The Case House Gazette

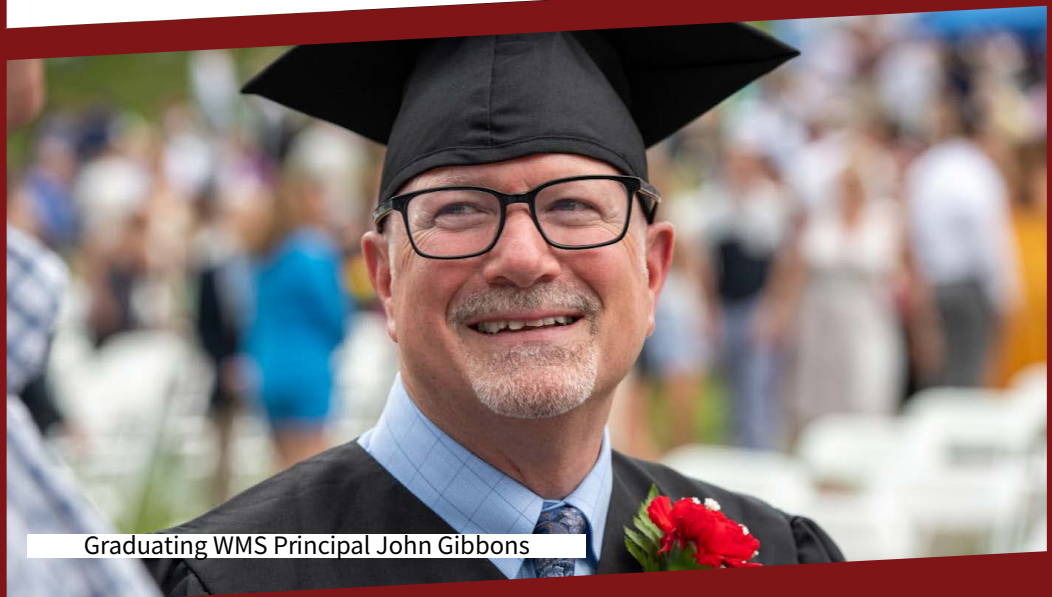
WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 2023

The Graduation Edition

In the realm of education, few milestones hold as much significance as graduation. It is a time when we bid farewell to a cherished chapter in our lives and set our sights on the endless possibilities that lie ahead. Whether it's the culmination of years of hard work in high school or the completion of a dedicated tenure as a teacher, graduation serves as a remarkable milestone for students and educators alike.

With graduation also comes celebration and, to that effect, this edition of the Case House Gazette is dedicated to commemorating the WPS Community—both those transitioning onto their next adventure and those staying with us a little while longer. We hope you will take this moment to reflect on all the accomplishments our community has made this past year, as well as your own personal achievements. At this time of year, there is nothing too big or too small to celebrate.



Graduating WMS Principal John Gibbons

About the Case House Gazette:

The Weston Public Schools Administration works in the historic Case house building, and we publish this newsletter to share some seasonal and annual highlights with WPS students, staff, families, and all our community members.

Click here for previous editions from last spring, fall, and earlier.

Weston also has a weekly district PTO newsletter, called Westword

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- Staff Recognition
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Please click HYPERLINKS, outlined in BLUE

Farewell from Dr. Connolly

Graduating Superintendent Midge Connolly

Dear WPS Community,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this letter to you. It has been an incredible honor and privilege to serve this extraordinary community, and it is with a grateful heart that I bid you farewell.

It is impossible to express in words the deep sense of gratitude I feel for the incredible educators who tirelessly dedicate themselves to the growth and development of our students. Your unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and the well-being of each and every child has had a profound impact on the lives of countless students. I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of your passion and expertise, and I am forever grateful for your tireless efforts.

To the parents and guardians, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your trust and collaboration. Education is a partnership, and your active involvement in your child's education has been instrumental in their success. Your support and engagement have not only enriched the educational experience of your own children but have also strengthened the entire Weston community.

I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of our dedicated staff members who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the smooth operation of our schools. From the custodial staff to the administrative team, your commitment and professionalism have played a crucial role in creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all students to thrive.

Lastly, to the students of Weston Public Schools, you are the heartbeat of our community. Your curiosity, creativity, and resilience inspire us all. It has been an absolute privilege to witness your growth, celebrate your accomplishments, and support you in overcoming challenges. Remember that each and every one of you has unique talents and potential, and I have no doubt that you will continue to achieve greatness in whatever path you choose.

As I embark on this new chapter of my journey, I leave with a heavy heart but also with a profound sense of pride in all that we have accomplished together. Weston Public Schools will always hold a special place in my heart, and I will carry the memories and lessons I have learned here with me wherever I go.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to serve as the Superintendent of Weston Public Schools. Thank you for your trust, your unwavering support, and the countless memories we have shared together. I am confident that the district will continue to thrive under new leadership, and I look forward to hearing about the future successes of the Weston community.

Wishing you all the very best in your future endeavors,

Dr. Midge Connolly
Superintendent of Weston Public Schools

Defying the Storm: WHS Class of 2023 Graduation

Weston High School's Class of 2023 celebrated their graduation in a captivating outdoor ceremony held on the Town Green, defying the looming threat of thunderstorms. With a stroke of luck and a collective sigh of relief, the graduates were able to bask in the joy of their achievements, surrounded by proud family members, friends, and faculty, as the weather held off just long enough to create an unforgettable and rain-free day of celebration.

The Town Green decorated for the day's event

Class President Grace Kirk delivered a powerful speech on transitions

2023

Class Speaker Holden Langenhagen proved that heartfelt and humorous is a perfect combination

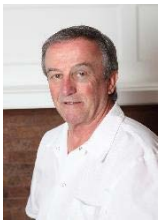
WHS Faculty moments before they led the procession

A tribute from the Class of 2023's faculty advisor:

What comes to mind about this class is their independence. The president (Grace Kirk) did an outstanding with the help of other student officers planning and executing events that brought the class together as a whole. Some of these events this year included fundraising and hosting Special Olympics (4 years total), Senior Sunrise, Black and White Dance, Senior BBQ, Trip to the Beach, Red Sox Trip, Senior Countdown activities, Spirit Days, and more. Grace was instrumental in making these events possible and building positive fun experiences not only for the senior class but for the greater good.

Celebrating Service: WPS Faculty/Staff Retiring in 2022-23

We invite you to join us in expressing our deepest gratitude and warmest wishes to our retiring educators and staff members. Let us celebrate their remarkable careers, their immeasurable contributions, and the lasting impressions they have made on our community. Together, these WPS graduates represent 236 years of service.



Stephen Allen, Bus Driver
WPS Employee since 2012

Janet Cinar, Admin Asst, SPED
Case House
WPS Employee since 2000

Gita Foster, Science Teacher
Weston High School
WPS Employee since 1998

Daniel Gabriner, Math Teacher
Weston High School
WPS Employee since 2004

John Gibbons, Principal
Weston Middle School
WPS Employee since 2001

John Kelly, Head Custodian
Country School
WPS Employee since 1986

Janet Kresl Moffat, Science Teacher
Weston High School
WPS Employee since 1992

Cynthia Neal, Learning Asst
Weston High School
WPS Employee since 1999

Theresa Schmalenberger,
Grade Office, Weston Middle School
WPS Employee since 2002

Daniel Taylor, Science Teacher
Weston Middle School
WPS Employee since 2002

Susan Wylie, SPED Teacher
Woodland School
WPS Employee since 2018

Staff Recognition Day

Weston Public School hosted a heartwarming and well-deserved recognition ceremony to honor its exceptional staff members. The event served as a testament to the unwavering dedication and tireless efforts of the educators and support staff who have tirelessly worked to create a nurturing and inspiring learning environment for students. From teachers who have been going above and beyond in their classrooms for 25 years to administrators who will continue to provide strong leadership until the day they retire, this ceremony acknowledged the invaluable contributions of the entire WPS faculty and staff.

Student speaker Aydin Abramson delivered a speech that made WPS staff members feel a full range of emotions—from joy to sadness to determination. His speech was an inspiration to everyone.

Unable to attend in person, fellow teacher Dr. Boris Korsunsky recorded his sendoff to graduating teacher, Dr. Gita Foster.

WMS teachers Georgeann Bossers and Chris Brown sent graduating teacher Dan Taylor off with jokes and loving jabs.

PTO Year-in-Review: Support, Selflessness, and Something Delicious

The below is an adapted excerpt from the speech given by graduating PTO President Gail Palmer at the June 5, 2023, School Committee meeting.

As a refresher for those who are reading and may be new to the community, The Weston PTO is an all-volunteer, parent-run, non-profit dedicated to enriching the education of our children and fostering community within our schools. Our annual PTO budget is supported by membership dues, printed directory sales and donations. I want to acknowledge and thank the many families who contribute throughout the year by donating their time, as well as refreshments, baked goods and those who make financial contributions for various music, theater, art, athletic and staff appreciation events. We could not do this without your support.

PTO
Weston
Parent
Teacher
Organization

We hope to continue to build awareness and increase engagement, participation and support in the year ahead. Our annual membership drive is now open for the 23/24 school year! So, now is the time to join or renew your membership for the upcoming school year. Membership is $75 per family for the year. PTO membership information is available on the WPS District website or at any of the individual school websites under the "About" tab. Or reach out to me directly at president@westonmapto.org. We thank you for your support!

With the help of our **Community Outreach** committee, we kicked off the start of our school year with a successful back-to-school ice cream social for all three elementary schools. This was held at the Field School playground and had over 200 people in attendance. And for the first time we hosted a back to school social for the middle school. This was held on the same day as the 6th grade visit day and was such a success that we plan to make this an annual event. Our Community Outreach team also helped to organize successful fundraising drives benefiting UNICEF, Hope & Comfort, Bristol Lodge in Waltham, and Weston's Council on Aging.

Our **High School PTO** chairs were busy organizing a variety of teacher & staff appreciation events each month throughout the year including pizza for BTSN, gift bags at Thanksgiving, a first-time holiday cookie exchange, and lunch from the Linden Store during national Teacher Appreciation week. Back in January our HS & MS PTO Chairs collaborated to provide a W branded pompom hat for every teacher, administrator and staff member at both the HS and MS as a New Year's gift. And of course, our HS Chairs continue to work closely with the Class Parents of each grade in the HS and have been busy with many yearend events, dances, and graduation-related activities.

At the **Middle School** our PTO volunteers also organized monthly teacher & staff appreciation events which included delicious meals, snacks, a specialty coffee cart, and a new coffee machine for the teacher lounge. They also hosted a holiday cookie exchange and provided generous holiday gift cards for every teacher, administrator, and staff member. The MS PTO community also stepped up to support a teacher who lost her home in a fire, for a student who was injured in an accident on the way to school, and re-opened the school store which hadn't been open since the COVID shutdown.

At our **elementary schools** (Woodland, Country and Field), our PTO chairs do a lot of collaborating throughout the year. They showered their teachers and staff with many events, including welcome-back breakfasts in September for the teachers & staff, dinners for BTSN, or breakfast the morning after, and provided special meals throughout the year in partnership with our Weston-owned business friends at Jindu, Heirloom and Dumpling Daughter. They also created wonderful, themed gratitude events during Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and St. Patrick's Day and continued the popular tradition of the holiday cookie exchange and restocked the teachers lounges throughout the year with treats, coffee, and general supplies. In October the three schools hosted an amazing Trunk or Treat event in the Field School parking lot. The event was probably the best attended Trunk or Treat on record. There were 32 decorated trunks and lots of enthusiastic candy loving kids in attendance. Field School also hosted the Global Diversity Fair, which was an amazing collaboration between the three schools and featured 36 booths, and 31 distinct countries/cultures and regions being represented by Weston public school families.

One of the biggest highlights of the year for our **Green Team** was the launch of the much-anticipated composting program at the Field School. Our green team leaders worked tirelessly with administration, green team teacher liaisons, and the Town's new sustainability coordinator, Julie Gagen. This composting program will serve as a model for other schools in the district to follow. Huge kudos to our Green Team chairs Heather Borden and Angela Rostami and all those involved for bringing this project to life.

Through our continuing partnership with **BWMPO** – we had a fun social event called Meet Me Halfway at the Trillium Brewery in Canton in October. We hope to repeat this kind of event next Fall. In addition to our joint-Zoom meeting in November, we had an engaging in-person meeting in March at the Epiphany Early Learning Center in Dorchester, which included all 5 building principals and Boston and Weston parents sharing stories, challenges and brainstorming ideas for how to better support our METCO kids, particularly those participating in afterschool sports, theater, and music events. This is an ongoing initiative.

The PTO has also been leading a concerted effort to increase attendance and participation at **Town Meeting**. As you know historically, attendance at Town Meeting has generally been low and typically represents a small % of our town's population. This year we supported a Kids Night Out event, spearheaded by Country School chair, Jessica Kaplan, with a key assist from Henry Moon, who serves as an Instructional Coach, Faculty Advisor and a Parent at Weston High School. Because of their initiative and collaboration, they had over 100 kids dropped off just prior to TM allowing more parents of school aged children to attend. We hope that the Town will help to support similar efforts next year and going forward so that together we can achieve greater participation and representation at Town Meeting.

These are all just highlights of the many ways our PTO volunteers have supported our faculty, staff, administration, students and families.

I am so grateful for and impressed with the team of board members that I have had the honor of working with this year. We have an amazing team of talented, smart, and energized volunteer board members, each of whom are supported by a whole network of parent volunteers at each of the schools that they serve.

The PTO will be officially transitioning to our new board in the next couple of weeks. I am thrilled to have Stephanie Goldstein step up to serve as President for this next school year. Stephanie will do an outstanding job. So thank you to Stephanie for volunteering your time, your talents and energy to continue to support the mission of the Weston PTO.

Weston Athletics—What a Year!

By Mike McGrath, Director of Athletics

What a year it has been for Weston Athletics. Our small town has collected 4 State Championships through the fall and winter season with many spring teams still competing in tournament play at the writing of this article. Looking back to the fall the Cats returned from summer break with a determination like no other. Football, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Golf, Girls Volleyball and Girls Soccer all had outstanding regular seasons which propelled them into the MIAA State Tournament. Boys Cross Country won the 3A championship before finishing 3rd in the State Championship race. Girls Volleyball had a remarkable run to the Final 4 while Girls Cross Country and Golf reached the pinnacle as State Champions. Football sat at the Thanksgiving Day table this year with the sweet taste of victory over rival Wayland in the annual morning contest for the first time in ten years.

As the weather and sport season changed, the success experienced by our teams did not. Boys Swim/Dive captured their second consecutive State Championship as did the Girls Indoor Track team as both squads demolished their competition.

Girls Swim/Dive finished 3rd in the state while Boys Indoor Track also brought home a 3rd place finish. Boys Basketball made a furious run at the end of the season with 6 consecutive wins to qualify for the tournament while Boys Hockey played into the Round of 8 with a solid tournament run themselves. Alpine and Nordic Ski both had amazing seasons and Wrestling saw success with a very young team.

Heading into the spring sports season the thought was how could Weston sports team keep up the incredible success they have had through the first part of the year. Well, not only did they keep pace, but have absolutely taken off. Seven of the 9 sports that are ranked within the state-wide ranking system have finished their regular seasons (state tournament play will occur after the writing of this article) in the top of their divisions: Boys Tennis #1, Girls Tennis #1, Girls Outdoor Track #2, Girls Lacrosse #2, Boys Outdoor Track #3, Boys Lacrosse #4 and Baseball #7. An amazing accomplishment for such a small school. Looking through the teams just mentioned we know the Girls Outdoor Track team finished as State Runner-ups and the Boys team finished 5th in states.

Boys Tennis will look to make it 6 consecutive State Championships, Girls Tennis will look to get past last year's Final 4, same with Girls Lacrosse. Boys Lacrosse will set their sites a long tournament run and Baseball who flipped their record from last year's 3-17 campaign to this year's incredible 17-3 record will focus on continuing to play good fundamental baseball through the tournament. Add in Crew who will send 8 rowers to Nationals after a very successful state championship race and the end of the 2023 spring sports season could be a special run.

At the middle school level we saw large numbers and much success this past year. It is a great precursor for things to come once these Jr. Wildcats make their way to the high school. The fall season is our biggest offering with Girls Volleyball, Field Hockey, Football, Cross Country, Girls Soccer and Boys Soccer. In the winter we offer Girls & Boys Basketball, and our spring sports include Outdoor Track, Baseball, Softball, and Tennis.

The 2022/23 high school athletic season has been one for the ages. We have seen numerous All-Americans, Globe & Herald All-Scholastics, DCL All-Stars, 11 Dual County League Championships, 4 State Championships (not including the spring season which is still in progress), and 4 Boston Globe Coach of the Year recipients again with the spring season not accounted for yet. Additionally, with over 57% of the student-body participating in athletics this year the Wildcats were incredible! *Go Cats!*

Weston Boosters

Boosters is a parent-run organization supporting local student athletes and encouraging community participation in Athletics and other extracurriculars.

Please consider getting involved with Weston Boosters to help support our student-athletes and equip our teams.

Visit WestonBoosters.net or click below to learn more and show your support!

WILDCAT TRACKS

Wildcat Tracks is the student-news website for Weston High School. The site features a wide range of different stories.

Please follow us on Twitter @WestonAthletic. Game schedules can be found on Arbiter-live, and all games played in the high school gym as well as on Proctor Field can be seen live and on YouTube. (Channel: 'Weston High School Live').