

The Red Rider

REVIEW



UNDER CONSTRUCTION
Goodbye junior lot, hello softball field

INSIDE: Planetarium | Art Show | Concussion Awareness

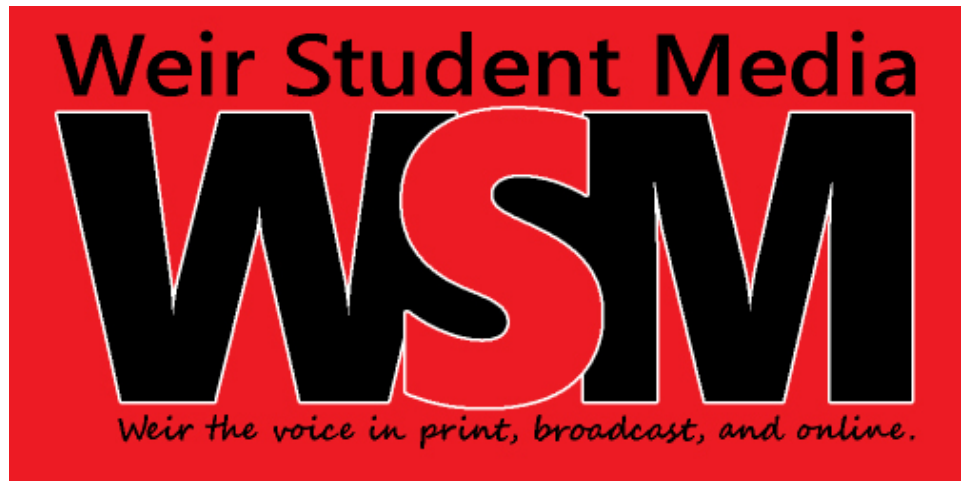
UPCOMING EVENTS

December

- 9 | Poetry Out Loud School Competition
- 10 | First Home Girls' Basketball
- 11 | Dance Team Clinic
- 13 | First Home Boys' Basketball
- 15 | Swim Senior Night
- 17 | GAA Formal
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- 22 | Holiday Break
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- 3 | Return from break
- 11 | Wrestling Sr. Night
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Mission

Weir Student Media is a student-led journalism staff responsible for creating Weir High School's media publications. Through print, broadcast, and web, WSM students apply journalism skills to produce high-quality content that increases understanding and awareness of relevant news and current issues of importance and interest by covering the school's diverse perspectives with accuracy, fairness, and balance. Our publications provide an open public forum for and by the students of Weir High School. Perspectives expressed in the publications do not represent those of Weir High School or Hancock County Schools faculty, staff, or administration.



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Weir Gives Back

Students and staff donate thousands of goods

By Elijah Anderson

Weir students donated nearly 5,000 items during the food drive hosted by Weir Ambassadors from November 7-18.

According to principal Kristin Bissett, this is the most items Weir has raised during this annual event.

Students contributed their items in the gym lobby as they entered the school each morning. In the end, the food donated was split between the Community Bread Basket and the pantry at Weir's school-based health center. Food was also donated to Weir high families in need for thanksgiving.

In return for their donations, students received feathers that they could give to the teachers they wanted to be crowned the Top Turkey. They were given bonus feathers if they donated Campbell's Chunky soups or Velveeta macaroni and cheese.

From the beginning, there



Isabella Earley helps deliver food items to the Weir Complex health center.

was a concerted effort among many students to ensure that science teacher Lucas Flaus would be crowned the top turkey. And, they were successful. With more than 375 feathers, Flaus "won."

During an assembly at the end of the day on Tuesday, November 22, principal Kristin Bissett

drew the names of senior Jordyn Ferguson and sophomore Bethany Berry, who doused Flaus with syrup and feathered him in front of the entire school.

Flaus said, "I felt like I was on top of the world" and added that he was happy that the school donated so many items.



Flaus struts proudly after being syruped and feathered by Ferguson and Berry.

The Weirton Christmas Parade

Weir Lights Up the Night!



Photo used with permission of the WHS Band Boosters.

By Tanner Finsley

Weirton hosted its annual Christmas Parade on November 26th with this year's theme being "light up the night."

With every parade, Weir's Band has always been there to participate. Starting with "It's a Wonderful Life," the Drama Club has periodically joined as well. Each year the two participate, they did something special for the people in attendance.

The band director, Samantha Lash, stated, "The band will be marching in the Weirton Christmas Parade this year. We are playing a medley of Christmas songs that includes Deck the Halls, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, and Go Tell it on



Photo used with permission of Teresa Bash, the Mountain, when she was asked

prior to the event.

As the band readied for the parade, each band member had their own unique thoughts on the matter. Thus, when asking the field commander, Savannah Moore, she responded, "I'm excited to march in my last Christmas parade." She added that she felt "kinda sad, but also excited" about this being her final parade.

Meanwhile, another senior in band, Skyler Kuhn, who rejoined the band for the first time since eighth grade, said he felt "More confident than the first since I'm pretty sure I can memorize the songs, and that is where most of the trouble is." He added, "Even if this was my last parade, I'm pretty sure there is opportunity to do more."

Behind the band was Weir's Drama Club, which advertised Snow White, which took place on December 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. The club did this by having Leila Schwer dress up in her Snow White costume, Jason Lipovich dress up in his Prince costume, and Leanna Bissett dress in her Witch garbs. Meanwhile, the rest of the club passed out coupons which could be turned in on any of the show nights for a two dollars off.

This marked the third time

the club has participated in the Weirton Christmas parade, starting with *It's a Wonderful Life*, returning in 2021 with *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, and having marked its third appearance this year with *Snow White*.

When Drama Club Secretary, Jason Lipovich, was asked about his thoughts and feelings prior to the parade, he stated "I am very excited to walk in the Christmas parade with my fellow actors one last time." He added, "I kind of feel sad since I'm going to be leaving the drama club behind once I go to college and how I will miss every single actor and



Photo used with permission of Teresa Bash.

member in our play" when asked how he felt about this possibility being his last play.

Similarly, Leila Schwer stated, "I'm very excited to be part of it! And I'm honored to be representing the drama club in it!" She then added, "I love being part of big events like this and I'd be delighted to be part of it next year as well to represent Weir High Drama Club (if we participate next year) or anything else I may be in!"

Overall, both clubs helped add more substance to the parade, truly kicking off the holiday season.

The Planetarium

An out of this world invention

By Nick Parker

What lies beyond Earth in the universe and outer space is one of life's biggest wonders, and scientists have spent thousands of years studying it through the field of astronomy.

The American Museum of Natural History describes astronomy as the study of everything in the universe beyond Earth's atmosphere. That includes objects we can see with our naked eyes, like the Sun, the Moon, the planets, and the stars. It also includes objects we can only see with telescopes or other instruments, like far-away galaxies and tiny particles.

Schools have used many methods to instruct their students about astronomy such as videos, worksheets, and documentaries. Weir offers an entire course on astronomy, taught by Michelle Turner, but nothing quite compares to the Planetarium.

Oxford and Merriam-Webster dictionaries defines a planetarium as a building or "theater" in which an optical device projects various celestial images of stars,



Space teacher Phillip Cottrill was the teacher to teach using the Planetarium.

planets, and constellations on the inner surface of a dome for public entertainments or education.

Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh has its Buhl Planetarium, but I if you did not know, Weir High has its own Planetarium! It opened in the fall of 1963, but unfortunately 2011 was the last year that it was operating.

Principal Kristen Bissett stated, "The Planetarium has traditionally been used for Astronomy class, but sometimes other classes

es have used it when doing space-based content. It used to be used to be used for elementary school field trips when it was still function-

Andrea Anderson, who was the last to teach in the Planetarium, gives a speech to community members.



ing."

But before 1963, Weir High School had a different campus located in downtown Weirton.

The school first opened in the fall of 1917 and was named Butler District High School. The school was then named after Ernest T. Weir and David M. Weir because they were the founders of Weirton.

Bissett stated, "The Planetarium no longer functions as it should. Many of the features of the computer system and lighting are no longer in working order."

Roughly ten years ago, the school even thought about fixing the planetarium. Bissett also stated, "About ten years ago, the school looked into getting it fixed, and the cost (if they could even find the parts) was tens of thousands of dollars and well out of our budget to get repaired."

With that being said, the planetarium was very helpful in the education and entertainment of many children. From class room fun to elementary school field trips, the planetarium now rests as a memory of Weir High School.



The photo above shows Weir's Planetarium as it stand empty in December 2022.

Dreams and Nightmares:

By Paisley Tice

Weir students are participating in Dreams and Nightmares, an art show hosted by Summit Art Gallery in downtown Weirton.

Student artists from JDRCC, Brooke, Oak Glen, and Madonna were also invited to participate in the exhibition.

It was a packed house on November 10 as show organizers held a special reception, open to the public.

An estimated 150 people attended the opening night, and over 60 students participated. Some students sold their art, while others decided to keep it.

Weir High art teacher, Laura Johnston, assigned every student an art project that fit the theme of “Dreams and Nightmares.” Then, the students got to decide if they wanted to display their art in the show.

According to the rules, submissions could be any of the traditional media including sculpture as well as a new cat-

egory this year for digitally produced works.

Each school was permitted to submit up to 20 pieces of art for final judging. The exhibition was not between schools but within students from each school, so five students from each school received award ribbons beginning with first place. Teachers and a member of the Arts Council served as judges with the teacher from the school being judged abstaining in the voting process.

Senior Rylie Baker submitted two drawings. Her piece “Drift Away,” a black and white picture of a woman as she slowly disappears, was made strictly with pencil and won first place in the show. Baker’s second piece is a watercolor galaxy. It is for sale, but “Drift Away” is not.

Baker said that her favorite part of this experience was having all of her friends and family there to support her.

She described the night: “When they announced my name, I was just overcome with joy, and getting to put the ribbon on my piece was the cherry on top, it just made an already amazing night with



Baker hangs the first place ribbon on her artwork.

family and friends even better. I was so beyond thankful that I even got the opportunity to be a part of it and that so many people submitted works this year.”

Katelyn Bowders, 11th grade, won second place for “Sweet Nightmares.” This piece shows a little girl’s bedroom. The



Bowders’ “Sweet Nightmares” is displayed with her second place ribbon.

girl is sleeping peacefully, but there are monsters surrounding her. Bowders took inspiration from the idea of monsters under the bed. She did put her piece for sale, but isn’t sure if it has sold.

The best part of this show for Bowders was getting to see other young artists in the area and what they created for the show. On the topic of winning second place, Bowders reflected, “Winning second place felt rewarding. I was extremely happy



Junior Channing Swearingen introduces her artwork, which sold during the event, as Johnston and event organizers look on. All students were given the opportunity to present their creations.

Area high school students participate in local art show



All of the Weir students who participated pose with their art teacher Laura Johnston prior to the winners being announced.

to get some of my talent recognized.”

Sophomore Kayla Mazon ended with third place. She drew a colorful dreamcatcher, with some of the panels containing nightmarish scenes. She used watercolor, acrylic, and gouache. Mazon left her work untitled and decided not to put it for sale.

Mazon explained that the best part of this process was creating the art and combining her inspirations. She felt that winning third place was very rewarding because many young artists are deserving of recognition.

Weir High sophomore, Naomi Young, displayed her watercolor and charcoal art. Young said, “I didn’t want it to be something that was gory and scary, but I also didn’t want it to be a basic dream that was all butterflies and rainbows. I just wanted people to look at it and be like ‘Oh, that’s kinda weird.’”



Mazon’s dreamcatcher painting hangs with her third-place ribbon.

Young’s piece depicts a room with a window. She used a dark teal watercolor to make the room, and then shaded it with charcoal. Her piece was not for sale because she wanted to keep it.

When asked her favorite part of the experience, Young said, “I think the best part of this experience was being able to work through the process of figuring out what I was making

and seeing it come to life on paper.” Young also received an honorable mention.

The art show is still open for visits until December 16 at the Summit Art Gallery in downtown Weirton. The gallery is open from 10:00am-6pm on weekdays, with the exception of Wednesday, which is open 8:30am-4:00pm. There is no charge for entry.



Young poses with her untitled piece.

Construction Begins in Junior Lot

Goodbye Junior parking lot
Hello new softball field!



By Alex Orris

There has recently been construction in progress where the junior parking lot used to be. This has been the cause of a large amount of controversy and confusion for parents and students alike.

All the commotion comes from the current plans to build new softball and baseball fields. This is the first time there has been construction at Weir High since the new turf was put on the football field in 2021. Here's what's happening and what the future plans look like.

When asked what exactly is happening with the construction, Principal Kristin Bissett said, "Red rider road is moving slightly to make room for the new softball field." She added, "The old softball field will become a new baseball field. They will also be adding additional parking spaces to the back of the lot."

As for the length of time that Red Rider Road will be

Project Description

According to the Construction Journal the project entails the following tasks:

- site improvements related to the demolition.
- removal of an existing parking lot to create space for a synthetic turf softball field.
- renovations to the existing softball field to create a synthetic turf baseball field.
- excavation and earthmoving.
- site drainage and preparation.
- road and walkway paving.
- concrete slab systems.
- masonry field structures.
- electrical infrastructure for site amenities, field lighting, and scoreboards.
- interior and exterior plumbing systems.
- utility relocations.
- other general construction.



closed, in a Weirton Daily Times article, Mark Dziatkowicz, the director of facilities and maintenance for Hancock County, "noted the current schedule will put construction of the softball field to reach substantial completion by February 10, and the baseball field by April 10."

While outside contractors have been hired for the major parts of the project, Hancock County Schools maintenance crews will work on the dugouts, concession stands, press box and a retaining wall for the softball field in-house to save money, while hiring an outside blocklayer for additional support.

Musko Lighting has been hired to perform lighting and electrical work, with FieldTurf to take care of the turf portion of both fields. The board has been working with McKinley and Associates and J.T. Sauer and Associates in planning the fields.

When asked about her opinions about getting a new

softball field, senior and three-year varsity softball player, Reagan Hoover stated, “I’m happy we’re getting a new softball field, though it probably won’t be done in time for me to be able to play on.”

The softball field will not be fully ready to play on until spring of 2023. Until then both student drivers and parents will have to get used to the new parking procedures put in place.



Drivers navigate around fencing blocking off the construction flanked by a storage area for materials as they exit to Red Rider Road.

During the first few days of construction, both students and parents were quite disoriented arriving to school and trying to leave at the end of the day with many unsure of how the traffic pattern worked.

When asked how they felt about the current construction traffic senior Nick Yacos said, “I absolutely hate this chaos!”

Senior Ty Lyon agreed



Banannio directs traffic as students exit the parking lot at the end of the day.

saying, “[the construction] is always getting in the way and [the traffic] has been so bad.”

Most students have been getting used to the new rules. For those that are not aware, all students must park in the senior parking lot and parents are to drive closest to the fence where construction is located. Students, parents, and staff should leave earlier to account for traffic delays and avoid being late to school.

Administrators along with PRO Stevie Jo Banannio direct traffic to aid in the process. They are aware that the parking situation is complex. Their main concern is student safety.



In an all-call to parents and guardians, Bissett said, “Please be patient as we try to find the best way to get all of our students into school as safely and efficiently as possible.”

Future Plans

The construction project doesn’t end with fields. In the future, there will also be physical education additions. According to the Construction Journal, that project is tentatively planned to consist of the following:

- a roughly 18,500 square-foot high bay addition to the exterior of the existing high school gymnasium, consisting of three main spaces: PE classrooms 1 and 2 and a Fitness Center.
- site improvements.
- renovations of the existing weightlifting room into a wrestling room.
- an area of roof replacement.
- mechanical systems, electrical renovations, including replacing the existing switch gear.
- complete replacement of the fire alarm system in the entire building.

WEIR Spreading Concussion Awareness

Dangerous but common; how can you stop them?

By Izzy Bernola

Being a cheerleader, many injuries are bound to happen. One of the most common injuries that can be seen are concussions. I for one have experienced many concussions throughout my cheering experience mainly through the stunting process.

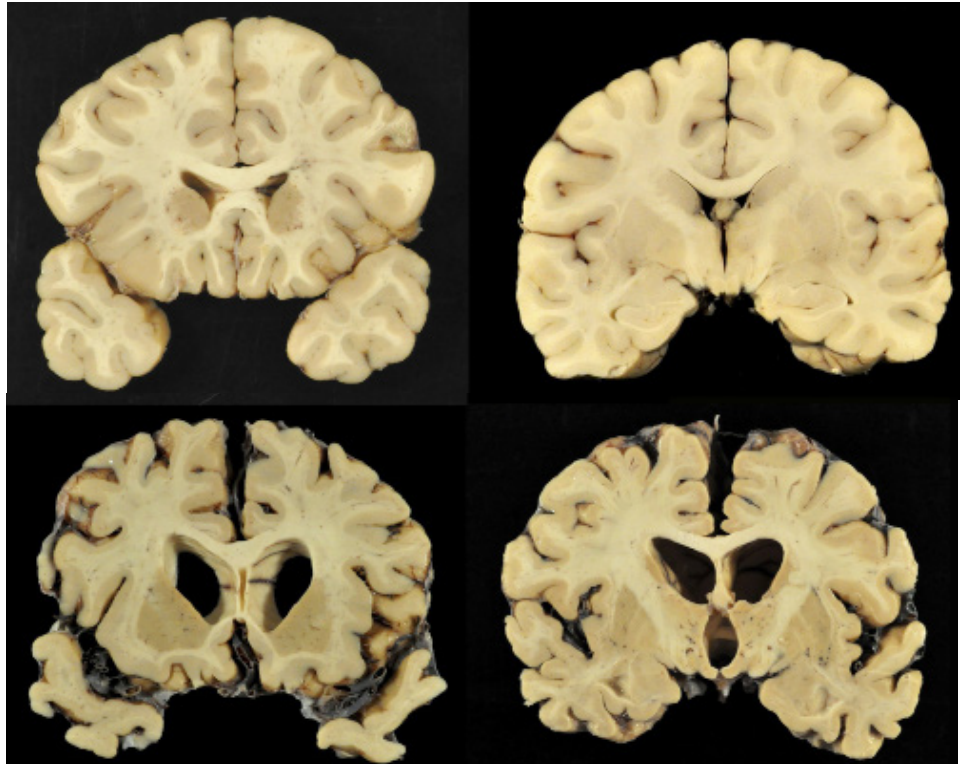
I hit my head on the ground and was kicked in the head as we were stunting. Another time I had a concussion, the flyer fell on my head. My time with a concussion was not pleasant at all. I was very quiet, and irritable and just wanted to sleep all the time. I was not myself at all.



Izzy Bernola cheers on the sidelines at a football game.

Studies show that high-school sports have the highest concussions rates, with 8.3% of athletes experiences recurrent concussions.

According to Mayo Clinic, a concussion is a traumatic brain injury, or TBI, that affects your brain function. They are usually caused by a major blow or sudden impact to the head. Other things such as violent shaking of the head and, or up-



The scan above depicts a normal brain compared to a concussed brain.

per body can cause concussions. Some concussions may even cause one to lose consciousness.

Weir athletic trainer, John Hollister, said, "As far as the impact on teens, the impact on teens is the same as adults. It's the side effects from the concussion. They range from headache, to nausea, to light sensitivity, sound sensitivity, emotional extremes. You just don't feel yourself, a lack of ability to focus or concentrate."

There are many side effects that come with concussions. The CDC and Mayo Clinic report that those who endure concussions may experience pressure in the head, headaches, balance problems or dizziness, blurry or double vision, bothered to light or noise, feeling sluggish; hazy; foggy; or groggy, confusion, concentration or memory problems, not feeling right or feeling down, vomiting, or ringing in the ears.

Hollister said, "The worst thing that can happen when it comes to a concussion is if you have a brain bleed, it could result in death...but as far as concussions each case is different."

Foothills Neurology provided information about the long term effects of concussions. They

"Overall the concussion was horrible. I was stuck in bed for a lot of it. I had a headace and couldn't look at bright lights for like two weeks."

Jordyn Ferguson

are not common but are very serious when affecting oneself.

When concussions are left untreated, they can lead to a higher risk of Alzheimer's, immediate memory loss, trouble of verbal communication, and trouble communicating. It can also lead to emotional changes such as depression, personality changes, social inappropriateness, and aggressiveness.

Hollister said, "There's really no way to avoid concussions, you get a concussion basically because you get hit in the wrong place at the wrong time and in a sport like football, they'll tell you they have a helmet that is concussion proof, and even if you have the best helmet in the world. Professional football players pay thousands of dollars for a football helmet, they get hit the wrong way, they will still get a concussion. You can do neck strengthening exercises to strengthen the neck muscles that help you absorb impact to the head, but it I never going to prevent it."

Concussion Prevention

- Know the game, techniques and skills required.
- Wear the appropriate safety and protective gear for your sport, make sure it fits properly and is in good condition.
- Strengthen neck, abdominal and back muscles.
- Stay alert. Avoiding goofing off during practices or games.
- Avoid unnecessary contact.
- Communicate clearly and loudly during practices and games.
- Follow all rules of fair play and sportsmanship.
- Always inform your coach and parents/guardians of injuries immediately.

Jordyn Ferguson



Ferguson, a senior, has played volleyball for seven years. Her specialty is defense. She has also participated in club volleyball for Pittsburgh Elite.

Q: When did you get a concussion?

A: I had it during my soccer season before highschool started.

Q: How did you get it?

A: There was a ball that was kicked from halfway across the field and it hit me straight in the face and knocked me to the ground leaving me with a black eye and a minor concussion.

Q: What did you feel like?

A: I felt a tremendous amount of pressure in my head and I always had a headache. I couldn't look at bright lights for two weeks.

Q: How did you recover?

A: I mainly took it slow and I didn't do anything that would strain my head. I stayed in the dark and rarely looked at light.

Stromile, a junior, has played football since fourth grade. He served as the varsity quarterback in the 2022 football season until he suffered a serious injury after a hard hit on October 14 during the home senior night game against Albert Gallatin.

Q: What did it feel like?

A: It felt like a lot of pressure on my head and it was hard to think.

Q: How did you recover?

A: I recovered by resting a lot, and that's mainly it. Just letting your brain rest.

Q: When did you have a concussion?

A: I had a few throughout the season, but I never told anybody.

Malachi Stromile



Q: How did you get them?

A: I got them by getting hit multiple times in the head and just all the contact.

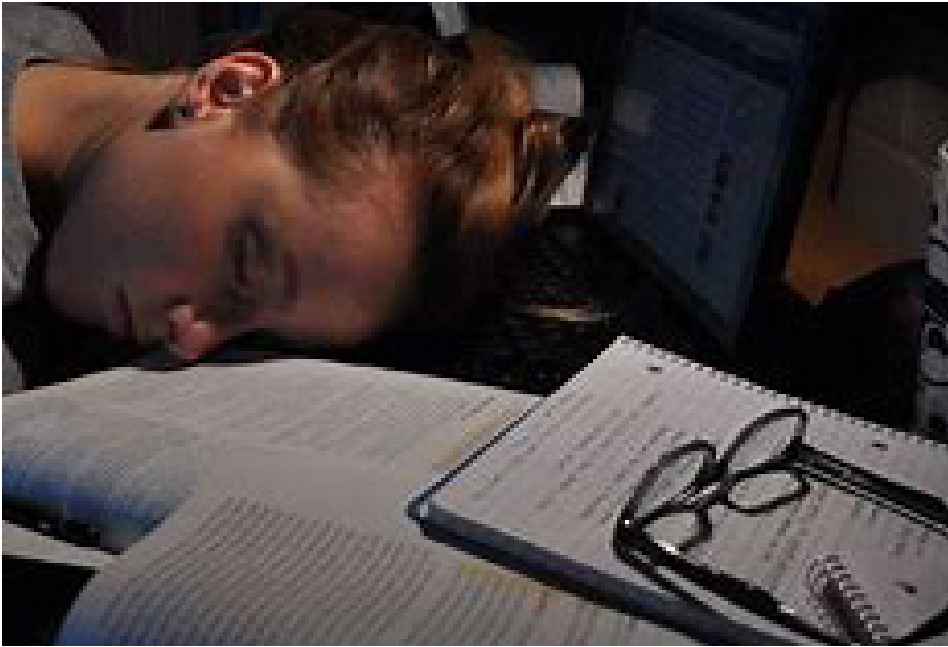


Photo from the Kansas State Thecollegian.

Are your Sleeping Habits Effecting you?

By Jordyn Ferguson

Sleep research suggests that the average teenager needs between eight to ten hours of sleep overnight, but most teens only get about six to seven hours of sleep per night.

Screens play a significant role in reducing teen sleep. Beyond staying up late looking at them, screens let off blue light at night. Blue light is beneficial during the day because it boosts our attention span, reaction times, and moods, but it has a negative effect at night because it tricks our brains into thinking it is daytime.

Playing videogames at night increases the amount of blue light that we see causing our bodies to stay awake. Studies show that 72 percent of teenagers play video games. A new study from the Pew Research Center shows that 59 percent of girls and 84 percent of boys, ages 13-17 play video games. 67 percent of these children are suffering with insomnia. On average only 19 percent of gamers reported getting more than seven hours of sleep. Over half of the respondents average around five to six hours of sleep per night.

Here are a couple of ways to protect you from blue light at night:

use dim red lights for night lights, avoid looking at bright screens two to three hours before bed, consider wearing blue light glasses at night if you cannot avoid the screens, and try to expose yourself to lots of bright light during the day to boost your ability to sleep at night.

Our body clocks naturally shift to make them feel tired later in the evening. That is known as our Circadian Rhythm. According to the Sleep Foundation the circadian biological clock is controlled by the Suprachiasmatic Nucleus (SCN), a group of cells in the hypothalamus that responds to light and dark signals. When the eyes perceive light, the retinas send a signal to our SCN, then the SCN sets off a chain reaction of hormone production and suppression that affects the bodies temperature, appetite, and sleep drive.

Each morning, as the sun comes up, our body temperature begins to rise, and cortisol is then released. This is what causes us to wake up in the morning. Most days, though, the sun isn't up yet when kids go to school. That is why they are so tired at the start of school. With sundown, our bodies think it is still nighttime and does not release

as much cortisol causing us to feel more asleep.

This leads to chronic sleep deprivation among teens, and it can have a dramatic effect on life. This includes affecting mental well-being and reducing academic performance at school.

Teens who do not get enough sleep might have trouble focusing in class. Long term lack of sleep in teens has also been linked to health problems. This includes an increased risk of being overweight, developing diabetes or heart disease, and an increased risk of getting infections. According to UC San Diego Health, teens who are sleep deprived also have a higher chance of falling asleep in class or other inappropriate places. Another added risk is teens who drive. Sleep deprived teens who drive have an increased risk of a serious accident.

Sleep deprivation also affects mental health. It was proven in a study, using close to 5000 teens, that depression and anxiety were closely linked with their sleep habits. Students with depression symptoms averaged around three and a half hours of sleep per night.

Senior Izzy Bernola stated, "On average, I tend to get about four hours of sleep per night due to stress."

There is still more information that is needed for to understand the mechanism underlying the conditions between sleep and mental health. It is clear that sleep is especially important to many brain and bodily functions that help process daily events and regulate emotions and behavior. Sleep helps maintain cognitive skills, such as attention, learning, and memory.

Poor sleep can make it much more difficult to cope with minor stressors and can even impact the ability to perceive the world. Here are some ways you can get more sleep: set a sleep schedule, go to bed early, avoid caffeine after 2 pm, eliminate blue light sources, regulate bedroom temperature, and try not to stress before bed.

The Dangers of Drunk Driving

PSA contest designed to discourage DUI



Jordyn Ferguson, Izzy Bernola, Johnny Kirlangitis, and Lizzy Rhodes act in a scene for the PSA.

By Addi Mikula

Members of Weir Student Media staff are working to create a video for the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration's tenth annual "No School Spirits" PSA contest, highlighting the dangers and effects of underage drinking and driving, which is the leading cause of teenage death.

The student committee designated to produce this video includes Lizzy Rhodes (leader), Jordyn Ferguson, Paisley Tice, Noah Magnone, and Da'shjuon Smith.

The prizes for the WVABCA's contest are as follows: "The grand prize winner will receive \$5000 (for school-related use) and take part in the creation of the television and radio PSA. Second-place receives \$2500; third-place receives \$1000; fourth-place and fifth-place receives \$750 each."

Rhodes said, "I think it shows teens a real outcome that can come from teen drinking. It warns teens of the dangers and encourages them to think twice about their actions."

Fred Wooton, the commissioner of the WVABCA, stated that, "Engaging our youth in a program to prevent underage drinking can be an effective way to save lives."

Ferguson said, "I think the PSA is important because it alerts students about the dangers of drunk driving, so hopefully when they are put into that position, they choose to say no."

According to the CDC, "Every day, 29 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. This is one death every 50 minutes."

The site adds, "Young drivers (ages 16-20) are 17 times more likely to die in a crash when they have a blood alcohol concentration of .08% than when they have not been drinking."

The National Institute of Mental Health explains that adolescents might engage in more risky behaviors and not be able to control their impulses due to their brains not being fully developed. Adding alcohol to situations that involve driving will only further impair their judgement and ability to avoid an accident.

If the risks of drunk driving are so high, why do teenagers still do it? Since alcohol impairs decision-making skills, someone who is under the influence may overestimate their ability to drive. Peer pressure is another big reason, as

many also make the mistake of not choosing a designated driver.

How to avoid a DUI

- Avoid situations including alcohol.
- Choose not to drink.
- Volunteer to be the designated driver.
- Make sure you have a friend who is willing to not drink, so they can drive you home safely.
- Hide your keys or give them to a trusted person if you know you are going to be drinking.

Those interested in participating in the PSA may submit a video individually or with a group. The limit for the number of submissions per person is four. Visit <http://www.abca.wv.gov> for more information.

TIPS for TEENS

UNDERAGE DRINKING

THE TRUTH ABOUT UNDERAGE DRINKING



Scan the code for more information about underage drinking, its short- and long-term effects, and common myths.





Effects of Block Scheduling

By Lizzy Rhodes

Before the start of my senior year, I was excited to get my last school schedule. I finally had the chance to take the classes I could not register for in previous years. Yet, this excitement later changed to disappointment. I glanced over my schedule to find it unbalanced and inconsistent. My AP classes filled my second-semester schedule, and my first semester consisted of all electives. An unbalanced schedule is a problem, especially in senior year, as students tackle challenging classes, jobs, sports, clubs, and applying to college. This frustration tends to be a common theme for students as a result of block scheduling.

A common problem associated with block schedules is signing up for electives. Natalie Charlton, school counselor, explained such problems in an interview. “Some of our electives students want to take can be hard to get into because we only have eight blocks a whole year, but really six that teachers teach so there may not be as many sections as students had before,” Charlton stated.

When asked about the frustration, she stated, “I think sometimes students get upset especially if they're taking AP or honors classes. They may not be offered as many spots and that creates a domino effect.”

This domino effect may make it nearly impossible for some students to choose electives. In

a school-wide survey asking students about the scheduling process for electives, several students expressed their frustration. When asked to describe their experience in one word, the top words included “stressful,” “confusing,” and “frustrating.”

Isabella Bernola, a senior, spends three of her four classes in journalism electives with Morgan Bricker, media advisor. In an interview, she stated, “Since it’s my senior year, I’ve taken most of the electives, so my options are limited.”

Sophomore Hannah Mitchem also found this true when creating her schedule this year. In an interview, she said, “I didn’t have a third block, and I got put in a class that I didn’t want. This made me frustrated and irritated.”

Staff are affected, too. Deanna Williams, a science teacher, explained the complications from a teacher’s standpoint. She stated, “I’ve seen that this year for the first time with my forensics class. I definitely have some students who aren’t very interested in the topic of forensics, and that makes it kinda difficult to keep them on track.”

Block scheduling creates additional stress when completing the requirements needed for graduation or completer programs.

Assistant principal Kelly Lawton described the complications in an interview. She stated, “There’s just not enough opportunities for classes. If there’s only one class

available, for example Business Computers 1, there might be only one chance for that student to take that.”

Senior, Rylee Donaldson, experienced first-hand the difficulties registering for required courses.

Donaldson stated, “I signed up for a fine arts class all four years but was never able to take one because they were all full. I had to take one my senior year and move my schedule around to take it.”

There is not one clear solution to ease the frustration students feel. However, altering the block schedule or hiring additional teachers may alleviate some stress. A modified block schedule (A/B days) allows students to focus on four classes a day while also letting students take eight classes a semester. A personalized schedule system, such as the one described above, alleviates the scheduling conflict with electives and is also manageable for teachers.

On the other hand, rather than altering the schedule, hiring additional staff would create more opportunities for students to take classes as well, because it would create more classes during each block.

Each solution would require action and support from the school board and community, especially parents. Individuals can advocate for change by attending school board meetings or contacting county administrators.

Traditional		4-by-4 Block		Non-Traditional Block		A/B Block		Modified Block		
Full-year		Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	Odd Day	Even Day	Semester 1	Semester 2	
Period 1	English	Block 1	English	History	English		English	History	English	History
Period 2	History				Chemistry					
Period 3	Algebra	Block 2	Algebra	Chemistry	Phys. Ed.	Art	Algebra	Chemistry	Phys. Ed.	Art
Period 4	Art									
Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		
Period 5	Phys. Ed.	Block 3	Phys. Ed.	Art	US History		Phys. Ed.	Art	Algebra	Chemistry
Period 6	Chemistry				Algebra					
Period 7	Health	Block 4	Health	Astronomy	Health	Astronomy	Health	Astronomy	Psychology	Literature
Period 8	Astronomy									

Let's Talk about the Future: Is college right for you?

By Angela Paull

High School flies by fast, and then what? College? Community college? Trade school? Not going to college? What do you want to do with your life?

With information and advice from school counselors and the pros, our new "Let's Talk about the Future" series is designed help students explore their options for after high school. First up, we'll take a look at college, what it is, and what it has to offer.

According to Best Colleges, nearly 7.3 million (46%) of college students were enrolled in a four-year public institution in spring 2022.

What is college?

College offers a greater depth in education and will challenge and inspire you. College are four-year institutions.

Benefits of going to college

- You can get a job and make good money since you get a degree
- You get more freedom
- Choose your own courses and class schedule
- Explore subjects greater than what you did in high school
- New passions
- Bond with new friends
- Prepare for your future
- Being more independent
- You will be more mature and responsible



At the workshop, they listened to opening speeches by Candace Perkins-Bowen, the OSMA executive director, and Amy Reynolds, the Dean of Kent's College of Communication and Information, before attending informational sessions.



Weir Student Media Staff visited Kent State University for the Ohio Scholastic Media Association fall journalism workshop in October.

College can be a lot of fun, but it can come with a lot of challenges, too.

Challenges of going to college

- It can be stressful since it's a new atmosphere
- It can be fun but you need to manage your time
- You may get homesick
- You might get some Anxiety
- Balancing sports and school work
- The Cost of the college
- You need to be organized

College is the last step until students start doing whatever they choose to do for the rest of their lives, but how might they know what is best for them?

Tips to help you decide

- List your interests, strengths and weaknesses
- Explore your options for majors/careers
- Talk to a college advisor or your school counselor
- Visit/look into the college you're interested in
- Understand the financial aspects

School counselor Natalie Charlton added, "Do not be afraid to step outside your comfort zone when it comes to selecting a college/university."

Choosing the right college can play a big part in your future too. Students can visit the campuses and see what they like and how they feel about it.

Questions to ask yourself

- Do you want to stay close to home?
- Do you want to be far away from home?
- Do you want to go to a big/small college?
- Private or public?
- How much does it cost?

What are you looking forward to in college? Justin Velegol says, "I'm excited to meet new people and get a better education."

Which college are you going to? How did you know how to pick which one? Elijah Anderson says, "I'm going to Point Park. I decided which college I was going to by making sure it was a good fit for me and a positive atmosphere."

What are you most excited for about college? What are you most nervous about? Izzy Bernola said, "I am most excited to meet new people and have the experience of being able to major in something fun and new. I am nervous for the harder classes and not knowing what to expect."

Students can start preparing when they are juniors. By junior year, students should start visiting colleges and looking into majors. Seniors should job shadow and then apply to the colleges they choose.

If they decide college is not for them, they can look into other post-secondary options and career paths to follow that do not involve going to a four-year school. Stay tuned for future columns in this series to learn more about those possibilities.

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