegatchie ~ Colleen Sturm

Clark Lane Middle School
- 6th Egrets ~ Gavin Polcaro
- 6th Cormorants ~ Olivia Marelli
- 6th Herons ~ Alexis Hullivan
- 7th Ospreys ~ Karas Boluch
- 7th Coral ~ Kyijong Tenzin
- 8th Sea Stars ~ Kayla Roy
- 8th Terrapins ~ Abby Silva
- 8th Whelks Julia Cameron

The Waterford Rotary would like to announce an informational seminar entitled “Concussion: Fact vs Fear.” The presentation will include diagnosis, treatment and prevention as well as addressing myths in the media surrounding concussions and the controversies surrounding CTE.

The seminar will be on July the 18th at 6:00pm in the Waterford High School Auditorium. It is free of charge (donations will be accepted) and will be open to the public. This is not a sport specific presentation and will be valuable information for any parent (or student) whose child either plays or would like to play any Youth or High School sport.

**PRESENTERS:**

**Keynote presenter: Dr. Stephanie Alessi-LaRosa, MD, MPH** she is a board certified neurologist specializing in the diagnosis and management of concussion, post-concussion syndrome and neurological conditions in athletes. She has completed a residency at UCONN/Hartford Hospital and a fellowship in Sports Neurology at The Sports Neurology Clinic in Brighton, Michigan. Dr. Alessi-LaRosa is the Associate Director of the newly established Hartford Healthcare Sports Neurology Program. She has a passion for educating patients, families, and communities on the topics of brain health and sports neurology.

**Waterford High School and Waterford Youth Football** programs discussing their policies surrounding concussions and practice contact.

**Hailey Lugo (Waterford’s Certified Athletic Trainer)** will discuss the concussion protocols of Waterford High School.

**MISSION:** The mission behind this presentation is to counteract the rumors and negative publicity surrounding certain sports and allow parents to be comfortable letting their children enjoy all the benefits that organized team sports have to offer.

**CONTACT:** John Strecker – Head Football Coach Waterford HS: john-strecker@sbcglobal.net
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- Waterford High School Girls’ Softball Team claimed the title of Class M State Champions.
- Waterford High School Boys’ Baseball Team claimed the title of Class L State Champions!
- Girls Lacrosse - Grace Briggs was named a US Lacrosse Academic All-American.
- Boys Lacrosse - Caleb Holdridge was selected as a US Lacrosse All-American.
- Boys Lacrosse - Alex Fayan was named a US Lacrosse Academic All-American
- Golf - Ryan Sadosky finished 10th overall at the CIAC Boys’ Golf Championship earning All-State honors.
- Golf - Caroline Petchark came in 4th overall at the CIAC Girls Golf Championship, earning All-State honors.
- Track - Sam Menders finished 1st in the Triple Jump at the Class MM Championships earning All-State Honors.

Waterford Public Schools who have exemplified leadership qualities as well as community service organization that prides itself on the motto “Service Above Self”.

- WHS Freshman ~ Tessa D’Agostino
- WHS Sophomore ~ Emily Swift
- WHS Junior ~ Jason Kenniston
- WHS Senior ~ Hannah Ward
- Rotary Scholars ~ Sabrina Chhorn Kody Dow Ryan Dombroski Owen Seltzer
WFCT Honors District Retirees

On June 3rd, the Waterford Federation of Classroom Teachers had the privilege of honoring staff who will retire after the 2019-2020 school year. We are thankful for the years of service that the following staff dedicated to the Waterford Public School district and students. We wish them well in retirement!

♦ Jennifer Radack – Grade 5 Teacher @ Oswegatchie Elementary School

♦ Mark Capasso – Mathematics Teacher @ Clark Lane Middle School

♦ Paula Reid – Paraprofessional @ Oswegatchie Elementary School

♦ Mary Hendrickson – Art Teacher @ Oswegatchie Elementary School

♦ Joanne Beliveau – Paraprofessional @ Clark Lane Middle School

♦ Judith Jacaruso - Library Assistant @ Waterford High School

♦ Jeanne Violette – Paraprofessional @ Great Neck Elementary School

Waterford Public Schools
Gregory A. Benoit, Board of Education Chairperson
Thomas W. Giard III, Superintendent
15 Rope Ferry Road
Waterford , CT 06385
Phone: 860-444-5852
Fax: 860-444-5870
Contact: Caroline Whittaker - Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
E-mail: cwhittaker@waterfordschools.org

Waterford Public Schools is a community of learners that fosters and supports high aspirations, ensuring every student acquires the skills and knowledge necessary to be a responsible citizen, prepared to contribute and succeed in an ever-changing world.