



# WEDS NEWS

## Fall 2019

### Message from Head of School

Each year, we establish a theme that goes beyond our mission statement. This year, we chose **Growth Mindset**, an approach where students understand that their abilities can be developed. This approach coupled with our focus on developing **resiliency**, has truly **empowered** our students to unlock their **potential** and find joy in learning. We have spent this semester, opening our eyes to the endless **possibilities** for ourselves as a community and for each child. As you read through this newsletter, I hope you will get a glimpse of this culture of **positivity** that has been central to learning this semester!

As a school community, we are also **imagining** the endless possibilities as we gear to raise funds for our Gym Renovations. Like everything at WEDS, this will be so much **MORE** than a physical education space. We are **determined** to shape up our athletics area as well as create a phenomenal stage for our performances. This campaign project will **reach** each and everyone of our students and sure to make a great impact!

It's been a fabulous semester and I'm excited for all that is to come in 2020!

With Gratitude,  
Carrie Catapano, Head of School

### Upcoming Events

January 30th - Annual Art Exhibit

February 13th - Winter Sing

February 26th - Family Game Night



### Message from Education Heads

The fall has been filled with so many amazing learning experiences. The students have been participating in some new curriculum this year. The new STEM program, taught by Ms. Carhart, has been an exciting addition to the students' learning. Our STEM program is a project-based curriculum that follows a five-step lesson plan, namely prediction, research, discovery, application, and reflection. The lessons are open-ended and hands-on, allowing students to explore science, math, engineering and technology concepts during each project.

Our new Drama curriculum has been off to an exciting start. For our younger grades, the students work on story drama including making storybooks, poetry, or practice making a spoken story come to life. In our older classes, the students process drama by developing scenes and stories based on prompts, or creating the next part of a story that wasn't written. They are also involved in acting and writing scenes and monologues as well as improv.

The faculty professional workshop day this year was particularly interesting. We welcomed Mary Cay Ricci, an education consultant and popular keynote speaker. She spent a day with our faculty speaking about growth mindset, and how to build a growth mindset in our school culture. During the workshop, she explained the process that happens when students are challenged to change their thinking about their abilities and potential by having a growth mindset, and then gave us practical teaching strategies to use in the classroom. It was an informative day that left us all eager to get back to the classrooms to continue our work with the children.

Looking forward to a winter filled with more exciting learning!

Katy Jenkins and Jessica Chambers, Co-Education Heads

## Ms. Steinfeld & Ms. Mark's Class

Ms. Steinfeld and Ms. Mark's class have been discovering what it means to be part of a community in Social Studies! They have also explored the question: What makes a community? This unit involved the students learning about different community workers within the school community and home community as well as the role of students at West End Day. The students also learned that communities are groups of people who may share similar interests and work together! During the community helpers lesson, the class enjoyed learning about doctors, police officers, and fire fighters. They were especially enthusiastic about creating patrol cars and doctors' kits! Lastly, they really absorbed the concept of the types of community environments, such as urban, suburban, and rural.

In author study, the students have been so engaged in learning about all different authors from many different backgrounds. In the first unit, the class studied Leo Lionni and learned that he is an author from the Netherlands! The next unit was about the beloved Dav Pilkey, the author of the Dog Man series. The students enjoyed the read aloud of *The Paperboy* and creating their own newspaper comic strip using four and six square panels. Most recently, the class studied Ezra Jack Keats and learned that this author noticed that many children's book characters are Caucasian. Keats wanted to change the narrative and represent children from other cultures all around the world. The students were very interested in this discussion and enjoyed reading *The Snowy Day*, and making their own snowy day pictures using a cut out of Peter, oil pastels, and cotton ball snowflakes! The students are looking forward to exploring and inquiring about more authors from the books they read every day!



## Ms. Henry & Ms. Kronfeld's Class

The students in Ms. Henry and Ms. Kronfeld's class have been buzzing with knowledge so far this year! In Social Studies, the students have been discovering how they are members of many different communities. They began by discussing the responsibilities of being a community member. The class then talked about community workers in the school community, community workers in the outside community, and how they are similar and different. The students had the opportunity to use play dough to pretend to be each community worker and create a tool or object that the worker uses. This led them into a discussion about the differences between urban, suburban, and rural communities. The class will begin exploring the community of New York City after Winter Recess!

The class has been introduced to the concept of Growth Mindset, which highlights the importance of perseverance and practice. In Language Group, Ms. Moore introduced a Growth Mindset unit which aimed to teach how the brain works. The class engaged in many interactive lessons including creating neuron buddies, using a scale to see how much a human brain weighs, and coloring parts of the brain to understand their function. The students became immersed in learning how the brain is a muscle you can train. Growth Mindset has also been weaved into daily activities and lessons. The class has been encouraged to change their mindset from "I can't do it" to "I can't do it, yet". This mindset has been beneficial for both academics and social skills.



## Ms. Berger & Mr. Stella's Class

Ms. Berger and Mr. Stella's class began their journey around the world through their Social Studies curriculum world communities! The students reviewed basic map skills and identified continents and oceans around the world. To introduce their next unit, they began learning about the culture, traditions, and land of Brazil. The students culminated their study on Brazil by making Carnival masks to celebrate the festival that takes place in Brazil.

This fall in Language Group, the class started with a review of basic language concepts through a unit on pets. Topics covered included comparatives and superlatives, identifying same and different, fact and opinion, and using descriptive language (size, color, texture, shape). The students then learned about making inferences, both from pictures and text. After having several opportunities to make inferences via guided practice, they each picked a pet and wrote a "Who Am I?" inference riddle for their classmates. The class practiced using graphic organizers and scaffolded outlines to create a typed paragraph full of clues about their chosen pet. At the conclusion of the assignment, all the paragraphs were read aloud to the class and students were able to make inferences from each other's work. The students were proud of their efforts, and enjoyed sharing their work with their classmates.



## Ms. Michlovich & Mr. Afzaal's Class

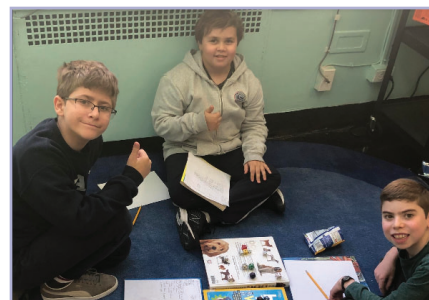
Mr. Afzaal and Ms. Michlovich's explorers have been investigating local and regional New York history. Through the lens of Native Americans and early European settlers, they are piecing together how the New York City community has developed into what it is today. To start the year, the class reviewed map skills and regional geographical features. The class then examined the complex societies that made up the Iroquois Confederacy during years before European contact. They have been using primary and secondary texts (such as folklore and songs) when possible in order to get a clear and emphatic image of how life was for many tribes in the area. The students learned about the components of Native American culture including their customs, religion, agriculture, food, etc. They are now moving into investigating early settlers and how their arrival forever changed the landscape of the Americas. The unit will conclude with each student researching and presenting their findings on an individually assigned European explorer.

In Language Group with Ms. Rumley, the students began creating a class newspaper. First, Ms. Rumley discussed persuasive writing and how to structure an argument, or article, for a particular audience. The group then learned about different components of a newspaper. Each student will be responsible for creating an individual section in class—either a book/movie review, a current event article, or an interview they conducted with a WEDS staff member. In order to give the students creative ownership over the newspaper, they will be given the opportunity to add riddles, comic, mazes, and/or puzzles.

## Ms. Moss & Ms. Cotton's Class

Starting the school year with a map skills unit, Ms. Moss and Ms. Cotton's class jumped right in with a review of the continents and oceans of the world. They learned about different types of maps and what they are used for, as well as the features of maps such as the lines of latitude and longitude, prime meridian, and the equator. The students learned what the word 'hemisphere' means and discussed the hemispheres of the earth. This led to their primary curriculum for the year, the Eastern Hemisphere. The class looked at a variety of significant geographic features of this half of the world. Next, the students learned about the first humans and how they modified their physical environment and adapted to their environment. The class discussed the Paleolithic and Neolithic Eras, compared each era, and completed a long-term project. The students have completed unit tests on both the map skills unit and the Neolithic Revolution unit, creating study guides and discussing test-taking strategies before each unit test.

This fall in Language Group, the students have been hard at work on several units including their first long-term research project called "A Day in the Life of a Profession." Each individual picked a career that was of interest, located two-to-three sources, and then completed a teacher-generated outline with important information. Additionally, the students did research to find out what a daily schedule might look like in this profession, and created their own version in a Google Spreadsheet. The students will complete their first drafts, revise/edit, and publish their projects after the completion of the Art Show in January. Overall, the students have worked extremely hard and made excellent progress this semester!



## Mr. Kassel & Ms. McGowan's Class

The students of Mr. Kassel and Ms. McGowan's class are becoming seasoned explorers of the Eastern Hemisphere! After a review of map skills and an overview of the geographical features of the eastern world, the students traveled back to prehistory for a unit on the Neolithic Revolution. They examined how early humans transitioned from nomadic hunter-gatherers to agricultural societies. The students then completed a long-term project based on their findings where they convinced nomads to join the Neolithic Revolution to become part of a farming society. The class has just begun their unit on the Ancient River civilizations that developed during this Agricultural Revolution, namely Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley. They will continue working on this unit as the Winter Semester begins.

In Language Group, Ms. Rumley has been working with the class on persuasive arguments. They are applying these lessons as they prepare for a debate on the merits of social media. The class split into pro and con groups in support of and critical of the use of social media by adolescents. Each student is writing about one aspect of social media, such as how it leads to the spread of information, creates employment opportunities, impacts grades, and affects personal and professional relationships. They have worked hard on researching and drafting strong arguments this semester for the upcoming debate.

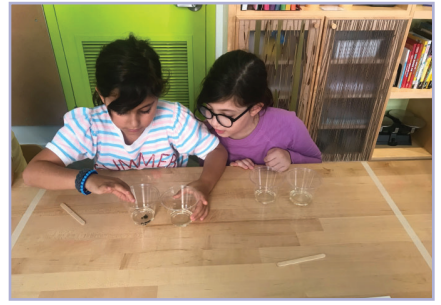


## STEM Program

During STEM with Ms. Carhart, each class has engaged in a project-based curriculum twice a week. Each lesson consists of four steps: prediction, discovery, application, and reflection. Through these lessons, students communicate, collaborate, and utilize problem solving skills to complete each activity. In addition, each class has been participating and completing STEM challenges. The challenges include open-ended tasks that require building, designing, constructing, and displaying various creations.

In the younger classes, the students have been practicing their STEM skills through various topics and experiments. The students participated in a unit on force, which included exploring pushes, pulls, speed, and friction. The younger classes created vehicles using K'NEX pieces, and tested their ability to move with a push or a pull on a ramp. They also discovered the effect of eliminating senses by trying to determine what materials were in a covered cup using only their sense of hearing. The younger classes completed several STEM challenges, such as creating a balanced ship with sails and masts, and designing a structure that resembles an igloo which can withstand harsh winter temperatures.

In the older classes, the students are focusing on the steps of the scientific method through each lesson and experiment. In order to do this, they must make individual predictions and hypotheses based on the given question. The classes followed the step-by-step procedures of the scientific method to test which location a pumpkin seed would grow best in. Over the course of a month, students made bi-weekly observations and drew conclusions to summarize the experiment. The older classes have also completed various STEM challenges, such as replicating a spider web using string and creating a buoyant and balanced raft.



## Alumni Parent Reception

The Annual Alumni Parent Cocktail Reception was such an amazing night for the WEDS staff and both the current and former parent body. The night was a great way to catch up with old friends, make some new friends, and share stories. The highlight of the night was a special visit from an Alum currently in college! Always one of the favorite events of the year, this night is a prime example of how WEDS is More Than a School!







## Community Thankfulness Day

The students at WEDS always look forward to an opportunity to help those in need, and Community Thankfulness Day is their time to shine. This year's event was "Crafting Confidence for Kids". The Thankfulness Committee volunteered support for Enchanted Makeover and two of their community projects, "The Doll Adoption Project" and "Capes for Kids". The WEDS community created stuffed animals and capes from scratch for children in shelters to offer them an armor of strength, imagination, and hope. The WEDS community was thrilled to have the opportunity to help provide some hope and comfort to less fortunate children.



## Assemblies

This fall, WEDS welcomed two new, exciting assemblies. First, Josh Feinman performed his one-man show, Voyage of Odysseus. The story follows Odysseus through his twenty-year journey from the Battle of Troy to his Odyssey home as he struggled to return after the war. This interactive show calls for full audience participation, and some students even joined the show as actors! Next, the Wild Bird Fund came to WEDS for an assembly on the birds of New York and their mission to rescue and rehabilitate injured or orphaned birds from around the city. After learning how they can help keep birds safe, the students were excited to meet two of the birds they rescued, a chicken and baby pigeon. We were so impressed with our student's empathy and compassion for wildlife programs.

