



WESTON EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

December 2004

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Dear Fellow Westonites:

I invite you to participate in the Weston Education Foundation's activities and projects. I have been involved with this organization for three years, been its chairman for the past two, and I am even more convinced that with your continued participation, we can make a real difference in our community by supporting excellence in education. Enriching and enhancing education throughout our community, but particularly in our schools, is our goal. Ten years ago, the founding members of WEF recognized a need for alternative sources for funding education in our community. That need still exists today. Communities throughout the state are facing tight budgets; education foundations continue to be formed to address this need. WEF, one of the early education foundations in Connecticut, continues to work in partnership with the schools and the community to introduce new technology, to encourage teacher's creativity and innovation, and to offer **Community Education** through Weston Open Learning and Weston Talks.

We make a real difference by supporting our school's greatest asset, our teachers. In the past few years, **WEF Grants** have introduced our students to storytellers and poets and their craft, which encourages new and creative methods of expression and communication, and have supported the sciences by providing experts-in-residence grants to develop and improve the curriculum and teaching methodologies. When a teacher comes to WEF with an idea about how to demonstrate the principles of linear motion by purchasing robotic rocket remote sensors, we support it and our children benefit. Some of the best experiences that our children have come from these inspired teachers. With your help, we can continue to support that process.

Technology Initiatives are a key focus for WEF's fundraising efforts. Introducing new technology into our schools becomes increasingly more difficult. This year, we continue to raise funds for Interactive Whiteboard Systems. We will be hosting an Interactive Whiteboard demonstration after the first of the year. I urge you to come and see why the faculty is so enthusiastic about this new technology and why it will be a great learning tool for our students. Technology plays an increasingly important role in our lives and introducing our children to its applications and benefits will enable them to develop and apply the new technologies of the future.

Your support makes the difference. We thank you for your past donations and ask for your continued support. Please make a generous donation to WEF this holiday season.

Stephanie Schwartz
Chairman
341-0467

Greetings from the Superintendent

The Weston Education Foundation continues to be a very special organization. It has a rich history of providing exceptional support for educational endeavors that benefit our children, our staff, and the greater Weston community. The on-going and highly successful collaboration between the Weston Public Schools and the Foundation serves as a model for other communities that are developing new school/community partnerships. This collaboration also reflects the shared values and goals that deepen community support for our schools. Highly successful school communities create and sustain activities that link students, staff, parents, and members of the community to each other. These school communities provide opportunities for teachers to engage in new creative and effective instructional practices and capitalize on the many worthwhile contributions offered by supportive adults in the community.

Over the past 10 years, Foundation funding has supported activities, research, resources, and specialized equipment for students and staff. Successful initiatives have included teacher grants for innovative instruction along with funding to support experts-in-residence who work directly with students and staff for a sustained period of time during the school year and as part of a plan for program improvement. Additional projects identify and link our schools and staff with university faculty. These nationally recognized consultants use their knowledge and expertise to deepen the instructional understandings of our staff. Major efforts this year are to continue funding Interactive Whiteboard Systems for each school and to support a science expert-in-residence.

I encourage you to learn more about the Weston Education Foundation's goals and accomplishments. Your continued support and generous contributions will keep our passion for education burning brightly in Weston.

Lynne B. Pierson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Interactive Whiteboards Systems – a Technology Initiative

Weston is proud of its school system's record of producing young adults prepared to enter college and life with a strong academic foundation and the confidence to achieve their goals. WEF supports the school's efforts to achieve its educational goals through grants that encourage teachers to introduce new teaching concepts and methodologies and by helping to introduce new technology long before budget constraints would otherwise permit. This year, WEF has given a substantial grant to the school system to improve the science curriculum in grades K through 8 by hiring an expert-in-residence to work with staff as they implement a new science curriculum. Some past grants have included the Advanced Science Laboratory, the Mathematics Calculator-Based Lab, the Recycling Project, and the 4th and 5th Grade Sister Partnership with students from other countries.

Our current technology fundraising effort is to acquire high-tech Interactive Whiteboard Systems. The Systems include a permanently-installed electronic Interactive Whiteboard, an LCD data projector, and an audio system. Each Interactive Whiteboard System costs approximately \$6,000. These multi-use "blackboards of the future" allow teachers:

- to use Internet resources associated with lessons
- to save/archive lessons
- to access information stored on the computer
- to interact more with students

Our children will be interacting with technology in increasing levels as they continue their education, in employment, and in their home lives. We are proud to help them prepare for the future by using the most advanced technology available to them and to help our teachers advance their ability to teach through innovative tools, techniques, and technology.

We would love to see one of these Interactive Whiteboard Systems in every classroom. With your generosity so far, we have raised enough funds to purchase one Interactive Whiteboard System for each of the existing schools. Won't you consider buying a System?

We invite you to invest in Weston's top-notch education system by generously contributing to the foundation's efforts to keep our schools at the forefront of educational technologies and innovation. The schools will be able to purchase as many Interactive Whiteboard Systems as your generous donations make possible. Please contribute today and take pride in knowing that your support will have a direct benefit to Weston's current and future students. WEF is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation. Please use the form on the back of this newsletter to support our efforts by making a contribution to the Weston Education Foundation.

Karen Zaharoff
Development Committee

Grants Encourage the Development of Innovative Curriculum

Superlative teaching is one of our schools' greatest assets. The Foundation recognizes and supports this valuable resource through a variety of grant initiatives that promote the development of innovative instruction and cutting-edge curriculum.

Expert-in-Residence Grants make it possible for an expert in a given discipline to work with students and teachers to develop new curriculum and teaching methodologies. The expert trains teachers in both content areas and delivery strategies, works with students in a culminating activity or project, and presents a program for the community. In 2000, the WEF supported the then president-elect of the National Science Teacher's Association to consult with our high school science department to align the science program with state and national standards and to incorporate inquiry-based methodology into the curriculum. Now, in 2005, the WEF will enable the BEST Science Teacher-in-Residence of the State of Connecticut to train teachers (K-8) as they launch a new science program. The grant will cover the first year of a two-year plan that instructs teachers in content area and implements an inquiry-based program. An event for the community will demonstrate this new approach to scientific learning.

Teacher Development and Creativity Grants give teachers a means to develop projects within the curriculum that engage students in the problem-solving approach to learning, promoting both higher-level reasoning and critical-thinking skills. This year, WEF awarded a grant to Edward Demchuk, a middle school social studies teacher, for the purchase of 10 Global Positioning System hand-held receivers to help instruct students in the principles of longitude and latitude by using modern technology. This enrichment of the curriculum will enable students to transfer concepts learned in the classroom to relevant real-life experiences.

The Enrichment and Technology Initiative allows Weston faculty to obtain funding for innovative ideas that include state-of-the-art technology, advanced science laboratory equipment, or collaborations with other institutions. Past projects include equipment for the Media Lab, wireless technology for the high school library, a sound system for the auditorium, gel electrophoresis equipment for biology laboratories, and a collaboration with Fairfield University for an American Studies Program.

In 2000, the WEF established **The David Trigaux Innovation Award** for a teacher who has demonstrated an unusual level of originality and dedication to creative teaching. Mr. Trigaux – teacher, principal, program administrator, and, from 1992-1999, superintendent of the Weston Schools – was widely recognized for encouraging innovation in education and for his support of teachers who brought it to their classroom. The award is designed to recognize this type of individual accomplishment and celebrate it throughout the community. Past recipients of the award are Geri Grocki, Mark Evans, and Jean Bennett.

Carol Glassman
Education Grants Committee

Weston Open Learning & Weston Talks – Our Community Education Programs

One of the foundation's three pillars is community education for Westonites. WEF is committed to education for everyone. Our two community education programs are Weston Open Learning (WOL) and Weston Talks. Weston Open Learning offers courses that meet from two to eight times; **Weston Talks** are one-time programs. In both programs, Westonites share their expertise and interests with other Westonites. This past year, we presented two Weston Talks programs whose presenters were all Westonites – “A Culinary Conversation” with restaurateur Nicola Zanghi and Gillian Duffy, food editor for New York Magazine, and “The Secrets of The Code: A Books-Behind-the-Book Discussion of Dan Brown's The DaVinci Code” with Dan Burstein and Arne de Keijzer. Our Weston Talks programs are always very popular and we are planning another one for February or March.

Our advisory committee, comprised of foundation board and community members has been hard at work developing our next **Weston Open Learning** offerings. In the past, we have offered courses titled The Painter's Palette, Build Your Own Computer, The Business of Gene-Based Medicine, Elements of Videography, Internet for the Cyber-Hesitant, and Digital Photography, to name a few. We are delighted to confirm that Clem Malin will be presenting his hugely popular Foreign Affairs Brown Bagger, which will cover Foreign Policy Challenges for the New Administration. If you haven't joined him before, we encourage you to sign up for what is always a provocative course. Some ideas in the works include Architects of Fear: The Role of Conspiracy, using the computer to learn about genealogy, an art history overview, and the third in our series on gardening. We are always open to program ideas from the public and encourage you to contact us.

Look for our announcements in the newspaper for upcoming WOL courses and Weston Talks programs.

Nancy McCormick
Weston Open Learning

WEF is a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education for Weston residents all ages. WEF's three pillars and some of the projects we have funded are:

- **Technology Initiatives:** first data/video projector, first T1 line/high-speed Internet access, Videography Lab, Wireless Library
- **Teacher and Curriculum Development:** Math on the Move, Integrated World Drumming Ensemble, Advanced Placement Vertical Team
- **Community Education:** Weston Open Learning and Weston Talks

For your information, the Foundation's board is completely volunteer and 100% of its members have contributed financially this year.