

The Week At WHMS
(parent edition)
 Week of June 13, 2022




Thought for the week:

“Taking a break can lead to breakthroughs.”

– Russell Eric Dobda

Weekly Calendar:

| <u>Monday</u> | <u>Tuesday</u> | <u>Wednesday</u> | <u>Thursday</u> | <u>Friday</u> | <u>Sat/Sun</u> |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| 6/13 | 6/14 | 6/15 | 6/16 | 6/17 | 6/18-6/19 |
| <i>Day 1</i> | <i>Day 2</i> | <i>Day 1</i> | <i>Day 2</i> | <i>Day 1</i> | |
| Last FULL week of school begins | 3:00p – Department meetings 7:30p – Board of Education regular meeting and budget hearing | 12:00p – Living Environment REGENTS: <u>students taking exam report at 11:15</u> 1:15p – PST meeting Club Meets: Dignity & Tolerance | 8:15a – Algebra I REGENTS: <u>students taking exam report at 7:30</u> | 8:45a – RTI meeting 9:30a – First floor locker clean-out | Sunday Happy Father’s Day  |

Instructional tips: (from *Edutopia*)

We Drastically Underestimate the Importance of Brain Breaks by Youki Terada (excerpts)

Practice makes perfect. To become ambidextrous in basketball, dribble with your left hand, switch to your right, and repeat the process again and again. Likewise, to solve differential equations in math, pile them up and work your way through them diligently.

According to one popular school of thought, it’s this active, repeated manipulation of material that lays the neural foundations for skill development. All too often, time away from the basketball court—or the math books—is seen as a break in the learning process, a way to cool off, reenergize, and then return to the vital work of actual practice.

But for Leonardo Cohen, a neuroscientist at the National Institutes of Health and the senior author of a June [2021 study](#) published in the journal *Cell*, the idea that breaks are a cooling-off period is a misconception.

When analyzing the data, Cohen's team made an intriguing discovery: They observed a spike in brain activity, mimicking the neural pattern seen during the practice session, but compressed by twentyfold. Rather than being idle, the brain was replaying the practice session over and over at an astonishingly high rate of speed—flipping the material from the neocortex, where sensory and motor skills are processed, to the hippocampus, the brain's memory center, over two dozen times in the span of 10 seconds. Stepping away from the activity, it turns out, is not stepping away from the activity at all.

AN INSIDE LOOK

When we learn a new skill, we need to connect it to previous memories, explains Cohen, a process called "binding." For example, when learning how to play piano, our brains need to link a simple action—pressing a piano key—with a larger, more complex skill, such as playing a song. Until now, scientists have been unable to decipher how the brain connects these two discrete actions into a consolidated skill.

We greatly underestimate the value of breaks when learning, Cohen and his colleagues assert, commonly opting for an approach that views active practice as the only way to advance. But that's a mistake, because incorporating breaks into learning "plays just as important a role as practice in learning a new skill. It appears to be the period when our brains compress and consolidate memories of what we just practiced."

BRAIN BREAKS DURING SCHOOL

In the classroom, "brain breaks should take place before fatigue, boredom, distraction, and inattention set in," [writes](#) neurologist and classroom teacher Judy Willis, and that means they should be far more frequent. "As a general rule," Willis continues, basing her conclusions on decades of research, "concentrated study of 10 to 15 minutes for elementary school and 20 to 30 minutes for middle and high school students calls for a three- to five-minute break."

"Importantly, a break causes an improvement in test scores that is larger than the hourly deterioration," the researchers discovered. "Breaks, it appears, recharge students' cognitive energy, thus leading to better test scores."

For full article see: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/we-drastically-underestimate-importance-brain-breaks>

Items of importance:

- The school budget will be put up to a second vote on Tuesday, June 21st so that we can avoid a contingency budget and the significant cuts to programs, services, and staffing that would require. If you need to register to vote, call the district clerk at 516-390-3107.
- The *Digital Equity Survey* has been posted to our website at: <https://www.whufsd.com/article/722387>. Parents who completed the survey earlier this year do not need to complete it again. We ask that all families take the time to submit feedback. Thank you!
- As we enter the warmer weather season, I want to remind families of our established dress code as stated in the student handbook. Specifically:
 - o Tops should completely cover the torso.
 - o Shorts and skirts may be worn at an appropriate length when standing.

- Any illustrations or slogans on clothing should be appropriate for an educational setting.
- Footwear must be safe and appropriate for navigating the school. Items such as flip-flops, sandals, and “Crocs” are not safe and not allowed.
- We have resumed outdoor line-up in the mornings. Students will need to remain outside until 7:45 unless they are getting breakfast or attending extra help. Thank you for understanding.
- **Have you downloaded the West Hempstead App yet?** It is available in the App Store and Google Play, just search “West Hempstead.” This will let you keep track of everything happening in our school and access documents such as this “Week @ WHMS” newsletter.
- *Let me know when you have exciting learning taking place that I can tweet out and be sure to tag @WH_MS RAMS if you tweet yourself*

Items of interest:

- The **extra help schedule** can be found at: https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1553808/Extra-Help_Schedule_MS_21-22.pdf. Students should take advantage of teachers’ availability to do their best work.
- **The last day for homework center will be THURSDAY, JUNE 16th**

Homework Center Information: 21-22

Homework Center is open 2:45-3:45 on the following days

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Teacher</u> | <u>Room</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Monday | Ms. Elezi | 257 | Support available for any subject, or just a quiet place to work after school. |
| Wednesday | Ms. Geiger | 17 | |
| Thursday | Ms. Rogan | 16 | |

“COVID Corner” Information:

- **Please send your child to school with a refillable water bottle.** Our water fountains are “COVID-safe” and only the water bottle filler function is available.
- ESPECIALLY in light of the reduced mask use, I cannot say how vital it is that **if your child, or anyone in your home, feels sick, your child MUST REMAIN HOME FROM SCHOOL.** Call the nurse or Mr. Murray for advice on when it is okay to return to school.

Looking ahead:

Monday, June 20:

- **SCHOOL CLOSED** in commemoration of Juneteenth holiday marking the end of slavery in the United States

Tuesday, June 21: *Day 2*

- **ALL DAY – BUDGET VOTE IN MS GYM, 7am-9pm**
- FLACS exams in Spanish and Italian – 8th grade students, 7:55am
- 2nd floor locker clean-out, 12:30pm

Wednesday, June 22: *Day 1*

- **Last FULL DAY of school**, regular schedule for 7th grade students
- Yearbook signing and breakfast, AM – schedule forthcoming
- 8th grade “field day” activities, PM – schedule forthcoming

Thursday, June 23: *Day 2*

- **Early Dismissal – 10:30am** – LAST DAY of SCHOOL for 7TH GRADE
- “Field day” activities for 7th grade – schedule forthcoming
- Mandatory Moving Up rehearsal for 8th grade

Friday, June 24:

- Moving Up Ceremony for 8th grade, 9:00am
 - o Students must report by 8:15 to the middle school
 - o Tickets must be requested at: <https://forms.gle/LtHCiLwLox75q3Ui8> by 6/15

LOOKING AHEAD – June 21st
School Budget Re-vote @ WHMS Gym