

## **Curriculum Committee Meeting**

Wednesday, January 17, 2018 8:15 AM

Central Office Conference Room, 24 School Road, Weston, CT 06883-1623

I. **Call to order**

II. **Presentation and discussion on middle school  
teaming approach**

III. **Update on WHS visual arts courses and pathways**

IV. **Update and report on WHS Writing Center**

V. **Follow-up regarding proposed change to the  
coordination of the district's co-curricular  
theatre arts programs**

VI. **Follow-up regarding proposed change to the  
delivery of the WMS Mock Trial academic  
competition program**

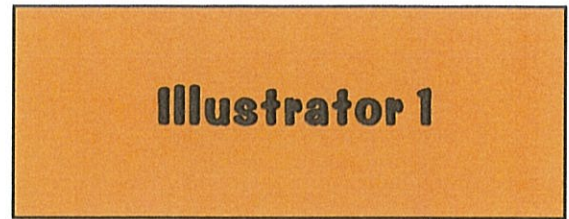
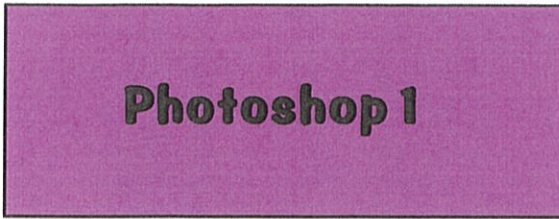
VII. **Approval of December 2017 minutes**

VIII. **Other curricular issues**

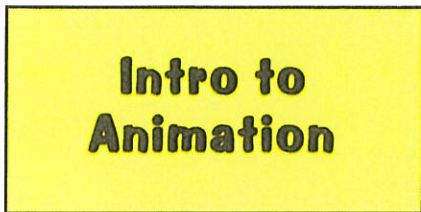
# **Advanced CMD Syllabus Chart**

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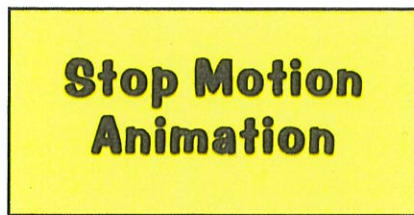
Every student chooses a Tier One unit:



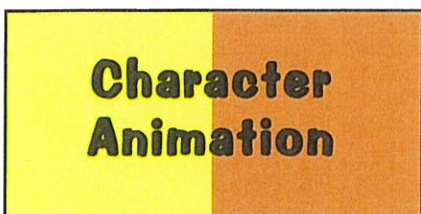
After completing the first Tier One unit, student moves on to a Tier Two unit or the other Tier One unit:



After completing at least one Tier Two unit, student may move onto choice of units (must complete appropriate intro units before starting advanced units - follow colors)



Tier Four units:



Once a unit is started, it must be completed before moving on!  
Students must complete 4 units and a final project.

Date: December 20, 2017  
To: Ken Craw  
From: Sydney Girardi, Visual Art CIL  
Re: Course Changes 2018-19

We would like to propose the following changes to the WHS Drawing class for the 2018-19 school year:

1. Drawing will change from a full year course to two semester courses.
2. These two new courses will be titled Drawing 1 and Drawing 2.
3. Drawing 1 will be a prerequisite for Drawing 2.
4. Drawing 2 will be a prerequisite for Advanced Drawing.
5. Drawing 1 will be prerequisite for Painting.
6. The curriculum for Drawing 1 and Drawing 2 combined will be the same as the current Drawing course as outlined in Atlas.

We are proposing this change in order to allow more students to fit Drawing into their schedule. With the size of WHS, and the number of courses students must take in order to successfully enroll in the college of their choice, students are finding it very difficult to take year-long elective courses. This change will allow them to split the course into two semester courses. This will also allow students to take just one semester of drawing if they prefer.

We are basing our assumptions about this course change on the results of splitting Beginning Videography into two semester courses in 2013. It has been very successful in allowing interested students get it into their schedule. We are hoping for the same result with Drawing.

We are also proposing to change the name of 'Crafts' to 'Fine Art of Crafts' in order to sell it better to parents and students. This means that 'Advanced Crafts' will be changed to 'Advanced Fine Art of Crafts' as well.

The proposed prerequisite change for Photo 1 is as follows:

- There will be no prerequisite for Photo 1.
- Only sophomores, juniors and seniors will be allowed to take Photo 1.

If, in the future, there are resources to set up an additional lab for Digital Photo, the limitation will be removed.

Finally, Advanced CMD and Publication Design will be combined into one choice based Advanced CMD course. Students will have the opportunity to choose from Photoshop Imagery, Digital Drawing, Animation, Design, Web Design, Stop Motion Animation, Character Design and several advanced levels of these areas to create a personalized curriculum.

In order to attract more middle school students into Visual Art, we would like to prepare a WHS Visual Art flyer for the MS and HS Guidance Counselors, at their request.

Thank you very much.

# Visual Art Department Course Offerings

Students must complete at least one credit of the arts to graduate; all art courses count towards this requirement; courses marked with a (T) can count as an (A) OR a (T) course

For the student who enjoys traditional art OR is THINKING OF art school/major:

BEGIN WITH:

DRAWING 1

THEN

DRAWING 2

THEN

ADVANCED DRAWING

AND

PAINTING

THEN

ADVANCED PAINTING

THEN

STUDIO ART

THEN

AP STUDIO ART

For the student who prefers 3-D media:

CERAMICS

THEN

SCULPTURE

AND/OR

ADVANCED CERAMICS/SCULPTURE

OR student can take:

FINE ART OF CRAFTS

THEN

ADVANCED FINE ART OF CRAFTS

For the student who wants to try a variety of media and techniques:

EXPERIMENTAL ART & DESIGN

For the student who is interested in new media and technology:

CONTEMPORARY MEDIA DESIGN (T)

THEN

ADVANCED CMD (T)

PHOTOGRAPHY (T)

THEN

PHOTO 2 (T)

THEN

ADV PHOTO\* (T)

\* student is then eligible to take AP Studio

OR student can begin with:

VIDEOGRAPHY 1 (T)

THEN

VIDEOGRAPHY 2 (T)

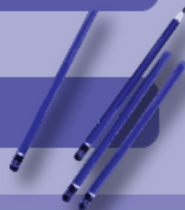
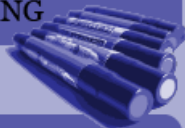
THEN

ADVANCED VIDEOGRAPHY (T)

OR student can take:

TV PRODUCTION (T)

CREATIVE COMPUTER APPLICATIONS (T)

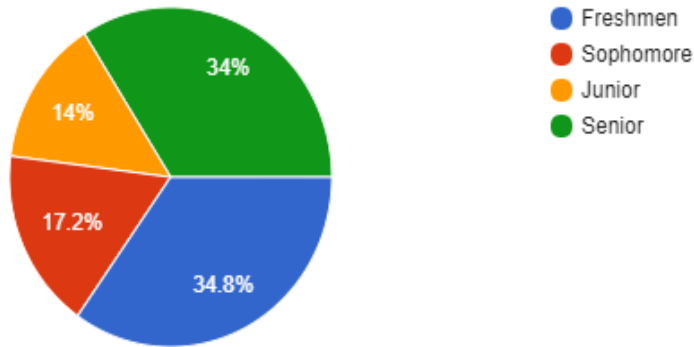


**Weston High School Writing Center Report  
Semester 1  
2017-2018**

Over the course of the first semester in the 2017-2018 school year, 507 students have met individually with the Writing Center. In addition, the Writing Center has visited 102 classrooms in English, social studies, science, and world language in order to meet with students to revise their work.

I. Of the 507, 34.8% (176) were freshmen, 17.2% (87) were sophomores, 14% (71) were juniors, and 34% (172) were seniors.

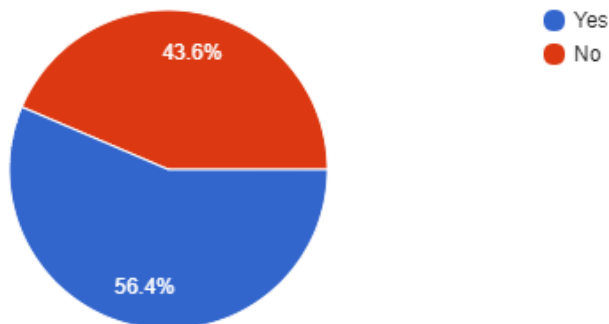
I am a ...  
506 responses



\*Note: One student did not respond to this question on the survey.

II. Of that 507, 56.4% (286) of students **represent unique visitors** to the Writing Center this school year.

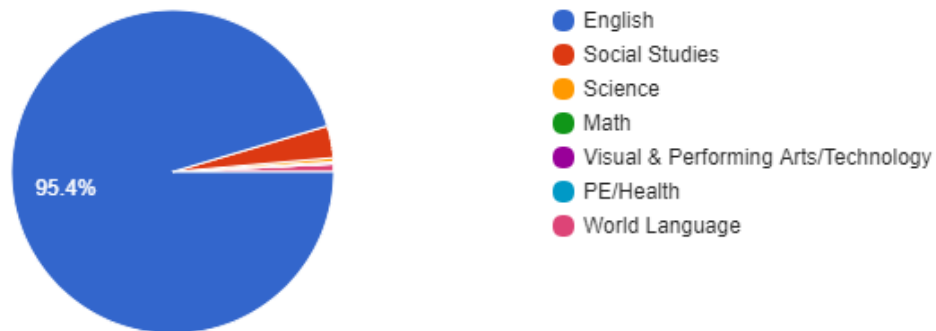
Is this your first visit to the Writing Center this school year (2017-2018)?  
507 responses



III. During the visits, 95.4% (480) of students sought help in English assignments, while 3.2% (16) students came for social studies, 0.8% (4) came for world language, 0.4% (2) came for science, and 0.2% (1) came for visual arts and technology.

### What subject are you seeking help with today?

503 responses

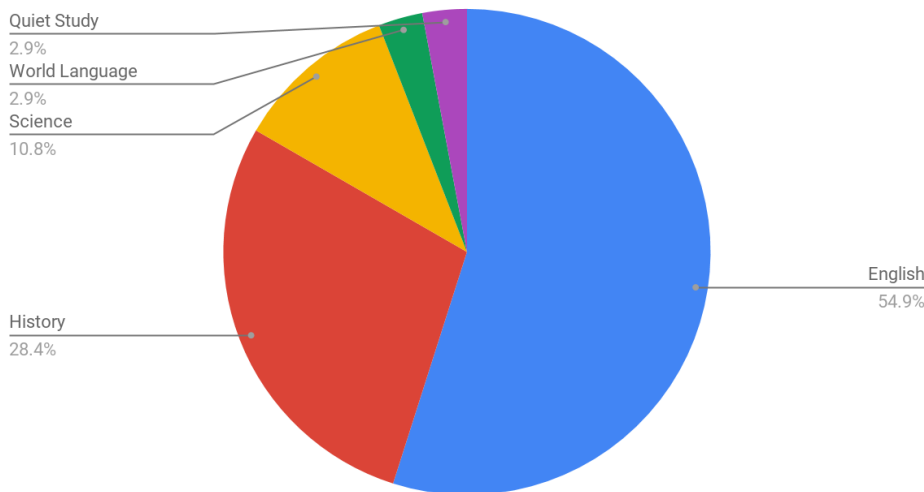


When working with students, the Writing Center saw a range of different assignments. Students made their own appointments using the Writing Center website, however, many stopped by the Writing Center to make appointments with the teachers in person. At the start of the school year, 12th grade students wanted to revise their primary and supplemental essays for their college applications. Often, seniors made multiple appointments in order to revise the primary essay in their application and then revisited the Writing Center to revise the supplemental essays their applications required.

Many 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students scheduled conferences to revise their major writing assignments for English and social studies. In these appointments, the Writing Center teachers worked to help students with their individual needs. Much of the time, students had a specific purpose for their conference and asked the Writing Center teacher for feedback on their work; the Writing Center teachers also helped students to brainstorm and organize their thinking prior to and throughout writing process. For many of the writing assignments, students required assistance and feedback on crafting claims and supporting their claims with evidence. The Writing Center teachers also helped to transfer these writing skills between classes.

IV. In the 102 classroom visits during Semester 1, 54.9% (56) were in English classes, 28.4% (29) were in social studies classes, 10.8% (11) were in science, 2.9% (3) were in world language, and 2.9% (3) were in quiet study classes.

## Class Visits



At the start of the school year, the Writing Center conducted orientations in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade English classes. During the 9th grade orientations, students reviewed their 8th Grade Writing Portfolio. They reflected on their feedback and set writing goals for their 9th grade year. In 10th grade orientations, students were formally introduced to the 10th Grade Writing Portfolio. In 11th grade orientations, students reviewed their feedback from their 10th Grade Writing Portfolio and set goals for their junior year.

The Writing Center teachers have visited 56 English classes this year. In these visits, the Writing Center teachers conferenced with students in small groups and individually to brainstorm, organize, and revise their writing. A major focus for many of the revisions is on crafting thesis statements, topic sentences, and embedding textual evidence.

The Writing Center has visited 29 social studies classes this school year. In these visits, the Writing Center teachers have conducted mini lessons on crafting thesis statements and conferenced with students in small groups and individually to revise and edit their thesis statements. In 9th and 10th grade, the Writing Center teachers visited classrooms prior to students completing document based question essays (DBQs); they worked with students to organize the source material and take a stance on the sources.

The Writing Center has also visited 11 science classes to help students embed research in their reports. The Writing Center teachers worked with students in both small and large groups in order to revise and edit their work. In the world language classes, the Writing Center teachers conducted mini-lessons on persuasive writing, helping students to transfer skills from their English classes to their world language classes. Finally, when visiting quiet study classes, the Writing Center teachers attempted to connect with students who have not utilized the Writing Center so far this year and visited students to offer assistance on whatever assignments they were working on.

### **Challenges**

One of the challenges that the Writing Center has encountered this year is the limited availability of appointments, especially during peak times (mid quarter and end of quarter). Although formal data has not been kept, there have been a large number of students stopping by the Writing Center and/or emailing the Writing Center teachers to ask for appointments when the calendar is full. In order to combat this, Writing Center teachers offer appointments before and after school, however, the Center cannot always accommodate every request.

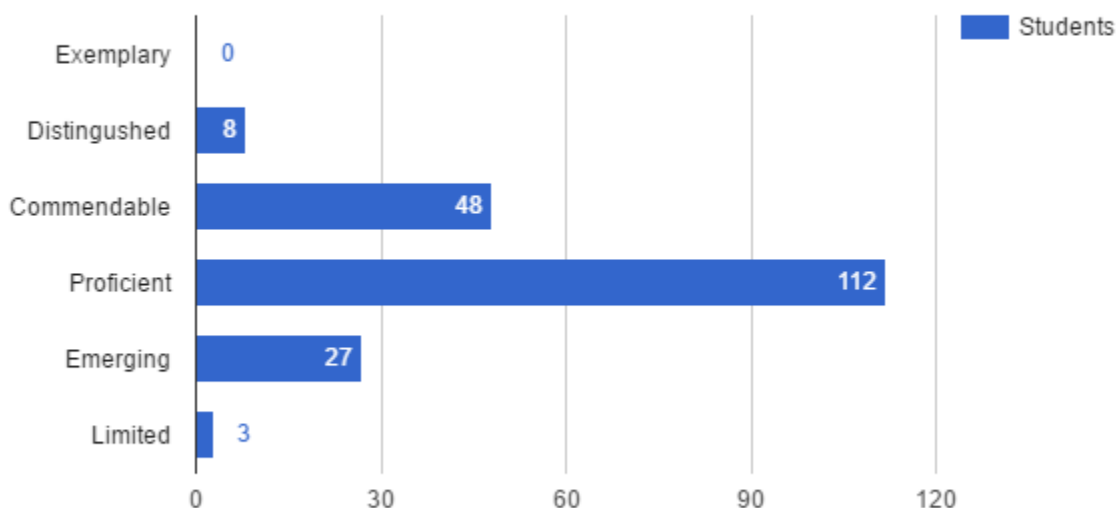
**Weston Middle School  
Grade 8 Writing Portfolio Reflection –  
Writing Portfolio Survey Questions  
Summary Report June 1, 2017**

90% of students (n=177) participating in the Weston Middle School Grade 8 Writing Portfolio were surveyed based on seven structured questions.

**2017 Results**

In 2017, scorers assessed 197 portfolios. Eighty-five percent of students scored at proficient or higher. In 2016, 75% of students scored at proficient or higher.

**2017 Grade 8 Portfolio Scores**



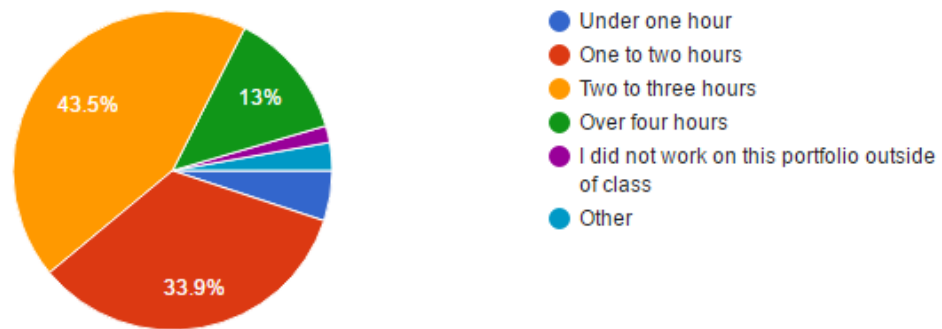
- Students were asked to submit four pieces to the portfolio: a reflective letter, an analytical piece, an on-demand piece, and a student choice piece.
- 23 “expert writers” scored the 2017 WMS Grade 8 portfolios. These scorers represented a variety of subject areas: English Language Arts (4), social studies (4), science (1), world language (1), special education (2), speech and language (1), school counseling (1). There was also representation from administration (1), curriculum instructional leaders for both English and Social Studies (2), and the Writing Center (2). Four teachers from an outside school district representing English Language Arts (2) and social studies (2) also participated in scoring.

Students responded to seven survey questions, with summary data in bold below:

1. How much time out of class did you spend working on your portfolio?

- **Most students (n=77) reportedly spent between two and three hours working on the portfolio, with a range from no time spent outside of class to over four hours. These results show an increased amount of time students spent working on the portfolio outside of class when compared to the 2016 results. In 2016, 41% of students spent one to two hours outside of class and 20% spent two to four hours outside of class working on the portfolio.**

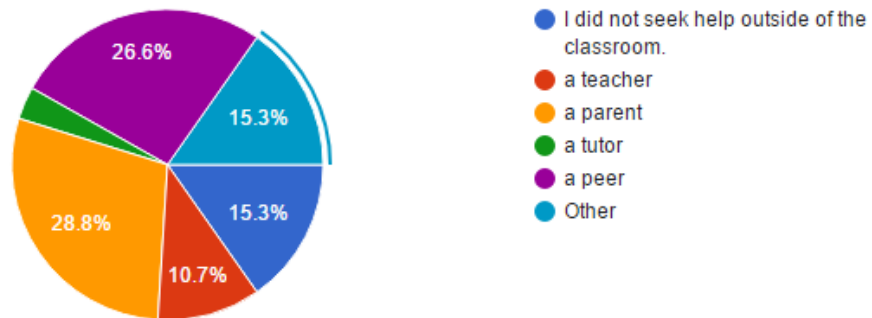
177 responses



2. Aside from the day when you conferenced with a teacher in either your English or social studies class, did you seek individual help from someone (a teacher, a parent, etc.) in developing your portfolio?

- **All students conferenced with a Weston Middle School or Weston High School English or social studies teacher in 2017. Outside of class, 85% of students sought help from another individual, while 15% of students did not access help. Of the students who chose "other," 6 indicated that they received help from an older sibling, 20 indicated that they worked with a variety of the individuals listed below, and 1 indicated that he used online resources.**

177 responses



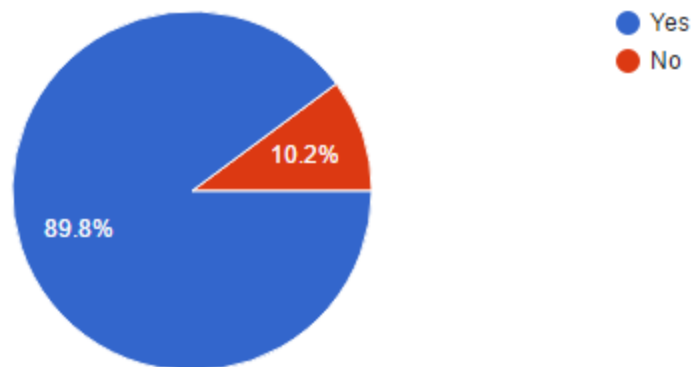
3. Explain why you did or did not seek extra help.

- ***The majority of students (n=125) sought extra help because they wanted more feedback/wanted someone else to proofread their work. Those who did not (n=24) articulated that they received enough feedback during the in-school conferences (9), that they wanted to do the work on their own without outside influences (7), or that they thought the portfolio was fine and needed no further revisions (6).***

4. Do you believe your portfolio is a good representation of who you are as a writer? Explain why or why not.

- ***The majority of students (n=159) stated that their portfolios are good representations of who they are as writers and/or indicated that they were proud of the work they did. Those who replied “no” (n=18) articulated that they did not put as much time into choosing, revising, and/or editing their pieces as they should have (n=13), while others wanted a less formally structured project so they could choose the writing they wanted (n=5).***

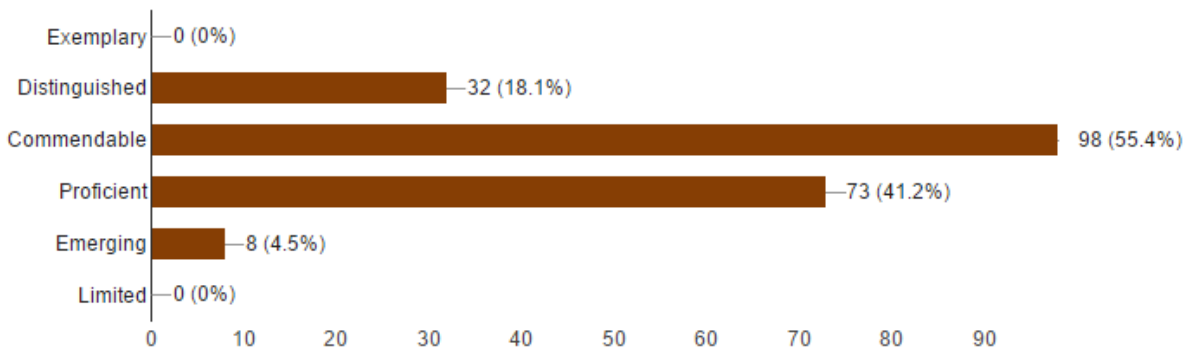
177 responses



5. Review your feedback and the Writing Portfolio rubric. Based on the feedback you received, what do you think you scored on the portfolio?

- ***Students received their feedback without scores attached. They were asked to review the feedback from the scorer and to determine their portfolio score. This scoreless feedback was provided in an effort to aid student reflection.***
- ***Students tended to self-score higher than what they actually received as a portfolio score.***
- ***Students crafted writing goals for 9th grade based on this feedback. These goals will be shared with 9th grade English teachers and Writing Center coordinators. Students will revisit/revise these goals at the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The plan is that these goals will guide them as they continue to develop their skills and work towards their Sophomore Writing Portfolio.***

177 responses



6. If you could change anything about the portfolio process, what would it be, and why?

- ***Answers ranged, and included: more time to work in class on the portfolio (which included suggestions for peer editing and more conferencing with classroom and high school teachers) (n=65), additional opportunities for on-demand writing that could be used in the portfolio (n=8), comments on scorer feedback/a desire to discuss writing with the scorers (n=7), more options or free choice in the selection of pieces (n=6), additional lessons on revision and the opportunity to revise pieces throughout the year (n=3), and less class time to work on the portfolio (n=2). Twenty-two students said they would not change anything. Fifty-seven students provided responses that were specific to their portfolio choices and assessor feedback and not specific to portfolio improvement.***

7. If you could change anything about writing at Weston Middle School, what would it be, and why?

- ***Answers ranged. Students (n=31) articulated, in various ways, an interest in more creative writing. Students also asked for lessons specific to revision, grammar, and/or vocabulary, some of which included more time to reflect and revise their writing (n=19). Thirteen students requested more time to write their process pieces, which includes more time for peer and teacher conferences on writing. Eleven students requested more opportunities for analytical writing. Students (n=9) requested more writing help, either from the classroom teacher or from a writing support teacher outside of the classroom. Two students specifically requested a WMS Writing Center. Other students (n=7) wanted more choice in their writing assignments so they would feel more empowered to then produce better writing. Five students requested additional opportunities for free writes and four students requested more opportunities for writing in general. Forty-six students had no suggestions for changes. Forty students did not offer feedback specific to program improvement.***

~Submitted by Christine Cincotta

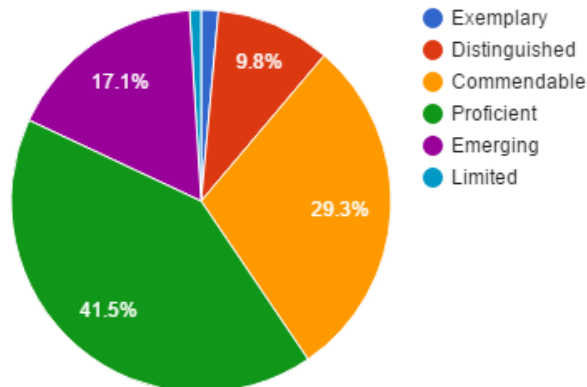
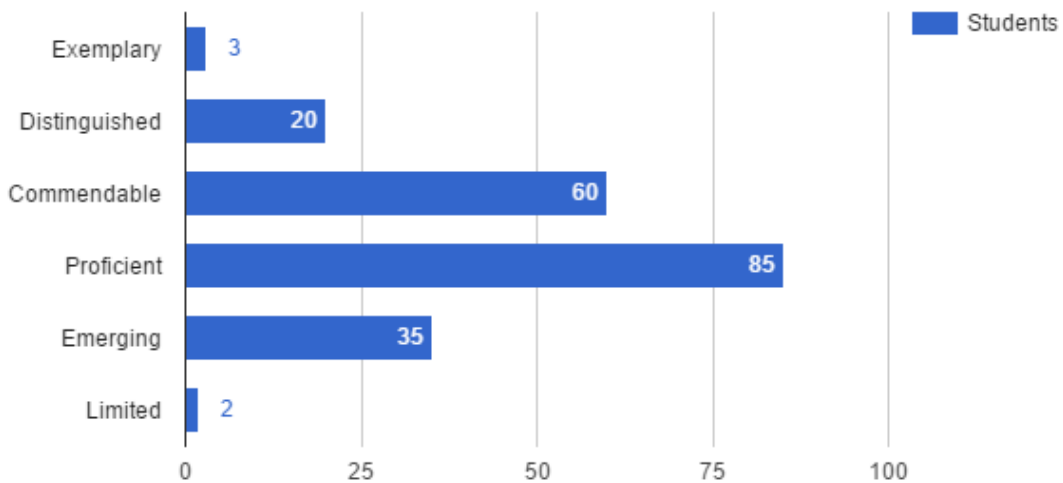
**Weston High School  
Sophomore Writing Portfolio Reflection –  
Writing Portfolio Survey Questions  
Summary Report June 12, 2017**

81% of students (n=167) participating in the Weston High School Sophomore Writing Portfolio were surveyed based on seven structured questions.

**2017 Results**

In 2017, scorers assessed 205 portfolios. Eighty-two (82) percent of students scored at proficient or higher. In 2016, 91% of students scored at proficient or higher.

**2017 Grade 10 Portfolio Scores**



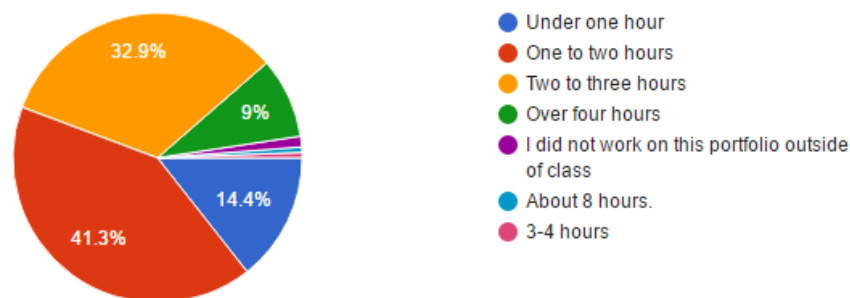
- Students were asked to submit four pieces to the portfolio: a reflective letter, an analytical piece, a creative/personal narrative piece, and an on-demand piece.
- 24 “expert writers” scored the 2017 WHS Sophomore portfolios. These scorers represented a variety of subject areas: English Language Arts (2), social studies (3), science (2), math (2), world language (1), performing arts (1), special education (2), CASE (1), school counseling (1). There was also representation from curriculum instructional leaders for both English and Social Studies (2) and the Writing Center (2). Four teachers from an outside school district representing English Language Arts (2) and social studies (2) also participated in scoring. One retired English Language Arts teacher also participated.

Students responded to seven survey questions, with summary data in bold below:

1. How much time out of class did you spend working on your portfolio?

- **Most students (n=24) reportedly spent between one and four hours working on the portfolio, with a range from no time spent outside of class to eight hours. Ninety-nine percent of students (n=165) worked on this portfolio outside of the classroom.**

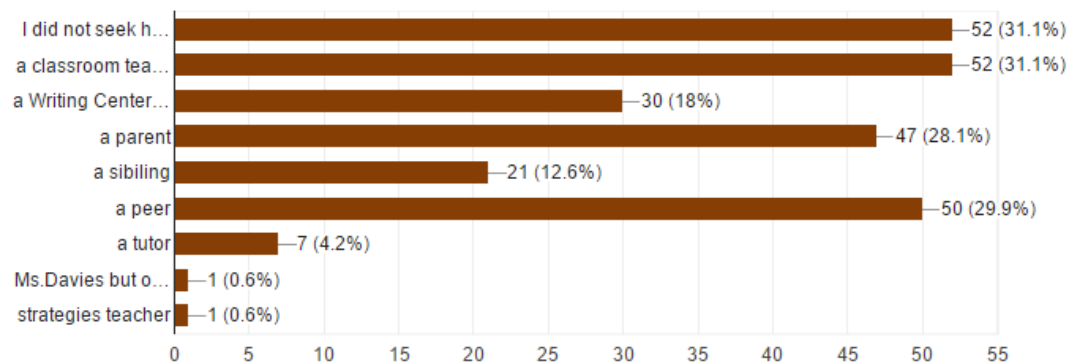
167 responses



2. Did you seek individual help from someone (a teacher, a parent, etc.) in developing your portfolio? From whom did you seek individual help outside of the conferences in the classroom? (Check all that apply.)

- **English teachers built in at least one day for conferences in the classroom. Teachers encouraged students to make appointments and access help from the Writing Center.**
- **Although 31% of students did not seek help from anyone outside of the classroom, another 31% reached out to their classroom teachers beyond the day(s) of conferencing in the classroom. Thirty percent of students also reached out to a peer, which suggests that students value the feedback of their classmates.**

167 responses



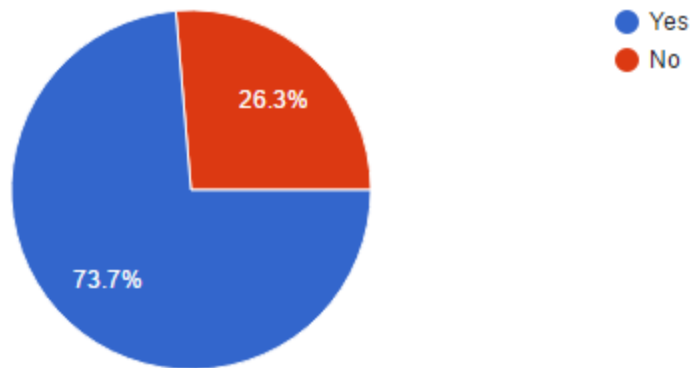
3. Explain why you did or did not seek extra help.

- **The majority of students (n=103) sought extra help because they wanted more feedback/another perspective/someone else to proofread their work. Many of them expressed a desire to make their work “better.” Those who did not articulated that they did not think they needed any outside help (n=22), that they wanted to do the work on their own without outside influences (n=24), or that they did not have the time (n=6).**

4. Do you believe your portfolio is a good representation of who you are as a writer? Explain why or why not.

- **The majority of students (n=123) stated that their portfolios are good representations of who they are as writers and/or indicated that they were proud of the work they did. Those who replied “no” (n=44) articulated that they wanted a less formally structured project so they could choose the writing they wanted (n=27) or did not put as much time into choosing, revising, and/or editing their pieces as they should have (n=10), while others wanted more class time to work on the project (n=6). One student noted that the portfolios were not an authentic task since they were revised or influenced by outside help.**

167 responses

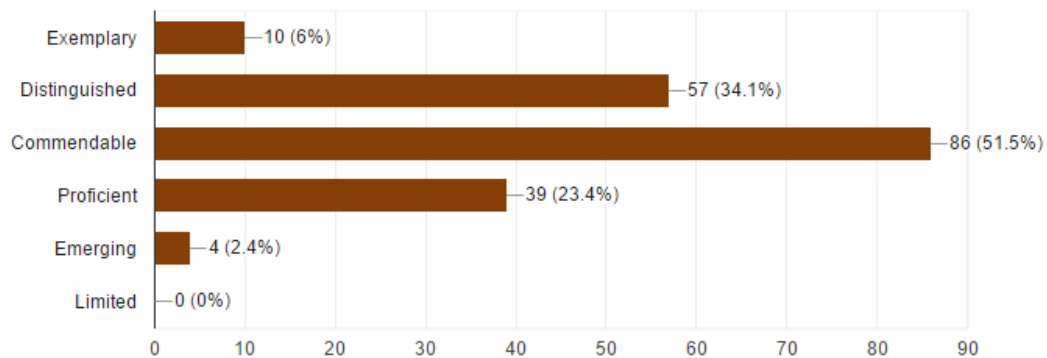


5. Review your feedback and the Writing Portfolio rubric. Based on the feedback you received, what do you think you scored on the portfolio?

- ***Students tended to self-score higher than what they actually received as a portfolio score.***
- ***Students will craft writing goals for 11th grade based on this feedback. These goals will be shared with 11th grade English teachers and Writing Center coordinators. Students will create these goals at the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The plan is that these goals will guide them as they continue to develop their skills during junior year, and will also help us guide students who did not reach proficient on the 2016-2017 portfolio.***

Review the Writing Portfolio rubric. What do you think you scored on the portfolio?

167 responses



6. If you could change anything about the portfolio process, what would it be, and why?

- ***Answers ranged, and included: more time to work in class on the portfolio (clearer directions from teachers, additional time for teacher-student conferences, and including incremental check-ins throughout the process) (n=40), more options or free choice in the selection of pieces (n=19), more options for timed writing (n=8), and a desire to work more with Writing Center teachers (n=6). Twenty-three students said they would not change anything. Thirty-one students provided responses that were specific to their portfolio choices and assessor feedback and not specific to portfolio improvement.***

7. If you could change anything about writing at Weston High School, what would it be, and why?

- ***Answers ranged. Students (n=35) articulated, in various ways, an interest in more creative writing. Students (n=23) also requested more variety in writing types among their assignments and more freedom of choice when writing assignments (as opposed to writing in a specific mode). Seventeen students suggested the more time is spent on process writing, requesting both more time in class to work on this writing and thus gaining more time outside of class to perfect their writing; nine students also requested more time for peer and teacher conferences on writing. Students also asked for lessons specific to revision, grammar, and/or writing in general (n=13). Six students made suggestions to improve the Writing Center (more staff, more information), while six other students suggested that rubrics be more individualized for assignments (as opposed to using the school-wide writing rubric). Other suggestions included more time for free writing (n=4), more timed writing (n=3), and more writing in general (n=3). Thirty-one students had no suggestions for changes. Seventeen students did not offer feedback specific to program improvement.***

### **Writing Center Information**

In the 2016-17 school year, the Writing Center held 986 appointments with most requests for conferences made via its website. There were 315 unique student visitors, which represents 39% of the student body. Writing Center coordinators also visited 75 English and Social Studies at WHS and held conferences/visited WMS classes on three occasions.

~Submitted by Christine Cincotta

## **Curriculum Committee Meeting**

December 13, 2017 8:15 a.m.

Central Office Conference Room

### **1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 8:16 a.m.

#### Present Committee Members:

Sara Spaulding (Chairperson), Ellen Uzenoff, Dan McNeill

#### Present Administration:

William McKersie, Ph.D., Superintendent; Kenneth Craw, Ed. D., Assistant Superintendent; Laura Kaddis, HES Principal; Pattie Falber, WIS Principal; Lisa Deorio, WHS Principal; Carolyn Vinton, K-5 Math and Science CIL; Janine Russo, 6-12 Math CI; Meredith Starzyk, WHS Counseling

#### Members of the Public:

Gina Albert, Doug Ronai

### **2. Report on K-5 science renewal**

#### Discussion:

Ms. Vinton presented an update on the K-5 science curriculum implementation.

- She demonstrated some of the facets of the Amplify Science program and why it was chosen for piloting over other resources.
- Grades K-2 are piloting new NGSS-aligned science units supported by Amplify Science. The intent is to fully implement the program for the 2018-19 school year.
- Grade 5 will implement the program next year as well, and grades 3 and 4 will implement in the 2019-20 school year.
- Some of the challenges to be addressed for implementation:
  - Professional development for teachers that includes content as well as instructional methods;
  - Time allotment for units of study – more time is required in the schedule for science;
  - Dr. Craw commented that the District will review the time allocation with an analysis of time devoted to core academic subjects in the spring of 2018.

### **3. Discussion of WIS new course proposal: Information Literacy & Digital Skills**

#### Discussion:

Principal Patti Falber discussed the rationale for a pilot of this course for the 2018-19 school year.

- Digital technology is currently embedded into the curriculum rather than having a stand-alone course on computing. WIS intends to keep this integrated approach and address some of the challenges presented in this approach with a one-semester course for each grade.
- Students in third grade require introductory keyboarding lessons. The pilot course in the first trimester of grade three would eliminate the need to pull students from core subjects, as is the current practice.

- All WIS students need explicit time and instruction on how to do a proper internet search in order to be able to access information effectively.
- The objective of the course is to provide students with the necessary skills to use technology appropriately and competently to support their learning.
- The intention is to have the course share the allotted time for health so that each grade would have one trimester of Information Literacy & Digital Skills and two trimesters of health.
- No additional staffing, supplies or equipment will be needed. There will be a slight decrease of FTE needed for health.
- Dr. Craw will bring the proposal to the Board for approval at the December 18 meeting.

#### **4. Discussion of WHS new course proposal: Accelerated Algebra & Geometry**

Discussion:

- Most students have now benefitted from eight years of Math in Focus. In particular, grade 6-8 Math in Focus offers an integrated approach to algebra and geometry. The course sequence of Algebra 1 followed by Geometry in high school no longer serves the needs of all algebra students as it repeats many of the concepts covered in Math 7 and 8.
- Many WHS students either double up on math courses as sophomores or take geometry over the summer in order to take Pre-calculus as juniors.
- The proposed accelerated course is mainly a geometry course with strong emphasis on algebra. The course would prepare a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student to take Algebra 2 in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- No increase in staffing is anticipated.
- The proposed course would not require any additional supplies, textbooks, or software.

#### **5. Discussion of WHS College and Career Center**

Discussion:

Ms. Starzyk and Ms. Deorio presented the rationale of hiring a certified college and career specialist.

- The role of the College and Career Center (CCC) has been more in line with a hospitality service of arranging college visits, etc. With the increasing demands of the college timetable, the CCC would benefit from having a dedicated counselor to assist in this process.
- The increased demand from students and parents in the college application process competes with and puts strain on other services and programs provided by the school counselors.
- A certified college and career counselor would provide assistance with college applications, Naviance, college placement counseling, and career programs; as well as help in establishing relationships with colleges and universities.
- The proposed hiring of a certified college and career counselor will be brought into the budget discussions with the Board.

## **6. Other curricular issues**

Discussion:

No other items were put forth for discussion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

June Curiano

Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent