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## Unified...an update! WPS 6-1-24

The weather was simply fantastic for the Second Annual WA & Friends Invitational held yesterday on Trustees Field. Our newly established WA Unified Track and Field Team were model hosts for the event and were cheered on throughout the day by the student-filled bleachers. Eight different teams from other school districts participated as well and the festivities began with an encouraging speech from Special Olympian Chris O'Neil during the opening ceremony followed by all three of the Special Olympic oaths: the Athletes Oath, the Coaches Oath, and the Volunteers Oath. The Athletes rotated with their teams through a series of events all around the track and spread out across the entire field. The joy and exuberance exhibited throughout the day was infectious and inspiring.

A few years ago Massachusetts transitioned the 8th grade Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks to a dedicated Civics course. As part of that transition, every 8th grader is expected to participate in an Action Project utilizing Project Based Learning strategies. An aspect of gold standard project based learning includes connecting students to various resources including experts in the fields in which the real world problems they are exploring exist. This past week, some of our local experts were invited to visit 8th grade students completing their projects to provide feedback and guidance as their final presentations come to fruition.

An even longer tradition in our district is that of the WA Senior Capstone Project. Another one of the many events taking place last week was the Capstone Exhibition which flooded both the main and auxiliary gymnasiums at Westford Academy, even spilling into the Bell Lobby. It was a wonderful opportunity to listen to the seniors share their takeaways from their experiences and connect their learning to their future plans. The variety of the work across the board reminds us how diverse our student interests are and how this experience provides them a unique opportunity to transfer their skills from the classrooms into practical work experiences prior to graduation.

As we progress through June, all of our schools will be organizing the various end of year celebrations that exist in each grade and classroom. Whether students are transitioning to a new building or simply a new location within each school, this season of reflection encourages everyone to consider and appreciate the positive relationships that have developed providing the foundation of this year's learning as well as helps us to consider individual and collective goals for next year.

Finally, I want to congratulate all of the seniors and their families as we all come together to celebrate the milestone of their graduation later this week. Whether their entire journey has been here in Westford or if they have joined us along the way, our hope is that they will carry with them fond memories of their experiences and gratitude for the individuals who have made up their support system. We are excited to hear about the adventures that await. They will always be a part of the Westford story just as Westford will always be a part of theirs.

Cheers!

Chris

Christopher Chew, Ed.D

Superintendent

Westford Public Schools

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