



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

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**An Update on Summer and Back-to-School
Curriculum Work and Professional Growth**
September 18, 2024

The summer offers educators an opportunity to engage in sustained curriculum development and revision, along with professional development, and this summer was a busy one for Westwood educators! We are excited to share some of the many summer highlights from our collaborative work.

Summer Curriculum Projects:

Twenty-five summer curriculum projects, involving 80+ Westwood teachers, took place over July and August. The largest projects, in terms of hours and educators involved, were a series of changes to the High School Social Studies scope, sequence and content, and to develop the Elementary Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) curriculum. The Social Studies curriculum work included preparing for the launch of the new AP US History II course, revising the AP Psychology curriculum, and developing a new Asian Culture elective. The Elementary DLCS curriculum will be taught to students in grades 2-5 this year.

Other projects included revising the curriculum for the new Financial Literacy graduation requirement at WHS, developing the BRIDGE program to support our most vulnerable students returning to school after extended absences, updating elementary math end-of-unit assessments, fine-tuning our Mid-School Math implementation and instructional strategies at the middle school, integrating public speaking skills through the 9-12 curriculum, and much more. We are so grateful to our educators for devoting their time and talents this summer to these important projects, and can't wait to see the impact on our students and colleagues over the course of this year.

Summer Professional Learning:

This summer, Westwood Public Schools offered three professional development courses for staff, developed and facilitated by Westwood educators. Participants in the *Identity and Positionality Bootcamp*, taught by WHS English teacher Leslie Briggs, “explore[d] their own experiences of race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, and ability while considering how these facets of identity impact students in school” (course catalog excerpt). Participants used reflection, excerpts from Westwood student experiences, case studies and research to identify and share best practices for supporting students. Tom Millett, WHS Assistant Principal, offered a course entitled, *The Well-Oiled Wolverine: Plan Ahead to Save Time*, and gave educators tips, tools, and time to practice new systems for organization and efficiency. Finally, district Occupational Therapist Jocelynn Wallach led *Improve Self-Regulation and Executive Functioning for Optimum*

Learning, where participants learned strategies for implementing universal design features and tools to support learners in developing executive functioning skills. Approximately 39 educators participated in these three courses. We extend our biggest thanks to Jocelynn, Leslie, and Tom for their investment in our continued learning, and to PD Coordinator Angela Wilson who curates, communicates, and maintains our PD Catalog and registration for all staff!

New Teacher Orientation:

On Wednesday, August 21st, we welcomed approximately 45 new staff (or current staff, returning to new roles this year) for our three-day New Teacher Orientation (NTO). New staff were greeted by our building leaders and Central Office staff, and enjoyed breakfast together; Superintendent Piwowar gave the morning's welcome and opening remarks. During NTO, educators learned about district technology, our systems for feedback and continuous growth, and the equity work Westwood is engaged in. On the second day, we took the learning "on the road," bringing our new folks together at Hale for a morning of community building and collaborative learning. That afternoon, new educators met their Westwood mentors over ice cream in the High School cafeteria courtyard. Finally, on the third day of NTO, educators reported to their school buildings, and school principals provided key information and time for questions and conversations at the school and grade level. Our newest Westwood staff bring a wealth of experiences, perspectives, and ideas, and we are excited to learn from them as they learn about our district and students.



Image: New Westwood educators listen closely to hear who will win the "Moo-Off" between Preschool Director Dan Tratt and Superintendent Tim Piwowar. Hale educators led our group through a series of fun, sometimes silly, collaborative tasks, and facilitated discussions on how we can transfer our learning to classroom and professional situations.