

WHITE MOUNTAINS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear WMRHS Students and Parents,

September 16, 2016

We hope that this letter finds you in good spirits and excited about the school year. Much work has occurred at WMRHS as we continue to create an educational institute that prepares students for the next phase of their lives. We are incredibly proud of WMRHS and that we have the opportunity to work with your children. We take this responsibility seriously. At WMRHS we want students to take advantage of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We are committed to working with our students and parents to create a school that is a positive reflection of our community.

We have a number of initiatives that we are working on at WMRHS. We would like to take the opportunity to communicate the great work that is happening at WMRHS to make our school a place that is good for students.

Below are descriptions of some of our work.

Problem/Inquiry-based Learning

Problem/Inquiry-based learning is a student-centered teaching approach designed to make students think about real world problems and occurrences through asking questions, making discoveries, and through serious engagement and collaboration. Students will be expected to take risks, utilize technology, collaborate, and give critical feedback. Problem/Inquiry-based learning provides students the opportunity to examine and try out what they know, discover what they need to learn, develop skills for achieving higher performance with teamwork, improve communication skills, and be able to state and defend positions through providing evidence. Students become responsible for and active in their learning.

1 to 1 Initiative and Tech Integration

The staff at WMRHS is committed to keeping up with the ever-changing needs of its students. Ninth graders have arrived at the high school with their own district-issued Chromebooks. In response to the increase in technology for their students, teachers have begun to explore their use of technology in the classroom. Professional development opportunities focused on teachers' use of technology were well attended during the summer and will continue to be offered to faculty throughout the school year.

CTE Redesign

The 2015-2016 school year was a busy year for the Arthur T. Paradise Career and Technical Center at White Mountains Regional. The CTE Center went through several in-depth studies to analyze programming, curriculum, assessment, safety, and general day-to-day operations. Information was provided to WMRHS from the New Hampshire Department of Education, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Primex, and the Office of Civil Rights.

9th grade STEAM Cohort

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. Jobs in these fields including graphic design, biotechnology, material science, and engineering, and they are predicted to be in high demand in the future. A high school education rich in STEAM can help meet this demand. A STEAM education involves two main parts. First, students are exposed to the different STEAM field and the jobs that are available in them. The second involves a change from what we think of as "traditional education." In STEAM classrooms, students are encouraged to learn more about the things that excite them. At WMRHS we are using a STEAM cohort approach. Interested incoming freshmen can take a number of STEAM focused courses while at school. During freshman and sophomore year, they take all of their required courses with the qualities of STEAM

teaching interwoven into the current curriculum. As juniors they will be encouraged to further pursue their interests in one of our many CTE paths or with more intense science and math courses.

Title I at WMRHS

At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, WMRHS joined a district-wide team in an effort to become a Schoolwide Title I School. We will be using our FLEX period to offer interventions in the areas of math and English to those students who need assistance in meeting the current state standards according to school data. Students will also have the choice to attend tutoring sessions with our National Honor Society students.

Transition to New Bell Schedule

Please note we have changed our schedule from a seven period day to a hybrid schedule that includes an eight period day and an alternating block schedule.

Monday	40 minute periods	Periods 1 through 8
Tuesday	80 minute blocks	Periods 1, 3, 5, 7
Wednesday	80 minute blocks	Periods 2, 4, 6, 8
Thursday	80 minute blocks	Periods 1, 3, 5, 7
Friday	80 minute blocks	Periods 2, 4, 6, 8

A few other aspects regarding our work at WMRHS are explained below.

Spartan Spotlight

This weekly meeting occurs on Monday morning from 7:50 to 8:05. All faculty, staff, and students gather in the auditorium where we highlight and celebrate students’ academic, athletic, co-curricular, and behavioral success. We also use this time to discuss the weekly schedule of events and opportunities for students while encouraging them to become involved in the school. Lastly, we take the time to emphasize WMRSD Image of a Graduate components:

<u>Essential Habits</u>	<u>Content and Skills</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Punctual ● Prepared ● Responsible ● Reliable ● Communicative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English Language Arts ● Mathematics ● Social Studies ● Science ● Unifields ● Technology
<u>Necessary Abilities</u>	<u>Dispositions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independent Learner ● Problem Solver ● Higher Order Thinker ● Collaborator ● Communicator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grit ● Self-Regulation ● Zest ● Social Intelligence ● Gratitude ● Optimism ● Curiosity

Spartan 101

This weekly meeting occurs on Fridays from 9:20 am to 10:00 am. This time serves two purposes for us at WMRHS. First and foremost, the students meet in the auditorium and are presented with a number different topics by a variety of people. We use this time to bring in community people to discuss the opportunities available to our students including, but not limited to, internships, jobs, and work-based learning. Guests discuss important issues that are relevant to 2016, but may not have a permanent place in the curriculum at WMRHS. Secondly, teachers use this time to meet as a whole faculty to discuss school initiatives and how they can be implemented into the classroom to increase student learning.

Advisory/Writing and Research

Every Wednesday, students participate in Advisory or Writing and Research. The goal of Advisory is to provide students with a point person who helps them to create connections inside of our school. Advisory activities are related to school initiatives, culture, and Image of a Graduate, and they are designed to better prepare our students with the soft skills (teamwork, conflict resolution, adaptability, tolerance) they need in order to be well-rounded individuals. The goal of Writing and Research is to increase the proficiency level in writing so that students are better prepared for SATs. Improving writing is a school-wide goal, and activities are based upon data collected from standardized testing.

Preparing for the SAT

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a college entrance examination required by many colleges. Since New Hampshire has chosen the SAT for the state testing program, our preparation begins with the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) given to all juniors on Wednesday, October 19. There is no fee for either of these examinations as they are paid for by the district and by the state. The PSAT is considered practice for the SAT. Scores will be delivered to students and school districts in December. Based on the results of the PSAT, interventions and study plans for the SAT will be made available to all students. Further details regarding the PSAT and SAT for juniors will be forthcoming. Seniors should take the SAT a second time in the fall by registering online with the College Board. The examination is administered at neighboring high schools and requires registration at least one month in advance. Fee waivers are available for eligible students and may be obtained in the school counseling office.

Senior Seminar

Senior Seminar is a semester course designed to culminate a student's career at White Mountains Regional High School. In this course, students are preparing for the next phase of life. Seniors work on college essays, public speaking, resumes, cover letters, interview skills as well as skills for living independently while reflecting on areas of needed growth in their soft skills. Students planning to go into the workforce will create a plan and work to hone their workplace skills. All students will select a topic for their capstone project, develop a research question, conduct research, and present the completed project to family, faculty, students, and community members in the spring. Along with this, they will work all semester to gather experiences and organize them in their digital portfolios. This course challenges students to work on executive functioning skills and manage their time while analyzing and synthesizing information into a logical presentation.

Extended Learning Opportunities, Internships, and Independent Study

Extended learning opportunities, internships and independent studies offer students alternative ways to earn high school credits. The multi-step process allows students to explore areas of interest which are not offered in a traditional classroom. With the cooperation of area businesses, organizations, and support from within WMRHS, students will identify their interest, establish a plan, and work to execute the plan while meeting competencies to earn credit.

Introduction to Computer Science

WMRHS is one of the first high schools in the state of New Hampshire that requires incoming 9th graders to take a course in computer coding. Coding is the literacy of the 21st Century and will eventually become a common core subject in all US public schools. This generation and future generations of students will use code in the same way that prior generations used words.

Introduction to Computer Science (ICS) is the first course available to students in the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) computer science pathway. This course is designed for students who have never coded before. Students work in teams to create apps for mobile devices using MIT App Inventor. They explore the impact of computing in society and build skills in digital citizenship and cyber security. Beyond learning the fundamentals of programming, students build computational-thinking skills by applying computer science to collaboration tools, modeling and simulation, and data analysis. In addition, students transfer the

understanding of programming gained in App Inventor to text-based programming in Python and apply their knowledge to create algorithms for games of chance and strategy.

At WMRHS, we are motivated by our students' interests and needs. We understand that each student has his or her individual goals, and we work to provide supports and inspiration to meet those goals. It is our goal to have students leave our school with a plan for the next phase of their lives.

If you would like to learn more about any of our current programs or initiatives, please contact us at (603) 837-2528.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Berry