Principal's Message

We have passed the halfway mark! On Thursday, February 2, the third marking period began. Students and teachers wrapped up semester length courses, and midterm exams took place in a number of full year courses. We are looking forward to the opportunity for further academic achievement in the second half of the school year.

Highlighting academic achievement, senior Thomas Glade is recognized as a National Merit Semifinalist. Nationwide, Thomas scored in the top 1 percent out of the 1.6 million students who took the PSAT last year! Thomas is an accomplished delegate of the Model UN and Congress, founded the school’s Strategic Gaming Club, was a semifinalist in the NJ Scholars' Program and a state finalist in the NJ National History Day competition. In school, he serves peers and community members as a member of the National and Foreign Language Honor Societies.

At the January PTSO meeting, Mr. Smolinski, former chair of our Character Education committee, shared two year results of the school climate surveys administered in November 2015 and 2016. The majority of trends were positive across survey categories, and we have identified areas that we are looking to improve upon. Each day, we eagerly undertake the challenge of enhancing the positive culture of our school, brush by an art student or a roller by a student-athlete.

Continuing with one of our character education initiatives, the Citizen of the Month program, wherein staff members nominate students that they feel embody the traits of Highlander PRIDE (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity and a Dedication to Excellence). February’s selected students are: Kyle Little (senior) and Carly Love (junior) - pictured right. We are PROUD of the examples that Kyle and Carly set in school and in the community. Congratulations!

Course requests for next school year were open for entry on the parent portal on February 7. Students will begin meeting with their counselors starting February 15 to begin building their schedules for next school year. A visit to our high school might help bring this process to life for your family. Does your child wish to engage in AP Seminar, the first course in our newly offered prestigious AP Capstone program? Maybe it’s an elective in our outstanding fine and performing arts program? Perhaps you would like to meet some of our peer leaders who can talk about their academic experiences? Maybe a cup of coffee and a chat with me? Whatever suits your fancy and your schedule, we will do our best to accommodate. If you are interested in a visit, please contact Mrs. Stephanie Marquard, Principal’s Secretary, at 973-697-1701 ext. 7000.

Please visit our school web page, “like” our school Facebook page and “follow” your favorite teams, clubs, teachers, students, etc. on Twitter. My account is @WMTHSPrincipal

As always, I encourage you to reach out to my office with any questions, concerns or suggestions.

The winter sports season is coming down the homestretch, and our award-winning theater arts program is presenting yet another outstanding show with this year’s rendition of “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying.” Come out and see Highlander Excellence on display!

Upcoming Events

PTSO meeting - March 2
HS musical Senior Citizen performance / International Dinner - March 8
HS musical - March 9-11
Empty Bowls - March 13
Junior Parent Night / Naviance Session - March 16
GUIDANCE

Scheduling

The Department of Guidance and Counseling is a busy place as planning for the 2017-18 school year is in full swing. In the next six weeks, School Counselors will be meeting with each of their students in individual course selection conferences, reviewing the teacher recommendations, helping students assess their options, and considering the electives in the High School Program of Studies. Students should look for their appointment time on the board outside the Vice Principal’s Office.

With WMHS offering 25 Advanced Placement, six Dual Enrollment and over eighty elective courses in the Visual and Performing Arts; 21st Century Life Practical Arts and Careers: as well as in the Academics, there is certainly something for everyone! The master schedule at WMHS is 100% student centered, created solely based on students’ course requests. At WMHS, we take your requests and strive to build a master schedule in order to meet student needs. We hire staff, purchase textbooks and obtain materials and supplies in an effort to satisfy the highest number of students with their first choice preferences. Therefore, it is critical that you choose your courses wisely. Though the Parent Portal will only be open for a specific period of time, any questions or changes can be discussed at your child’s individual scheduling meeting. Your School Counselors are here to help.

National School Counseling Week

This year’s theme was: Helping Students Realize their Full Potential. Each day, the counselors read inspirational quotes on the topics of compassion, responsibility, dedication, resilience and more. Each message invited students to reach out to them for support in reaching their full potential. School Counselors are constantly looking at the whole child and can bring a unique perspective when working with other important individuals in the lives of their students. When School Counselors partner with their students, parents, teachers and administrators, students find success. Our goal at WMHS is to foster these relationships every day.

Junior College and Career Planning

The time has come! It is now time to begin the Junior College and Post-Secondary planning process. Your school counselors are here and ready to partner with you and your parents in this exciting, yet sometimes confusing, journey. We are here to help you navigate this process every step of the way. We invite students and their parents to attend. There will be prizes and giveaways. Don’t miss this critical first step in planning for your child’s future!

Naviance Informational Session

March 16, 2017 at 6:30PM – Lower Media Center. This is an informative session to provide important information on how to use Naviance/Family Connection for planning and college admissions.

Junior Post-Secondary and College Planning Night

March 16, 2017 at 7:00PM – Auditorium. This is an overview of the entire application process. There will be breakout sessions where you will have an opportunity to meet with your child’s School Counselor to obtain a more detailed look at the roles and responsibilities of each individual. We strongly encourage you to register in advance in order for us to prepare for this informative evening.

Junior College and Postsecondary Meetings

Study findings show that 11th grade students who talked about their future plans with a school counselor were:

- 6.8 times more likely to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- 3.2 times more likely to attend college
- Two times more likely to attend a bachelor’s degree program

Throughout the spring, School Counselors will meet with each of their students in small groups to go over the post-secondary planning process. If you would like to request an individual meeting with your child and his/her School Counselor, please email or call them directly.
ACADEMIC

English Department

The Poetry Out Loud Competition hosted by West Milford High School featured two competitors, Olivia Dell’Olio and Marie Parkin. Poetry Out Loud is a poetry recitation competition, where participants memorize and perform a poem for an audience, which requires hard work, dedication and stage presence. They vied for the win, which, after much deliberation, went to Olivia. Both students performed well. Poetry Out Loud eventually culminates in a national competition, but in the meantime, Dell’Olio is focusing on the upcoming regional event on February 23, held at Bergen County Community College. Break a leg, Olivia!

History Department

The students of History teacher Jennifer Metcalf’s Holocaust and Genocide Studies class, in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, constructed a Gallery Walk in West Milford High School’s lower media center. The display conveyed a powerful message for everyone who walked through it, as it reminded the over 400 attendees about the atrocities committed so long ago, the inhumane acts that continue to occur, and our commitment to the pledge, “Never Again.”

In 2005, the United Nations designated January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, to mark the liberation of the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. According to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, this date is meant to “honor the victims of Nazism, and to support the development of educational programs to remember the Holocaust and prevent further genocide.”

The Gallery Walk included a section on the rise of the Nazis, a 3-D display of the ghettos in Poland, a section on the Final Solution, a special area honoring those who resisted the Nazis, and a display identifying where other genocides have been perpetrated. At the start of the gallery tour, students were asked to reflect on a singular life -- either through hand-carried identification cards or through the images in the “Where Have the Children Gone?” section.

For the past few weeks, Mrs. Metcalf and her students worked diligently to create all the visuals for the Gallery Walk. On January 26-27, they transformed the lower media center into a mini-museum, for which they served as docents for all the visitors. Their hard work and dedication to continuing our awareness of extremely important issues is something that makes all of us very proud.

Students in eleventh grade from West Milford Advanced Placement American History classes will host a History Weekend at Long Pond on May 20 and 21 from 12 noon to 4PM. Students will work in all of the volunteer positions during the weekend and will add a few extra touches of their own. In addition to serving as the usual weekend Greeters and Tour Guides, they will work as museum guides, docents on the site, and in general care for any weekend visitor. There will also be fun activities with Colonial children’s toys that will allow young and old alike to participate and master a new skill. Furthermore, there will be a Colonial/Civil War Bake Sale. Members of the West Milford Highlander Band who are also participants may provide live music during the day. Plan on attending, bring the children, learn the history of Long Pond Ironworks, enjoy lots of fun events, and support WM high school AP United States History classes!

Business Department

Students in Ms. Denise White's Finance class signed up for the H&R Block Budget Challenge. In short, it is a free, virtual finance experience offered across the country. The section they competed ran from 10/6 thru 12/15. The students had to make several vendor selections at the start including bank account, cell phone plan, 401K contributions, apartments, etc. It was hard at first for the students to get used to the frequent transactions and the large spreadsheet, but they did West Milford proud. They placed 243rd out of 1195 teams, TOP 20%!!!
The WMTHS Jazz Choir (Highlands Jazz), directed by Doug Heyburn, won an Honorable Mention, coming in 4th out of 15 bands in their division! Later that same day, the WMTHS Jazz Ensemble, directed by Matt Gramata, came in 1st place out of 13 bands in their division. They also played later that night in the Winners Exhibition! In addition, two judge’s awards were given to Jack McGraw for Jazz Choir, and Alex Kerssen for Jazz Band.

Congratulations to these two groups of students and their directors for their time, effort, expertise, and willingness to go the extra mile.
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Pajama Day

Varisty Club collected over 600 dollars for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital to support children’s cancer research. We weren’t alone as we teamed up with Macopin to collect money for this worthy cause. In addition to the collection, all students and staff were encouraged to wear pajamas on Friday to show support for the cause.

No One Eats Alone!

PAL’s ran a district wide event called “No One Eats Alone!” on February 10th along with other schools in the district and across the country. No One Eats Alone Day is a program created and organized by students, that teach everyone how to make friends at lunch, often the most difficult part of the school day.

CINDERELLA PROJECT

The WMHS’s Interact Club hosted the Cinderella Project dress sale on Saturday, February 18th in the high school’s lower library. The Cinderella Project is not only for prom gowns: the club also collects semi-formal dresses, cocktail dresses, graduation dresses, and even summer dresses. The proceeds of the sale anonymously go toward WMHS school seniors in need to offset the cost of buying prom bids. The project was started five years ago by the Senior members of the Interact Club who wanted to make sure all of their classmates could attend prom. They felt strongly that none of their peers were excluded from this high school rite of passage because of financial difficulties. Any unsold dresses are either kept for next year’s sale or donated to the Cinderella Project Foundation in New York where they go directly to underprivileged girls in need of formal dresses.

Karaoke Night

West Milford High School students showed their karaoke skills at our Karaoke Night, February 15th in the Lower Media Center. The event, hosted by the National Art Honor Society, brought everyone together for a night of voices, snacks and fun!

Athlete of the Week/School Service Projects

The PRIDE Committee updated our Bergen Record’s Athlete of Week Wall outside the Gymnasium. The Football Team began the PRIDE Committee’s movement to transform the look of our school.
ATHLETICS

Cathi Reda has been named the North 1 - Administrative Assistant of the Year by the Directors of Athletics Association of NJ! Cathi will be honored along with WMHS for the "Program of Excellence in Athletics" on March 15th at the Golden Nugget in Atlantic City! The WMHS Athletic Program has been awarded the Directors of Athletics Association of New Jersey (DAANJ) "Program of Excellence in Athletics" Award. Congratulations to all of our coaches and student-athletes for your dedication to character, sportsmanship, educational leadership, and excellence... all of which this award represents.

Congratulations to this month's athletes of the week...

Zack Licursi of Boys Basketball
Celeste Leahy of Ski Racing
Bobby Klein of Boys Basketball
Sabrina Isoldi of Girls Basketball
Trevor Fleet of Wrestling
Siobhan Murray Girls Basketball
Gavin Pagano of Wrestling

The West Milford High School Athletics Hall of Fame is now taking nominations for the first inaugural class of 2018.
Go to www.wmhof.com for nominations.