

WESTBURY UFSD

FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

2018 WESTBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT HOMECOMING

A Celebration of Dragon Pride!



From the Desk of the Superintendent

It has been a truly wonderful and exciting commencement of the school year. As you'll read in the pages of this newsletter, the first few months of school have been marked by student achievement, student innovation/action and family engagement. In Westbury, we have students committed to not only their own personal achievement, but also to the prosperity of their neighbors and community. I consider myself extremely lucky to be their superintendent and can't wait to see what our students will accomplish during this year.

Our theme this year, *Changing the Narrative through our Hearts and Souls*, reflects our focus to build relationships with our students and families and reflect on ways to better serve our community. The collaboration amongst our leaders, faculty and our community will foster a deeper understanding of our purpose. We made significant gains and are closing the achievement gap in language arts and mathematics while meeting the standards of a four-year graduation rate. Our students are offered opportunities to engage in intellectual challenges, sports and recreation, and social-emotional exercise that contribute to their success. We are on a bright path, yet we will need every member of this community to take ownership of how bright the path shines on our students.

As a result of a request, we were excited to announce that the Westbury School District will now be live-streaming all Board of Education meetings and that all upcoming meetings will be archived for future viewing. The District will utilize all resources to be more transparent, to interact further, and better engage the Westbury community. This will support our families and residents to be more informed regarding District initiatives and have the ability to review past meetings to better understand the historical context.

Just as we in the administration are lucky to have such a committed student body, we are also fortunate to operate within a learning community that is passionate about its school district and the resources we are able to provide students so they excel both in the classroom and beyond. There are multiple ways for each of you to be actively engaged and we are eager to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Superintendent Eudes S. Budhai

WESTBURY SCHOOLS STANDS WITH OVERLOOKED DISTRICTS TO FIGHT FOR EQUALITY



In October, the Westbury School District joined with several other Long Island school districts to fight the injustices created by funding disparities in New York State. On the steps of the Nassau County Supreme Court, and with the public watching, students from Westbury and across Long Island made their impassioned case for equality in education.

As part of a coalition of schools that also includes our friends in the Brentwood School District, Westbury has filed an official complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights against New York for the state's denial to fully fund Foundation Aid, including the almost \$37 million owed to Westbury for the 2018-2019 school year alone. It was an honor to stand alongside passionate students and their teachers, and we look forward to continuing this fight with New York State for failing to live up to the court-ordered promise to fully fund school districts based on student needs.

"School districts rely on state funding to provide students with the resources they need to excel in the classroom and beyond. Without it, our students suffer. Despite the increased need for guidance counselors, social workers and highly trained staff to better engage students, our districts receive significantly less than what is needed to get the job done. How is that ethical? How is that equitable? That is why we have filed a complaint and we commend the other districts that have joined us in this pursuit."



~ Robert Troiano, President of the Westbury Union Free School District Board of Education

Wizards Take on Westbury!

In September, the Harlem Wizards dropped by the Westbury School District to take on the Westbury staff in a fun basketball game. For decades, the Harlem Wizards have toured the country, putting their dazzling brand of basketball on display to raise crucial funds for schools and nonprofits. It was a wonderful and entertaining night in Westbury when the Wizards came to town, and best of all, it was all for a good cause.



For the Fourth Straight Year, the Westbury Student Council Places First at New York Youth Summit

We officially have a dynasty on our hands in the Westbury School District! Westbury High School's student council has once again won the New York Youth Summit, marking the fourth consecutive year the WHS student council has achieved the victory. Bringing together talented high school students for interactive workshops with experts in the fields of medicine, the environment, business and the economy, and leadership, the day-long summit offered students a unique opportunity to represent their high schools and communities. That the WHS student council has so consistently succeeded at the event speaks volumes of the students' discipline, intelligence and commitment.

Several students participated in the New York Youth Summit under the guidance and leadership of Ms. Saddlemire, their advisor. Jessica Ellis and Alahna Perez won the top award in their category with their presentation titled "Teen Mental Health Issues." Notably, Amy Lopez Calderon and Claudius Mensah should be congratulated on their research into global warming and climate change; Lesly Leon Torres and Maricela Castro, for the research into issues surrounding teen substance abuse; Jennifer Chimbo, Jennifer Quiroga, and Elvira Torres on their research into social networking and cyber bullying issues; and Erik Mariano-Gonzalez for his creative artistic interpretation on leadership. Students from the 9th grade annex also participated in the summit, including Ayana Clark, Carme Derosier, Nephtalene Jean, Staelle Luxama, Wilhelms Olivier, Jenelle Rogers, Ke'shaun Robinson Skeene, Pearl Shaw, and Jada Walker.

"Our students are some of the brightest and most ambitious teenagers I have ever encountered," said David Zimbler, Westbury High School principal. "We have so much pride in their successes, and so much confidence in everything they set their minds to. Events like these are proof of how successful our students will be throughout schooling and the rest of their futures."



"We are constantly amazed by the drive and passion of our students. The amount of work and research our students put into their summit presentations is inspiring, and we hope these achievements drive other students to become involved and utilize their skills to delve into topics that peak their interests."

— Superintendent Eudes Budhai

The New York Youth Summit also included various workshops surrounding topics having to do with issues affecting teens today to allow participants the opportunity to learn from their peers, while also giving them a chance to share their research and what aspects of these topics they find interesting or are passionate about. The summit concluded with a joint workshop with students discussing their findings throughout the day, and synthesizing all they learned to help them throughout their futures. Events like these help the District in their mission to ensure students have outlets to express their interests, while learning and furthering their educations.

**WESTBURY UNION FREE
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
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DISTRICT NEWS BULLETIN

WESTBURY SUPERINTENDENT EUDES S. BUDHAI NAMED A NEXT GENERATION LEADER

Eudes S. Budhai, superintendent of the Westbury School District, is a modest man. When asked about being recently named a Next Generation Leader, Superintendent Budhai couldn't help but give credit to others. "I would not be able to do such great work without the incredible students, staff and community," Mr. Budhai said. "Being recognized reaffirms the importance of the work that we all do." Well, since Superintendent Budhai doesn't like to take credit, allow us: He was recognized by the Nassau County Executive, Laura Curran, as a Next Generation Leader in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. The recognition is based on influence and work, and aims to recognize leaders and encourage others in the community. Superintendent Budhai has done great things for the Westbury School District and always ensures students are receiving the best education while living up to their highest potential. Since becoming superintendent, Mr. Budhai has increased student achievement, family engagement, building future-ready schools, and creating a culture of trust where teaching and learning is valued.



DREXELITES HAVE HEART

Drexel Avenue School students and staff celebrated the beginning of the school year in a unique and fun way. The PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Committee organized a kick-off event, at which all students and staff members assembled on school grounds in the shape of a heart. The touching display aligned perfectly with the school's motto, *At Drexel, We Get Smart, Have Heart, and Stay Fit*. Mr. Servidio, a Drexel physical education teacher, rose above the ground in the Westbury Fire Department's Hook and Ladder truck to snap the picture. As part of the kick-off, each classroom teacher reviewed the school's HEART (Honor, Excellence, Attitude, Responsibility, Team Player) matrix, which delineates appropriate behaviors that are to be displayed in different areas of the school, including the bus. PBIS is a framework used by schools to encourage good behavior.



WESTBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT THE CRADLE OF AVIATION MUSEUM

Students at Westbury Middle School recently visited the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Hempstead, NY. Along with touring the museum and seeing spaceship models and installations, the students had the opportunity to meet with Scarlin Hernández, a Dominican-born Spacecraft Engineer for NASA's James Webb Space Telescope mission at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, MD. As part of the Flight Operations team, Ms. Hernández tests ground system software and codes real-time procedures that will be used to command and control the spacecraft while in orbit. This experience, while incredibly exciting and knowledgeable for the students, was also an incredible personal opportunity. As a minority woman herself, Ms. Hernández was able to impart her journey and experience onto the students of Westbury and relate to them on a personal level. Events like these help the District in their initiative to inspire students and to show all of the possibilities for their futures.