

**The Week At WHMS**  
**(parent edition)**  
 Week of January 17, 2022




**Thought for the week:**

“At the end of the day, I’d rather be excluded for who I include than be included for who I exclude.”

– Unknown

**Weekly Calendar:**

| <u>Monday</u>  | <u>Tuesday</u>  | <u>Wednesday</u>   | <u>Thursday</u>  | <u>Friday</u>   | <u>Sat/Sun</u> |
|--|---|--|--|---|----------------|
| 1/17   | 1/18  | 1/19   | 1/20   | 1/21  | 1/22-1/23      |
| <b>NO SCHOOL</b><br>Martin Luther King Jr. Day<br> | <b>Day 1</b><br>All day – ELA PD w/ Randi Roschnotti<br>3:00p – Select department meetings<br>7:30p – Board of Education meeting @ HS VCR | <b>Day 2</b><br>Math PD for 8 <sup>th</sup> grade teachers<br>1:15p – PST meeting<br><b>Club Meets:</b><br>Art Club; Comic Book & Graphic Novel Club; Dignity & Tolerance<br>7:00p – Parent & Family Webinar Series<br><a href="https://www.whufsd.com/page/parents-as-partners-webinar-series">https://www.whufsd.com/page/parents-as-partners-webinar-series</a> | <b>Day 1</b><br>3:00p – Schools to Watch committee<br><b>Club Meets:</b><br>Science & Robotics | <b>Day 2</b><br>Math PD for 7 <sup>th</sup> grade teachers<br>8:45a – RTI meeting |                |

**Instructional tips:** (from *Mind/Shift* @ KQED)

**How Can Teachers Nurture Meaningful Student Agency?** by Trevor MacKenzie (excerpts)

*The term “student agency” continues to be at the forefront of the educational discourse around the world. By encouraging children to have more control over their learning, educators hope students will leave our classrooms and schools with a range of skills that will support them in being lifelong learners, engaged humanitarians and empathetic people.*

But in my work with schools to create more student-agency-rich environments, I fear we may be missing the mark on what “student agency” truly is. Teachers frequently talk about student agency as a choice over assignments, like a list of items on a menu: essay, PowerPoint presentation, poster project or some form of digital literacy, such as a video, Padlet or Prezi. Although it’s important we ask our students how they would like to demonstrate their learning, student agency is about so much more. It requires educators to hold ourselves accountable to values that we must embody and intentionally work towards.

Let’s have a look at these values in more detail in order to clarify what we mean when we talk about student agency.

### **Genuine decision making**

Student agency is about having students take on some of the heavy lifting of learning. When students can have a genuine role in the decision-making process, this will create a classroom culture that values learning as an action. When I teach, I often ask myself, "Am I doing something my students could be doing themselves?" If the answer is yes, I de-centre myself so students can take on these responsibilities...

### **Knowing my strengths and stretches as a learner**

I often ask myself if my students know where they are at in their learning, where they need to go next, and if they can identify the steps they need to take to get there. Teachers can often answer these questions about each of our students, but can our students answer these questions for themselves? To help get these conversations started in class, I ask a series of guiding questions to help students reflect and begin to get to know themselves better as learners...

### **Exploring my wonderings, curiosities and passions in school**

All students enter their schooling as curious and inquisitive beings. They are full of questions and wonder as they explore and discover the world around them. However, somewhere in their schooling, many become complacent, disengaged and uninterested in their learning and in school. What does our teaching do to support and honour the innate curiosity of all students? How do we lean into student wonderings to make rich connections to our curriculum?

### **Having my questions shape my learning**

Questions are an invitation to learning. They call for us to be engaged, to be inquisitive and to research and problem-solve. In order to utilize this opportunity to create student agency, I often pose big, unGoogleable questions to frame our units of study in class that draw students in and will act as our overarching big idea for our learning. We discuss the questions that students generate and begin to sort them into categories and themes before we post them in class under the larger unGoogleable question. Students begin to see how their questions shape their learning.

### **Having a genuine voice in assessment of my learning**

If we are talking about student agency in the classroom, we must ensure there is student voice in the assessment of learning as well. Students have a genuine voice in the assessment of their learning when they can confidently give accurate feedback to peers, take and apply feedback without worry of ridicule or embarrassment, and embark into learning through the lens of taking risks in order to grow,

rather than for a grade, mark or percentage score... Students need to feel psychologically safe if we are to ask them to take on a more active and meaningful role in their learning, which is why as we nurture student agency in our classrooms, it's important that we also nurture relationships, trust and risk taking.

### **Showing and exploring my learning in different ways**

I often introduce the exploratory nature of a choice board by asking students, "Do you enjoy taking in information by reading text, looking at images, infographics or charts, watching a short video, exploring a website, or listening to a podcast or someone talking about the information?" Once students have reflected on this prompt, they have a clearer understanding of what best supports their learning.

When facing the options on a choice board, they make a decision based on their better understanding of their learning needs and strengths.

Further, I encourage students to document their learning—"evidencing," as we refer to it—in a manner that they decide. I always provide a few options in the form of thinking maps, thinking routines or templates to help anchor and organize their learning. After exploring these options and considering if any of them would support their learning, I encourage students to take ownership over this decision and select an evidencing method that works best for them.

### **Deciding how I want to share my learning**

I often ask my students, "If you could show me your learning in any way, how would you show me what you know?" My hope is to honour the diverse learners in the room whilst simultaneously leaning into student's strengths when it comes to agency... The result is that students begin to see that in our classroom, they will have some voice and choice in how they show their learning and that they can really lean into their strengths and interests... Kids will choose things that they're good at, interested in exploring more meaningfully and are more genuinely engaged in. How cool is that?

### **Growing into the person I want to be**

What are the enduring skills, lasting values and habits of mind that will be the legacy of our time with children in our classrooms? How are we cultivating the conditions in today's classrooms that will nurture the empathy and equity we hope students embody as citizens of tomorrow's world?.. *Student agency is about empowering students to know themselves better, determine who they want to be and identifying steps we can take together to have this goal become a reality.*

For full article see <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/56946/how-can-teachers-nurture-meaningful-student-agency>

### **Items of importance:**

- **WEATHER NOTICE**: we have outdoor recess, outdoor AM line-up, and outdoor PE daily unless it is raining. Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing and outerwear. We only stay indoors if the temperature falls below 30° or the wind chill falls below 28°
- **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\_MSRRAMS if you tweet yourself*

### Items of interest:

- From Ms. Walker and Ms. Gould, our yearbook advisors:
  - o Parents, a great way to celebrate your child in the yearbook is to purchase an ad. Also, please note, not enough yearbooks have been ordered to date. If you are interested in your child receiving a yearbook please go to [www.jostens.com](http://www.jostens.com) and order as soon as it is convenient.
  - o Buying ads helps keep the cost of the yearbook down for all.
  - o Hello Parents. Happy New Year! Please watch this important recording regarding your parent ad in the yearbook for your child. When ready to begin creating your message, you can click this link:  
<https://www.jostens.com/apps/jcom/router.mvc?affiliateId=1239445>
- We are pleased to offer our staff the "Parents as Partners" webinar series with Educational Consultant and Trainer Dr. Jennifer Bashant. These free webinars are accessible live or as recordings. Go to <https://www.whufsd.com/page/parents-as-partners-webinar-series> for more information. **FINAL WEBINAR ON 1/19/22**
- Our club calendar is available on the website at: <https://www.whufsd.com/o/whms/browse/221769>. Students should listen to AM announcements for the most up-to-date information about meeting dates and locations.
- 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](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 Homework Center is open after school on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. See details below:

### 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. Healey     | 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:

- 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.
- Please remember to **send your child** to school **with a** reusable or paper **mask each day**. A number of students are "forgetting" their masks on a regular basis and asking for masks at the front door.

- **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.
- For more information about the COVID vaccine for 5-15 year-olds, go to:  
<https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov>

**Looking ahead:**

Monday, January 24: *Day 1*

- On this day in 1848 the California Gold Rush began at Sutter’s Mill

Tuesday, January 25: *Day 2*

- Site-based committee meeting, 7:10am

Wednesday, January 26: *Day 1*

- PST meeting, 1:15pm

Thursday, January 27: *Day 2*

- Living Environment mid-term, 8:00am @ cafeteria
- Writer’s workshop PD, all day

Friday, January 28: *Day 1*

- **END OF 2<sup>ND</sup> MARKING PERIOD**
- Algebra mid-term, 8:00am @ cafeteria
- RTI meeting, 8:45am