

WELLESLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Learning • Caring • Innovating



DISTRICT PROGRESS REPORT

2018-2019
SCHOOL YEAR



CONTACT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
wellesleysps.org/schoolcommittee
School_Committee@wellesleysps.org

ATTEND A MEETING



A. KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES

Accountability & Assessment

State Accountability and MCAS

The District values the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) accountability system as a monitor of success in meeting student needs. The reports provide information to help the District adjust instruction and identify patterns of unmet needs. Indicators include achievement (ELA, Math, and Science MCAS scaled scores), growth across achievement levels (ELA and Math MCAS student growth percentiles), English Learners (EL) language progress (ACCESS scores), high school completion (graduation rate, extended engagement rate, and dropout rate), and additional indicators (advanced coursework rate, chronic absenteeism). DESE sets improvement targets for each indicator, individualized for each district. In 2019, the District met or exceeded targets for nearly every indicator.

District leaders use accountability reports for specific groups to analyze patterns of unmet needs. Though the High Needs group (Economically Disadvantaged Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and Former English Learners) is making substantial progress toward meeting targets, and the overall narrative for most students is positive, the data reveal opportunity gaps. Specifically, the District seeks to better address the needs of its African American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students. In 2018, in response to these persistent gaps, the District established a K-8 Math Opportunity & Achievement Gap Task Force, which is engaged in ongoing investigation and action to better meet the needs of all students at the individual, classroom, school, and district levels.

Students with Disabilities

Wellesley High School students with disabilities' average scaled scores were at the 94th (ELA) and 97th (Math) percentiles compared to the average scaled scores of students with disabilities from all public schools across the state.

Data in Context

While standardized achievement tests cannot measure everything the District teaches or values, they provide important data regarding student achievement and growth. They help inform curriculum and instruction, supporting teachers to better meet students' needs. The District uses these data along with information from measures of school climate and student health and behaviors, such as VOCAL and the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, and other district measures, such as standards-based report cards and PBL rubrics, to inform the next strategic plan and ensure that the needs of every child are met.

B. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING



Building Connections & Exploring Interests

At the high school **The Enrichment Education Program (ERP)** provides clubs and recreational activities for students every day after school, creating space for **playtime, downtime, and family time (PDF)**. There is no fee to participate and no long-term commitment required.

The **ERP** program grew out of a desire to find ways for faculty and students to connect outside the classroom around their passions. Originally funded by a gift from a private donor to help the school nurture such connections, funding for the successful program has since been rolled into the operating budget. Initial offerings included clay with kids, knitting, and fly-tying and have grown to include activities such as **Let's Talk About Race**, Friday afternoon movies, Friday Morning Announcements, S.T.E.M Club, American Sign Language, **Friends Forever**, Ping Pong, digital art, and ultimate frisbee. Each fall, students can suggest ideas for clubs and partner with educators to make them happen. The expansion of the program highlights that kids are finding ways to connect with other students and faculty on a personal level, building community at the high school, and helping to ensure that no student slips through the cracks.

The high school is fortunate to have community support for **PDF** and the **ERP** from the PTSO, Community Investors, and the Wellesley Recreation Department.

WHS students participate in

C. GLO for the Seal will receive this designation in the form of an insignia axed to their

WHS Art Department Trip to China

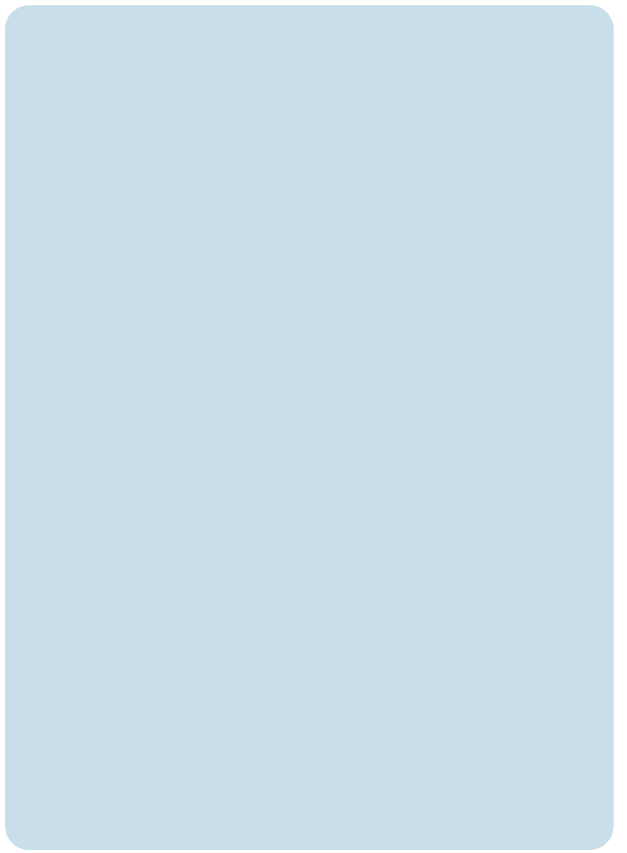
For fourteen days last April, 21 students and three chaperones traveled to China as part of the Art department's spring trip. Led by **K-12 Director of Art Thom Carter**, travelers visited Beijing, Xian, Guilin, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Hong Kong, immersing themselves in the art and culture of a place very different from Wellesley, Massachusetts. Additionally, the trip offered students who take Chinese language classes the opportunity to apply their knowledge and become teacher/translators for students and chaperones who didn't speak Chinese and those they encountered who didn't speak English. "The interaction with students their own age or younger (as it was break time for some Chinese schools) was priceless," said Carter. Those interactions included a pickup game of hacky sack with some senior citizens in Hutong center square.

The Seal of Biliteracy

In March, the School Committee unanimously voted to approve WPS participation in the **Seal of Biliteracy** Program. The Seal is awarded to students who have attained proficiency in English (as measured by the MCAS) and at least one other language by high school graduation, as measured by the **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages'** performance assessments, available in 12 languages. The Seal recognizes high school graduates who attain high functional and academic levels of proficiency in English and a foreign language, meaning that those students can communicate in those languages in authentic, real-life situations.

The Seal is a key element of the 2017 **Language Opportunities for Our Kids Act (LOOK Act)**. This legislation offers districts more flexibility in their language acquisition programs while still maintaining accountability for timely and effective English language acquisition. Within the **LOOK Act**, the Seal is a distinction that encourages students to pursue biliteracy, honors the skills students attain, and can be evidence of skills attractive to future employers and college admissions officers.

WPS students who meet the requirements for the Seal will receive this designation in the form of an insignia axed to their transcripts as well as to their diplomas.



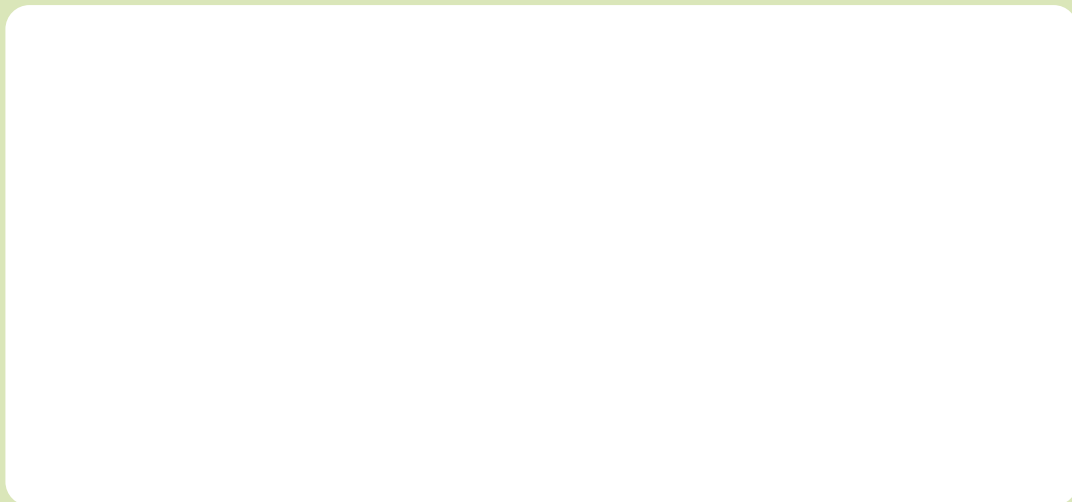
During SY18-19, the **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Council (Council)** continued its work through action committees focused on curriculum review, professional development, school culture, and family engagement. Recommendations included expanding professional development opportunities to support educators with culturally responsive teaching practices and offering affinity groups for staff.

Additionally, the **Council** membership expanded as Wellesley Public Schools (WPS) educators with deep knowledge and expertise of gender identity and expression (GIE) joined the team.





Figure 6 - Expenditures Over Time (FY2015 thru FY2019)



Data from Figures 4, 5 & 6 as well as additional data about the WPS School District can be found on cleargov.com.

Facilities Master Plan

Elementary School Educational Visioning

The Hunnewell feasibility study last fall presented the District with the unique opportunity of undertaking a comprehensive educational visioning and planning process that brought together elementary school teachers and staff, parents, administration, curriculum specialists, and members of the community, as well as appointed and elected board members who represented numerous constituencies, to develop a shared vision for the new Hunnewell school. Every one of the elementary schools was represented, ensuring that the design of the new schools would reflect the needs of and goals for the District's entire elementary school community. The District developed a comprehensive Hunnewell educational plan (following the **Massachusetts School Building Authority's** format) which serves as an important guidepost for the design team and the community during this early conceptual planning phase. The plan also serves as the critical foundation upon which the educational plan for the second school, to be built at either the Hardy or Upham site, will be developed.

The School Committee approved the educational plan in March of 2019. It provides a comprehensive overview of the schools' and District's needs along with aspirations for a 21st Century facility. The following points in particular strongly informed the conceptual designs and selection of the preferred option:

Neighborhood Learning Communities
Appr



