



HAT'S HAPPENING

CITIZENSHIP • CHARACTER • EDUCATION • WISDOM • KNOWLEDGE • SCHOLARSHIP • SERVICE • INTEGRITY

DECEMBER 2015



Holiday Events



Elementary School Musical

Friday and Saturday, December 4th and 5th at 7:00 pm
(Middle School Auditorium)

High School Winter Concert

Thursday, December 10th at 7:00 pm (High School Auditorium)

5th and 6th Grade Winter Concert

Tuesday, December 15th at 7:00 pm (Middle School Auditorium)

7th and 8th Grade Winter Concert

Thursday, December 17th at 7:00 pm (Middle School Auditorium)



Old English W Awards

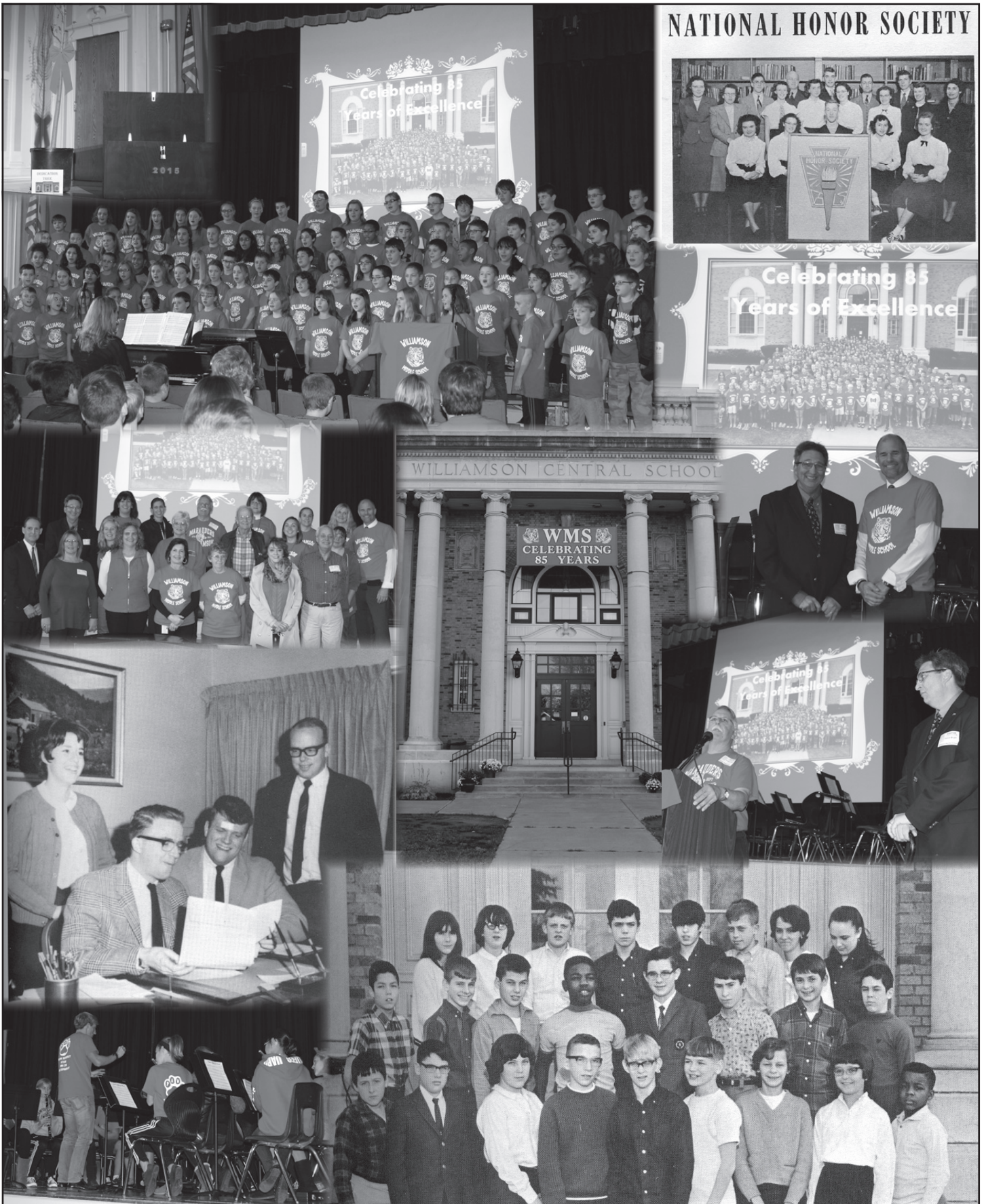
The Old English W Award is presented to the student in each class who had the highest average in the course.

Back/L to R: Nate Niles, Matt Kuhl, Anton Wendler, Joe Silipino, Kristina Stein, Lindsey Sharp, Anna Lalone, Lyndsey Yackel, Logan DeRue, Josh Bailey

Front/L to R: Jeff Cantwell, Irini Kostantinou, Autumn Pollock, Becca Moran, Leana Hess, Bailey DiSanto, Alex Steurrys

Missing from Photo: Jacqueline Aguilera Fonseca, Austin Whitcomb, Alyssa Williams and Zalya Doebring

Middle School 85th Anniversary Celebration





John E. Fulmer
Middle School Principal

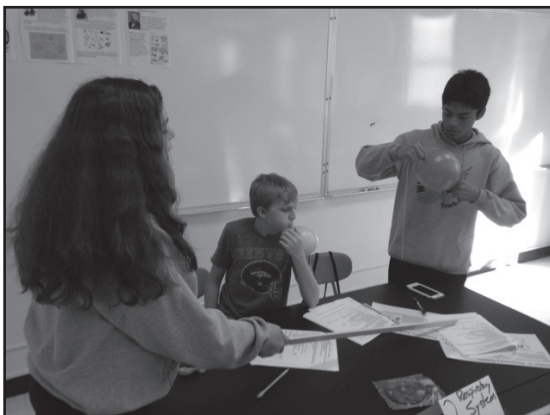
Middle School . . .

Our students have successfully completed their first 10 weeks of the school year. Students are continuing to learn, grow and develop. The faculty encourages students to stay organized and to give their best effort. Academic and behavioral expectations remain high for all students.

Our report card accurately identifies student progress toward meeting the new Common Core Learning Standards. Student work habits are in a separate column, alongside individual assessment scores for each class. Students are proud of their accomplishments and teachers are continuing to work diligently to instruct and challenge them. Students are encouraged to seek assistance if needed and be responsible for their learning. Together with families, we encourage students to put forth their best effort and engage in learning while participating in the whole school experience.

Activities that have occurred in the first quarter and into the second quarter of this year at the Middle School include:

- **Student Association** – Officers have been elected and many activities are planned for the future. Once per month “after the bell” activities are being planned.
- **Roller Skating** – 5th and 6th graders have the opportunity once again this year.
- **Spelling Bee** – The annual spelling bee begins in December.
- **Book Fair** - All students were given the opportunity to purchase discounted books and school supplies in November.
- **Travel Club** – Forty 8th grade students (along with 7 staff) traveled to historical Boston in October.
- **International Club and Newspaper Club** – Active clubs with over thirty participants.
- **Radio Club (PAWStolisten)** – Taped radio programing is beginning this year.
- **Odyssey of the Mind** – Two teams from the Middle School will participate regionally.
- **Educational field trips** – 5th grade went to Lagoner's Farm Market this fall and 6th grade went to Rochester Museum and Science Center for a Mission to Mars; other grade level trips are planned.
- **Red Ribbon Week** – A week-long focus on educating a drug and bully free lifestyle school wide. A great deal of school spirit was evident. Thirty-six students participated in hall decorating.
- **Fuel up to Play 60** – A number of activities including the 100 mile club.
- **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies)** – Monthly forums have begun promoting our PAWS (Personal responsibility; Attitude; Work ethic; Social responsibility).
- **Celebrating 85 years of the Middle School** – A community wide celebration took place on October 28th highlighted by a tree dedication, a time capsule, and an alumni gathering.
- **PTSA fundraisers** – Square 1 Art project had over 20 participants and gift cards are now on sale. There also has been a t-shirt sale.
- **Modified Athletics** - Over 70 students participated in extra-curricular athletics at the Middle School during the fall season.
- **Report Card Night** – Over 70% of Middle School parents picked up their students' report card and had an opportunity to speak directly to classroom teachers.
- **MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) Testing** – All students in the Middle School participated in this standardized testing that allowed students, teachers and parents to immediately know of reading and math ability levels.
- **Volunteer Club** – Shoeboxes will be filled with essential personal items and delivered to the Open Door Mission.



8th Grade Science Class



6th Grade Science Class

High School . . .

As of the time of printing this edition, we have not yet issued our first marking period recognition for improvement, merit, honor, and high honor roll, but we are confident our students will continue to make us proud. Our students have been working hard to balance academic expectations with work experience, service, job shadows, with clubs like Robotics and Model UN, with athletics, and with the arts. We welcomed a wonderful freshman class to our building, who showed during our Spirit Week hallway decorating that they are a positive force to be reckoned with. The library is bustling with classes and students working together. On October 1 we awarded 21 students Old English **M** awards, including two students who earned awards for top marks in four courses! The 7th vocal cabaret featured the talents of our 14 Select Choir students and a guest performance from our new band teacher Patrick Tyler. Our fall play “Everything I Need to Know I Learned In Kindergarten” was a great success! Student work is posted around the building from our art classes, including Photography and Computer Graphics, courses we are able to bring back to our schedule.



*Kathryn Avery
High School Principal*

Teachers are helping students to edit and share documents using Google Apps for Education like Google Classroom and Google Docs; and the seniors are using their Chromebooks everywhere and building 21st century skills. We believe our students and staff will continue to stretch themselves as we move into the winter!



Chromebooks for Seniors



Devon Traas Alumni Game



Freshman Class Picnic at Luke Farms



Exploring Library Databases on Pajama Day

Elementary School . . .

The elementary school has had a great start to the 2015-2016 school year! We welcomed over 30 new students to the building, as well as about 8 new staff members. It is wonderful to have this growth this year!

Once again, our focus is on academic growth for all our students. Classroom teachers and staff work hard in order to meet the needs of all the students here at Williamson Elementary. We have completed our first marking period, so at this time you should have a better understanding of your child's academic development during this school year. Parent/Teacher conference time is a wonderful opportunity for you to speak with your child's teacher about their individual progress.



*Ellen Saxby
Elementary School Principal*

In addition to the wonderful academic opportunities happening in the building, we have also had some exciting building-wide activities taking place. These special events include:

- 3rd/4th grade musical "Sleeping Beauty Kids"
- Roller Skating Parties
- Big Pumpkin Day
- Kdg, 2nd grade and 4th grade field trips to the Fire Hall
- 4th grade band/chorus
- Red/White School Spirit Fridays

We look forward to many more great learning opportunities throughout the school year!

Have a wonderful holiday season! I wish you and your family all the best.



4th Graders at the Williamson Fire Hall



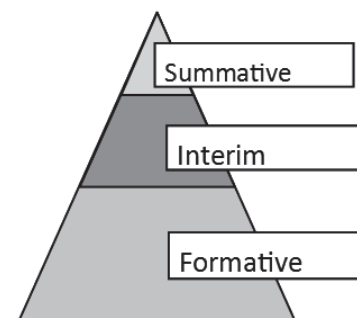
*Sleeping Beauty Performers Sing
at BOE Appreciation Night*

Striving for Fair and Balanced Assessment Practices



*Marygrace Mazzullo -
Assistant Superintendent*

Often, when we hear the word “assessment” we picture pencils or pens, multiple choice questions, bubble sheets, essay booklets and stress. The truth of the matter is that there is so much more to assessment than those images that most immediately pop into our minds. Let’s look at **three** basic types of assessment that we use in education today. By far, the most common and most frequent form of assessment utilized by educators is **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**. Formative assessment happens as students “form” their learning. During class, teachers observe what students are capable of doing and give instruction and direction on what students can do to improve their understanding or skills. Formative assessment comes in many forms: classroom observation, questioning, Exit Tickets, homework, labs, peer review, conversations, quizzes, essays, performances, activities. Much of the time, students are not even aware that they are being assessed. Formative assessment may be graded or ungraded, but it always includes feedback to students (either individually or as a class/group) on the next steps forward in meeting the learning objectives. **INTERIM ASSESSMENTS** are a bit more formal and happen at more regular intervals. Interim assessments are a way to benchmark how students are doing in terms of meeting the overall learning objectives. Interim assessments are things like unit tests, midterm exams, performance rehearsals, and practice drills that help teachers see how students are doing in meeting the course objectives. Most interim assessments are formally scored or graded to help students (and their parents/guardians) understand where they are in relation to the mastery of the learning and also to help teachers adjust instruction appropriately. Finally, there is **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**. Summative assessments are used to formally document the learning that has occurred and are the end result of the instruction. Final exams, final performances, and Regents exams are all types of summative assessments. Some summative assessments -- like the NYS 3-8 ELA and math assessments, Regents exams, and AP exams - - are standardized. This means our Williamson students take the same assessments as students in other districts across the state and country. These standardized summative assessments give us feedback on our district goals and valuable data to help us improve our instructional programs.



Assessment is an integral and necessary part of learning. It is important to recognize that assessments are **not always** formal, graded events. In reality, more often than not, assessment is happening while students are participating in active learning. A very small amount of time during the school year is spent on summative, standardized assessments. **All** types of assessment are vital to creating a comprehensive picture of student growth, student achievement and continuous instructional improvement. At Williamson Central School District, we are dedicated to providing fair and balanced assessment practices that give us and our students the information we need to be our best.

Our Buildings Are NEWLY On Twitter!!

@WilliamsonHS1 for the High School Feed
@WESMarauders for the Elementary School Feed
@WMSMarauders for the Middle School Feed



Message from the Superintendent . . .

Positive Changes are coming for the New York State 3-8 ELA and Math Tests



*Greg Macaluso
Superintendent of Schools*

After the departure of former commissioner Dr. John King for a post in Washington DC, the New York State Board of Regents has named a new Commissioner of Education. Mary Ellen Elia has taken his place here in New York. Mrs. Elia spent quite a bit of time during her first few weeks as commissioner, touring New York to talk to parents and educators about the state of our education system. A common topic of conversation was the turmoil surrounding 3-8 state testing in English language arts (ELA) and math over the past few years. She listened to concerns and put a plan in place to make some significant changes.

After two months on the job, Mrs. Elia announced that the state plans to shorten the length of the tests for the 2015-2016 school year. There will be fewer writing and reading exercises on the ELA exams and fewer multiple choice questions on the math exams. Further, Elia will not renew the state contract with Pearson, a London based testing vendor who has been widely criticized by parents and teachers across the state. Questar Assessment Inc., a Minneapolis based company, will build the tests starting in the 2016-2017 school year after the current contract with Pearson runs out.

The goal of the State Education Department is to design an assessment process that is fair, reasonable, valid, and reliable. Last year approximately 20% of students in grades 3-8 across the state chose not to take the tests. Here at Williamson approximately 70% of our 3-8 population took the test while we had 100% participation the prior year. The data we receive from this measure is important to us as it informs us of our progress as we strive to meet the requirements of the new state standards. Our goal is to get our participation rate back up to 100%. We hope that with the changes the state has made and efforts that we will make to inform our community, we will meet that target.

As a district, we will partner with our community to get information out regarding specifics of this year's tests so parents can make informed decisions. We will hold a parent information night prior to the testing next spring so we can share information face to face and answer any questions parents may have. Our school year is off to a great start and we are confident that this measure will reflect the good work that our educators and students are doing.

As I sit writing on a sunny fall day enjoying the vibrant colors of the season, I reflect on the upcoming winter and holiday season to come. I wish you all a warm, safe, and joy filled holiday season.

Respectfully,
Greg Macaluso, Ed.D

Message from the BOE President...

"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." – Marian Wright Edleman, Founder and President Children's Defense Fund

There are times in our lives when we simply recognize that we are part of a community that is much larger than ourselves. The past few months have been a revelation and reinforcement of the power of community in our lives.



Michael Collins
Board of Education President

As many of you know, I am in the process of undergoing a bone marrow transplant. It is a journey that will take many months to complete. However, I am on the road to recovery and getting stronger every day. The outpouring of support from the Williamson community is humbling. From the envelopes filled with cards from the elementary and middle school students, student council, teachers, staff and administrators to the prayers and healing thoughts from every corner of the District and town, I am utterly grateful. It is a testament to just how special our community really is.

That same sense of compassion is evident every single day in the countless acts of kindness that take place across the District and beyond. We should all be proud of the work and commitment to doing what is right for children. Because of you, Williamson embodies the best of what community means. Thank you.

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