# Curriculum Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2026 9:00 AM
Zoom Webinar

I. **Call to order**

II. **Approval of October 2026 meeting minutes**

III. **Grade 5 Connecticut Kid Governor Update**

IV. **WMS No Place for Hate Update**

V. **Future meeting topics**
   - **Weston High School Program of Studies**
   - **Professional Learning Vision, Mission, and Structure**

VI. **Adjournment**

**Curriculum Committee Meeting**
October 7, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
Via Zoom

Present Committee Members:
Lisa Luft (Chairperson), Nicole Wallach

Present Administration:
Erica Forti, Superintendent; Dr. Tina Henckel, Assistant Superintendent; Dan DiVito, Director of Technology and Digital Learning; Meghan Conetta, WHS Principal; Jason Bluestein, WMS Principal; Jennifer D'Amico, WIS Principal; Renate Roehl, WHS Teacher

## 1. Call to Order

The meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m.

Lisa Luft reviewed the general purpose of the Curriculum Committee meeting and the virtual meeting norms.

## 2. Approval of September 2026 meeting minutes

Motion Passed: Move that the Curriculum Committee approve the September 9, 2026, meeting minutes.
This motion was made by Lisa Luft and seconded by Nicole Wallach

**2 Yeas -- 0 Nays**

## 3. Overnight Field Trip – UConn Model UN Conference

Discussion:

- Renate Roehl gave an overview of the proposed Model UN Conference overnight trip. Nine Model UN club students are attending a weekend conference hosted by UConn. This conference will serve as an early-year starter event before a potential spring conference.
- Students will engage in sessions on Friday and Saturday ending with a closing ceremony on Sunday. They will stay in a nearby hotel with direct shuttle access to the UConn campus.
- Students will represent assigned countries, conduct prior research on global issues such as education, UNESCO, women's rights, and engage in committee breakout sessions to draft a resolution. Saturday evening will include social event.
- The trip is facilitated by Renate Roehl with Assistant Principal Nick Torres joining as the required administrator on site.
- Dr. Henckel noted that while the board prefers earlier planning, late-released event details required approval on a shorter timeline so that students did not miss an opportunity.
- The cost of the trip is $525. The committee discussed availability of funding for students needing financial assistance.

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**4. Instructional Technology Integration Update**

Discussion:

- Dr. Henckel spoke on Weston's technology beliefs that anchor decisions around intentional technology integrations, focusing on the learning objective rather than viewing technology as inherently good or bad. The slide presentation featured live links and snapshots of shared community documents.
- She explained that technology in the district is designed to support—not replace—authentic learning experience like classroom discussion, hands-on exploration, and relationship building.
- Details regarding technology shifts were distributed to staff and families through Superintendent Forti's newsletters.
- In grades K–2**,** device usage is teacher-directed for approved instructional purposes.
- Grades 3–8 has shifted away from individually assigned devices to classroom-based access, housing Chromebooks in designated slots in the back of classrooms for intentional teacher-directed use.
- Dr. Henckel and Mr. DiVito spoke on policy updates. The annual permissions update was revised to a formal opt-in/opt-out policy for district-provided devices, prioritizing non-digital tools for day-to-day work. Technology remains required for specific situations such as state testing, computer science, academic interventions and individual accommodations.
- Principal Conetta spoke on the technology shifts at the high school including an increased emphasis on physical notetaking, whiteboard problem-solving and in-class writing to strengthen cognitive retention.
- Principal Bluestein reported that overall Chromebook usage has decreased significantly as teachers intentionally replace reflexive tech use with paper, Post-it notes and whiteboard collaboration.
- Principal D'Amico's observation shows a marked increase in physical reading notebooks over digital documents. She also commented on the ongoing dialogue with families regarding the opt-in/opt-out choice that has helped clarify device usage.
- Committee members inquired about bringing cursive writing back into the curriculum. And asked for a deeper understanding of how these changes affect grades 3-5.

**5. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
June Curiano

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## Become a Candidate

## Become a Finalist

## Become the WIS Kid Governor Representative

**Connecticut's Kid Governor®**

The Connecticut Democracy Center's award-winning civic education program.

29 Fifth Graders chose to participate!
Their process included:

- Developing a platform about an important a community issue that includes a 3-point plan to address that issue
- Writing a clear, compelling, and convincing speech about your platform and why you are the best person to address it
- Delivering the speech to classmates

1. Each candidate delivered their speech to their homeroom and buddy class.
2. Students from these classes voted to select one finalist from each set of buddy classes, 4 finalists in all.
3. Each finalist made a video of their speech.
4. All fifth graders watched the 4 videos and voted again.

Our WIS Kid Governor Representative is Aubrey Finan!

Aubrey worked with Mrs. Bluestein and Mrs. Rinas to create a campaign video. This video, along with other documentation, was sent to the state.

# Why We Started with Names?




**We wanted to begin with something every student has, but no two students experience in quite the same way: a name.**



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| **The purpose** | Look beyond a name on a roster and recognize the family, language, history, identity, and personal stories it may carry. |

# No Place For Hate Activity #1 Pre Work

| Write Your Whole Name Below. |
| --- |
| |

Get some information from your parents or guardians about your name. Write your answers here.

| | |
| --- | --- |
| **The Naming Story**<br>• Who picked my name?<br>• Were there other names you almost chose?<br>• Did you pick it before or after I was born?<br>• What does my name mean? | |
| **Family & Namesakes**<br>• Am I named after anyone?<br>• Is there a naming tradition in our family?<br>• Where does our last name come from?<br>• What traits of my namesake do you hope I have? | |
| **Culture & Heritage**<br>• Does my name connect to our culture or religion?<br>• Is it spelled or pronounced differently in other languages?<br>• Did you choose it to help me stay connected to my roots?<br>• Did we do a traditional naming ceremony for me? | |
| **Nicknames & Hopes**<br>• What did you hope my name would represent?<br>• What is the story behind my middle name?<br>• How did you come up with my nicknames?<br>• Did a book, movie, or song inspire my name? | |

# Prior to Activity



# The Lesson Itself…




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| **Meet someone new** | In mixed-grade groups, students made name tags, shared something not obvious from their names, and introduced themselves to peers they might not usually talk to. |
| **Look beneath the surface** | Students brought their completed questionnaires, shared what they chose, watched “What’s in a Name?”, and explored the idea of names as icebergs, with stories beneath what we see. |
| **Application** | Groups discussed realistic situations: mispronouncing a name, dismissing a chosen name, joking about a last name, or avoiding a name for fear of saying it wrong. |
| **Make identity visible** | Students used images, colors, and symbols to represent their names and identities, with the work intended for display around the school. |

# Application

## YOUR TASK

**Your first job is not to fix it. First, understand it.**

Each group will analyze one situation that could happen in a middle school.

### QUESTIONS TO REFLECT:

- What happened?
- What might each person be thinking and feeling?
- Why might something that seems small to one person matter much more to another?

### A

### "I'LL JUST CALL YOU..."

A teacher gets a student's name wrong.

The student corrects the teacher.

The teacher tries again and says:

**"Do you have an easier nickname I can call you by? "**

### B

### "THAT'S NOT YOUR REAL NAME"

A student tells friends that they want to be called a different version of their name.

Someone responds:

***"But that's not your real name."***

### C

### "IT'S JUST A JOKE"

Friends turn someone's last name into a rhyming joke.

The student laughs along.

Later, they tell another friend:

***"I actually hate when they call me that."***

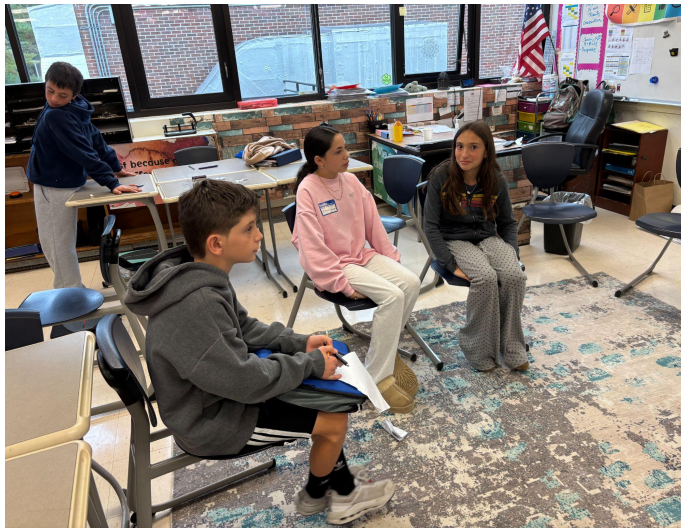
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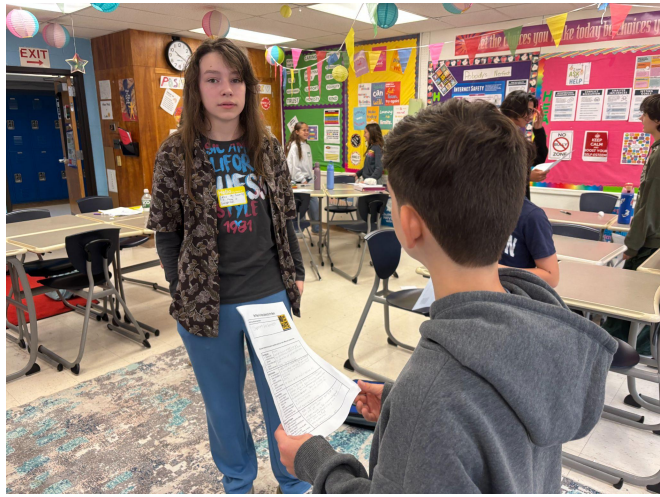
### "I DON'T WANT TO GET IT WRONG"

A student isn't sure how to pronounce another student's name.

They're embarrassed to ask.

So they avoid saying the person's name altogether.





Your names will be hung all over the school!

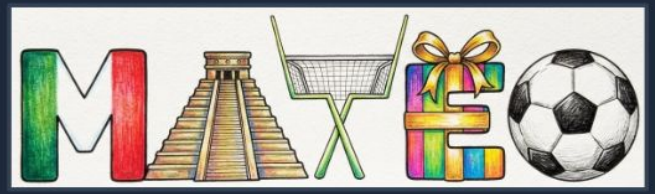
# Activity Task

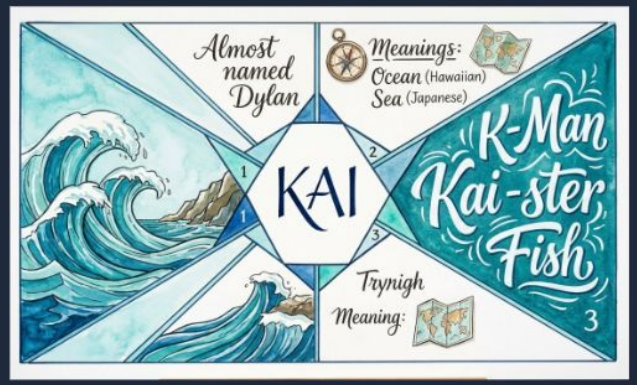
## Represent Your Identity

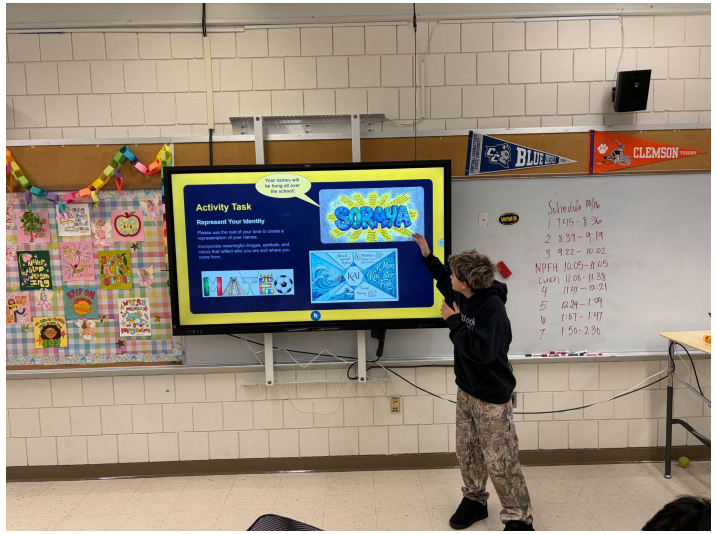
Please use the rest of your time to create a representation of your names.

Incorporate meaningful images, symbols, and colors that reflect who you are and where you come from.



# We Asked. Students Told Us.

Feedback helped us see both the value of the experience and what to improve




## 187 student responses

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| **What resonated** | Students described learning the stories behind names and discovering things about peers they could not have known from first impressions. |
| **What was harder** | Mixed-grade groups created meaningful connections for some, but others felt awkward or intimidated; familiar friend groups sometimes limited participation. |
| **What we heard next** | Students asked for more attention to everyday teasing, jokes, and language. Staff wanted clearer pacing, stronger discussion structures, and materials ready for small groups. |

# Activity #2




**We found an ADL lesson on slurs, offensive jokes, and how to respond that speaks directly to what students raised.**

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| **Our starting draft** | We have begun adapting the lesson for WMS with familiar middle school situations, structured conversations, and realistic ways students can respond. |
| **Student voice comes next** | At upcoming NPFH meetings, students will look at the draft, tell us what feels authentic, and help refine the scenarios and activities before we move forward. |

**The goal is not simply to deliver another activity. It is to build one with students, shaped by what they tell us matters.**