

PRESS RELEASE

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WBMS Alum and Frozen star Lauren Chapman hosts master class for 7th and 8th grade musical theatre students

West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) was honored to welcome home Lauren Chapman. She visited West Bloomfield Middle School Thursday, December 14, and spoke with students in the 7th and 8th grade musical theatre class where it all began for her.

"I started in choir like all of you," she shared, mentioning singing "Castle on a Cloud" from *Les Miserables* as a pivotal moment. Her teacher John Deierlein who has been with WBSD since 1996, even shared a few clips of her as narrator in the production of *Joseph*. Even more impressive than him having the DVD, and being able to make it work with new technology, was her heartfelt connection with the students.

Ryan Moore, WB theatre teacher since 1999, emceed the master class. Lauren spoke about how she filled her toolbox, taking choir at Abbott Middle School, and dance classes locally, and then heading to Interlochen Arts Academy, and Emerson College. She spoke about taking voice lessons and dance classes, asking others about securing an agent, and going to shows to keep adding tools along the way. She spoke about having only 8 bars (about 30 seconds) at open auditions to make an impression, and how as part of an ensemble she would also be an understudy for other parts and sometimes only have an hour before the show to move to a new role with all of its blocking, lines and songs. Throughout her presentation, Lauren emphasized to students the importance of being flexible.

She also spoke about the business. She shared how shows develop, and the difference between joining an existing cast as she did with *Kinky Boots*, and being part of building a show through workshops and out of town tryouts before bringing it to Broadway as she did with *Frozen*. She also shared the differences between a Broadway show and touring. One important emphasis was how many different viable careers there are within live theatre - from onstage talent, to backstage, hair and makeup, and the business side of it.

She sang a short selection, which we could not record per Disney rules, but you can see how intent students were as they listened, several mouthing the words. Students then asked great questions. They asked if it got boring doing the same show over and over. For her, the people keep it fresh and she's always finding new favorite parts of the show. They asked how long it takes for full hair and makeup - and she responded Team Anna gets it done in less than 45 minutes. They asked if she got to meet the President when the cast went to the White House, and no but she did meet Dr. Jill. They also asked about low points and they had a candid discussion about perseverance and patience and not taking rejection personally but using it to get better. She gave them practical tips like tapping their heel to channel nervous energy away from their breathing. And she shared because she's so much like the character Anna, there is a vulnerability to that - a vulnerability she shared with WBMS again.













