



The Connection

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPRING 2024

Bringing the accomplishments and initiatives of the Waterford Public Schools to the Town, Community and beyond to create a **Connection** that will reinforce a strong commitment to coming together to educate the whole child.

Top 10 Finalist Cintas National Custodian of the Year

At the March 28, 2024 Board of Education meeting, board members recognized Mr. William Krajewski for being selected as a top 10 finalist for the Cintas National Custodian of the Year award. Mr. Krajewski, better known as Mr. Billy by students and staff at Quaker Hill Elementary School, was nominated for the exceptional service that he has provided to the WPS community for over 30 years. Over 80 staff members and parents submitted narrative essays on Mr. Billy's behalf and the Waterford community has rallied behind him, supporting him in the public vote. Voting closed on April 12th and Cintas will announce the Top 3 finalists and the grand prize winner in late April/early May. We congratulate Billy on this national distinction and we wish him the best in the final competition.



See below for an excerpt from Quaker Hill Elementary School Principal Chris Discordia's nomination letter to Cintas in support of Mr. Billy.

"Billy is excellent at keeping the building in pristine condition so students have an optimum environment for learning. Billy is always responsive and tackles problems with a can-do attitude. Mr. Billy, has an amazing relationship with all of the children that attend our school. If you were to wander into the lunch room you might see Billy reading a picture book to our Kindergarten students about practicing manners, telling silly jokes or allowing students to recite a "joke of the day." Any time a student has a birthday, they know that Mr. Billy will lead the cafeteria in a rousing version of "Happy Birthday to You," and make them feel very special. Mr. Billy knows each of the students by name, and I can truly say that each one of those students loves having Mr. Billy as their custodian."

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In honor of the remarkable life and legacy of former First Selectwoman and Board of Education member Jody Nazarchyk, the Waterford community proudly dedicated the Waterford High School Softball Turf Field in her name. The Naming Ceremony, held on April 22nd, included Board of Education members, Community Leaders, District Administration, School Leadership and personnel as well as a special tribute by Ms. Nazarchyk's family. The field proudly named the Jody Nazarchyk Field will stand not only as a testament to her passion for sports but also as a symbol of her unwavering commitment to serving others and making a positive impact on our community.





WHS Technology Education Teacher Michael Bono was recently selected to be a member of the CSDE Technology and Engineering Standards Committee. This committee was chosen by the CT Technology and Engineering Education Association (CTEEA) and is comprised of CCSU Technology and Engineering Education faculty, SDE CTE and STEM consultants, CTEEA Leadership and teachers of different grade levels, various content areas, and geography regions of the state. Mr. Bono noted “The teachers selected were mostly the leaders of larger work groups that have been meeting remotely and in person over the last 18 months to revise specific content standards and contexts. Our goal is to develop the first State of CT Board of Ed approved Technology and Engineering Education standards document that is in Prek-12 and is aligned with our International Technology and Engineering Education Association’s (ITEEA) Standards for Technology and Engineering Literacy (STEL). This is a huge endeavor because the previous standards drafted in 2014 were Middle School and High School specific.” Mr. Bono led the working subgroup focused on Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (formerly referred to as Automotive) standards rewrite which will “build continuity with the Department of Labor and career pathway nomenclature”. The next step in the process for approval will be SDE review and focus groups input. It is the hope of the committee that the document will be approved by the State Board of Education in the spring of 2025.

Thank you Representative [Joe Courtney](#) for meeting with SNACT today and for being such a great supporter of school nutrition!
#LAC24



THANK YOU
REPRESENTATIVE JOE COURTNEY!



In March, Dianne Houlihan, WPS Director of Nutrition and Dining Services, attended the Legislative Action Conference in Washington DC. In her role as the President-elect for the School Nutrition Association of CT (SNACT), Ms. Houlihan worked to educate and inform Congressional members of the benefits of school meal programs, the challenges faced in the post COVID era and also advocate for school nutrition programs and services in school districts across Connecticut.



On April 4, 2024 Brian Ash, Social Studies Teacher at Waterford High School, joined an elite group of 77 Connecticut teachers in receiving the great news that he had been awarded a Fund for Teachers Fellowship Grant. Mr. Ash is the recipient of a fellowship that will enable him to engage in significant, in-depth professional growth experiences during the upcoming summer.

“It is our pleasure to inform you that Brian Ash from your school has been selected to receive a fellowship from Fund for Teachers. Brian is planning to drive the length of the Northwest Passage Lewis and Clark Trail, visit historical sites and join a 7 day remote canoe voyage on the upper Missouri River. His goal is to learn more about the Corps of Discovery expeditions and to create student-centered social studies projects about Native American culture, exploration and the American West. This is Brian’s second Fund for Teachers fellowship having also been a grant recipient in 2019.” Excerpt from Fund For Teachers Grant Announcement

We are excited for the opportunity that the Fund for Teachers Fellowship Grant will provide for Mr. Ash and how these experiences will further enrich the depth of his knowledge to share with his students. To learn more about the Fund for Teachers Newest Grant Recipients and their projects visit <https://www.fundforteachers.org/documents/2024-Fellow-Compilation.pdf>



Waterford in the News

Check out the articles below that showcase the great things happening in our district as well as the talent of our amazing students.

[Candidate for top school custodian in the U.S. finds 'his niche' in Waterford](#)

The Day, March 31, 2024



[CT '24: National Custodian of the Year Candidate Comes from Quaker Hill Elementary School](#)

WFSB, April 7, 2024



[Waterford School Custodian Nominated for National Award](#)

WTNH, March 21, 2024



[What's Right With Schools: Waterford students take part in after-school martial arts program](#)

WTNH, March 12, 2024



Congratulations to Waterford High School Junior Ian Li who won the 54th Young Musicians Concerto Competition for the Hamden Symphony. Ian will play as a soloist with the orchestra on Sunday, April 28th at 3pm.
See page 4 for more Music News



Congratulations to WHS Seniors Jay Zimmermann and Payton Smith for being named the 2024 CAS-CIAC Scholar-Athlete recipients for Waterford Public Schools. Jay and Payton are both in their academic class top 5 and are multi-sport athletes.

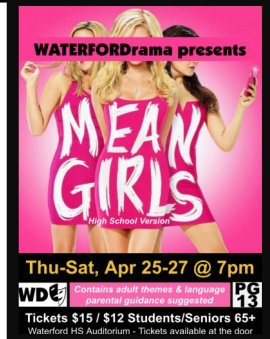
Waterford Dance Club Performance

The WHS Dance Club, an organization that allows its members to experience the wonder of dance and the joy of performing, put on a wonderful performance at Waterford High School on March 8th and 9th. Audience members enjoyed a variety of dance performances, including jazz, hip hop and theater to name a few. Students were in charge of choreographing their routines and chose music from Adele to Roy Orbison to complement their choreography. The Dance Club saw the return of male members who were included in couple dances and members of the WaterfordDRAMA club also performed a few numbers to showcase their upcoming musical *Mean Girls* scheduled for April 25—27.



Congratulations to Waterford High School music students, Ian Li, Boden Fagan, Michelle Liu, Yana Abramova, Sofia Fioravanti, and Caleb Nichols, for being selected by the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) to perform at the All-State Festival in Hartford.

WaterforDRAMA presents their spring musical *Mean Girls* directed by David Conway and Monique Nee and musical director Jeff Cregeur. MEAN GIRLS is iconic, hilarious, and a brutally honest glimpse of high school cliques, bullying, and the damaging effect it can have on teenagers. Look for a follow-up article in the next edition of *The Connection*.



Celebrating the Arts at WPS...



Congratulations to WHS students, Jolina Campisi (Art) and Joseph Mayer (Music) who were selected by the Connecticut Association of Schools to attend the High School Arts Awards. "CAS annually honors two outstanding seniors from each of the member schools in the state who excel in the performing or visual arts" and possess qualities of scholarship and leadership. Jolina and Joseph are pictured with their teachers, WHS Art Teacher Gretchen Lally and WHS Music Teacher Tim Fioravanti.



Shout out to the members of the Waterford High Chamber (Jazz) Choir and Jazz Ensemble for their outstanding performances at the University of Delaware Jazz Festival. The WHS Jazz Ensemble received two "Outstanding Soloist" awards: Joe Mayer (alto sax - for the second year in a row), and Jaedon Emerich (alto sax). The WHS Jazz Ensemble also received the overall "Outstanding Trombone Section" award (Andrew Bertrand, AK Wilson, Ian Balfour, Elliot Childs, Ethan Jones).



In the month of March, Waterford Public Schools participated in Youth Art Month, an annual event that promotes art education, emphasizes the value of art in schools, the community and society as well as encourage support for quality school art programs. All schools displayed artwork at the Waterford Public Library and Town Hall throughout the month of March to showcase the various mediums used and the variety of art classes that are available to Waterford Public Schools' students.



Frankie Secciaroli (grade 2), Ellie Baude (grade 5), and Jaxson Lee (grade 3) (shown left), students at Quaker Hill Elementary School, proudly show their artwork that was displayed at the Waterford Town Hall during Youth Art Month.

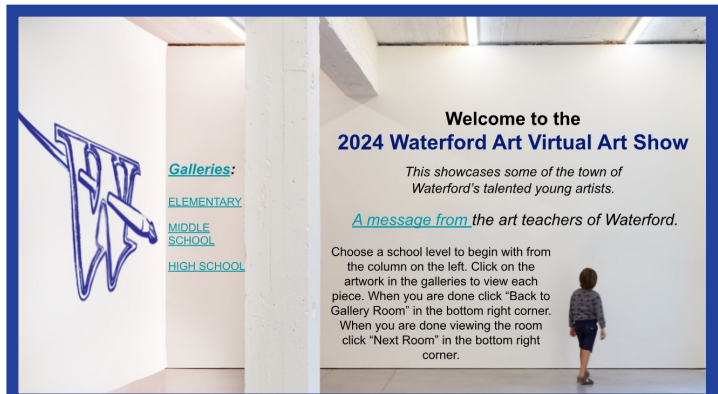
"How Ultron was Made"
Squiggle Challenge: Markers

"Perspectives"
Sharpie, Pencil, Colored Pencil, Marker

"The Big Tree"
Tempera Paint and Gel Pens

To highlight the many talented artists in Waterford Public Schools, the WPS Art Department created a Virtual Art Show to share with families and friends around the globe.

[Waterford Art Virtual Art Show](#)



Celebrating the Arts at WPS...

The month of March is marked as Board Member Appreciation Month. To thank our board members for their dedicated service and diligent efforts to help our students succeed, Waterford Public Schools provided members with notecards designed with student art work in the district. See below for some of the talented works of art provided by our Art Department.



Massai Chief Visit to WHS

“Our main purpose of coming to the U.S. is to come and share our Maasai culture and lifestyle...We have been able to try to keep our culture despite the changes of the 21st century ”

Chief Joseph Ole Tipanko

<https://www.theday.com/living/20230424/maasai-chief-comes-to-new-london-this-week/>

On Friday April 5th, Waterford High School was visited by Maasai Chief Joseph Ole Tipanko visiting with his delegation from Kenya. The Maasai tribe, once one of the largest in Kenya, is a tribe that has persisted in keeping their traditions and lifestyle consistent and not adapting to the current culture. This tribe continues living semi-nomadic and pastoral during a time of settlement from other groups. Chief Joseph met with over 150 students in 12 different classes. He and his delegation spoke about Maasai culture, including food and cooking, raising children, dealing with dangerous animals in Kenya, and other aspects of this ancient East African culture.



World Down Syndrome Day

On March 21, 2024, schools celebrated World Down Syndrome Day to bring awareness to what Down Syndrome is and to promote inclusion and acceptance within our school communities. To show support, staff, as well as students, wore mismatched socks to represent the unique and colorful spirit of those children with Down Syndrome. Clark Lane Middle School Special Education Teacher Michael Nevins noted, “This simple act symbolizes the uniqueness and diversity of individuals with Down syndrome and sends a powerful message of acceptance and inclusion.”




Photos courtesy of CLMS staff



Career Day at CLMS

Clark Lane Middle School hosted a Career Day on March 27th. Over 25 residents of various exciting careers spoke with CLMS seventh grade students about the huge array of opportunities that are available to them in the future. Career fields that were represented included law enforcement, occupational/physical therapy, scientists, restauranters, electricians, HVAC Specialists and mechanical engineers to name a few. We are thankful for the many community members who joined us on Career Day to provide insight for our students into the many professions that await them.





**GREAT NECK
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**WATERFORD
WONDERS**

Laymi De La Torre Kennedy Discordia

Waterford Wonders

Congratulations to Great Neck Elementary School Grade 5 students Laymi De La Torre and Kennedy Discordia who were selected as Waterford Wonders and recognized at the March 28th Board of Education Meeting. The Waterford Wonders program recognizes students for accomplishments in academics, exemplary character, going above and beyond and for being a good role model for their peers.

Laymi De La Torre - *“Laymi has a quiet demeanor and consistently demonstrates exemplary character. She is a wonderful friend to all. Academically, Laymi is a conscientious student who always puts forth her best effort and is not afraid of any challenge... Laymi is one of many of our multilingual learners and her ability to speak both Spanish and English fluently has been such a supportive gift to her multilingual peers. She is always willing to lend a hand to anyone and most importantly, she is always smiling and brings forth a positive energy to all that she does. She simply makes Great Neck Elementary School a better place.” Billie Shea, Great Neck Elementary School Principal*

Kennedy Discordia - *“Kennedy has been with us since kindergarten and she has consistently demonstrated outstanding qualities that make her a true role model for peers and an inspiration to teachers. Kennedy is a student who perseveres through challenges and always aims to do her best. She engages in every lesson with enthusiasm and curiosity. She is an active participant in class discussions and a collaborative peer when working in a small group. Kennedy motivates peers to achieve their best and is among the first to celebrate the accomplishments of others. She is a genuinely kind friend and exemplifies kindness and respect in all interactions. She treats classmates, teachers, and staff with warmth and consideration...She is an amazing mentor to her younger peers. She is a book buddy with kindergarten students and has mentored kindergarten students during their art class once a week. She also helps Mrs. Flaherty and Mrs. Stenz to make sure our younger students are engaged in fun activities during their morning care time. Kennedy demonstrates exceptional maturity and integrity in all of her actions.” Billie Shea, Great Neck Elementary School Principal*



SOCIÉTÉ HONORAIRE
DE FRANÇAIS

French

**Titus Barricklow
Jada Collins
Arthur Dhervilly
Jonathon Dorunda
Madison Goldstein
Isabel Henry
Sawyer Kempe
Alexander Seltzer
Maya Smith
Sadie Tiven
Ava Tucker**



Latin

**Hannah Grant
Zaya Haglund
Ethan Jones
Lucy Mullen
Evalyn Tesler**

**Twenty-nine students from
Waterford High School
were inducted into the
World Language
Honor Society on
March 12, 2024.**



Spanish

**Danica Agsalud
Isabella Dioquino
Jamie Gannon
Leigha Griswold
Taylor Griswold
Sydney Hurrell
Brielle Kenney
Nayoung Kwon
Jennifer Macca-Barnes
Leah Sanders
Jameson Smith
Cara Sollima
Adyson Wiseman**

Community Partners Information

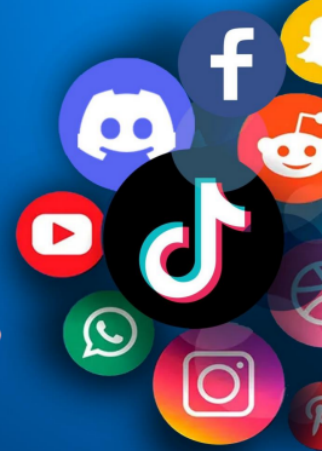
UCFS School-Based Health Centers at Waterford Public Schools

Scan below to find out more information
about the School-Based Health Centers
at Waterford High School and
Clark Lane Middle School!



IT TAKES A VILLAGE: SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

Waterford's Approach to
Internet and Social
Media Safety & What
Parents Need To Know



MONDAY, APRIL 29TH

6:00pm to 7:30pm

Waterford High School Auditorium

TOPIC OVERVIEW

Privacy Settings & Account Security
Online Predators & Cyberbullying
Digital Footprint & Reputation Management
Online Privacy & Personal Information
Monitoring & Parental Controls

Safe Online Behavior & Digital Citizenship
Mental Health Impacts & Support
Collaboration between Parents, Schools, & Law Enforcement
Q&A Session

FEATURED PRESENTERS

Laura McCue, WPS
Lauren McKenna, WPS
Joseph Trelli, WYFS

Daniel Lane, WPD Officer
Norm Malbaurn, WPD Officer
John Bunce, WPD Officer

DOOR PRIZES, BASKET RAFFLES & DRAWING TO WIN A
FREE WEEK OF CAMP DASH, A \$200 VALUE.

PURSUE OPTIMISM



WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Board of Education Approved Budget
2024-2025



2022 Approved February 22, 2024
BOE Approved March 25, 2024
BTA Approved

The Board of Education Budget was unanimously approved at the Board of Education meeting on February 22, 2024 and final action was taken by the Town Board of Finance on March 25, 2024. The Board of Education will present to the Representative Town Meeting on May 6th with final action scheduled for May 15th. The FY25 Budget and presentations can be found on the district website at https://www.waterfordschools.org/our_district/departments/business_office/budget



Waterford Public Schools

Pat Fedor, 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.

Stay Connected...

- ◆ **WPS Website - Visit** www.waterfordschools.org for up to date BOE, school and event information.
- ◆ **BOE meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month. For the complete schedule of meetings, go to the [BOE section](#) of the WPS Website.**
- ◆ **Download the [WPS App](#) to 'stay abreast' of all the happenings at our schools.**
- ◆ **Follow us on [Twitter](#) : [@WPS_CT](#) and [@WaterfordSuper](#)**