

# WE ARE



## WISSAHICKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Inspire, Engage, Excel**

Annual Report to the Community  
2018-2019



# WE ARE BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CHAMPIONS!

## To Our School Community,

It has been another exceptional school year at Wissahickon! We are so proud of the amazing accomplishments of our students and the unwavering dedication of our staff in providing students with a top-notch education.

In this year's Annual Report, we are pleased to share some highlights of our state-of-the-art educational programs that prepare students to assume their place in the world community as scholars, leaders, mentors, citizens, entrepreneurs, innovators, visionaries, volunteers, partners, performers, creators and athletes.

Throughout the 2019-2020 school year, we will share more examples of how "We Are" Building a Community of Champions at Wissahickon. We invite you to follow us on social media and visit our website to read about these achievements.

Our excellent schools and student outcomes are a reflection of the collaborative effort between our teachers, staff, administrators, school board and you, the community. Thank you for your support!

*WSD School Board of Directors and Administration*

## 2018-2019 School Board of Directors

*Pictured left to right (front row): Ronnie Hayman, Joseph Antonio, President, Tracie Walsh, Vice President, Carol Ann DiPietro, Deborah Greenstein; (back row): Paul Badger, David Frank, Ron Stoloff, Patricia David.*



## WSD Administration

Dr. James A. Crisfield, *Superintendent*  
Gary W. Abbamont, *Assistant Superintendent*  
Wade Coleman, *Business Manager*  
Cathy Rossi, *Director of Personnel*

Feedback about our schools helps inform decision making that is in the best interest of our students and community. The school board welcomes community members to attend meetings held twice a month during the school year at 7:00 p.m. in the Administrative Office, 601 Knight Road, Ambler. Board meetings provide the opportunity to learn about our schools, ask questions and provide comments. Visit our district website - [wsdweb.org](http://wsdweb.org) - for meeting agendas and other information. The community is also encouraged to reach out to our administration by phone or email with any questions, concerns or ideas.

View the digital  
version of this  
Annual Report  
and corresponding  
videos at  
[wsdweb.org](http://wsdweb.org)





# WE ARE RANKED AMONG THE BEST

**11th  
Best  
in the  
State**

Wissahickon High School ranking of *Best High Schools* out of 1,501 high schools in Pennsylvania  
(National Ranking: 502 out 17,245 high schools)

*U.S. News & World Report 2019*

**One  
of 400  
in the  
World**

Wissahickon Middle School is one of only 400 schools around the world recognized as a Microsoft Associate Showcase School for its excellence in providing personalized technology education

**One  
of Only  
200 in the  
Nation**

WHS is one of only 200 schools in the nation to earn a Promising Practices Award from the Character Education Partnership. This year, the school's second chance learning initiative and theme, **#NotYet**, was awarded for helping students recognize that success can be achieved, even if not immediately, through hard work, commitment, and patience. Students were given the opportunity to retake formative assessments after joint efforts are made by the student and teacher to reteach and relearn the content.

**#NOTYET**



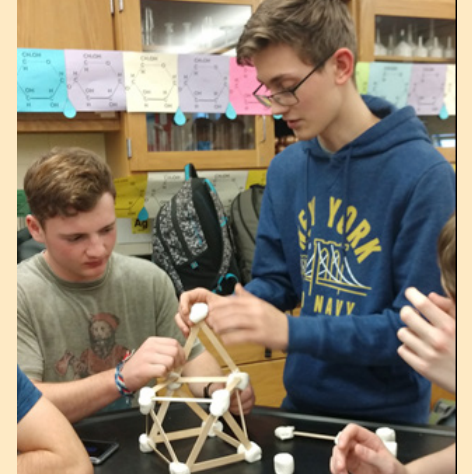
## About Wissahickon School District

**W** The mission of the Wissahickon School District, a community rich in diversity and committed to educational excellence, is to empower each student to excel to their fullest potential and contribute in full measure to the health, safety, welfare, and prosperity of our community. Located in Ambler, Pennsylvania, the school district serves approximately 4,700 students in grades K-12 in the communities of Lower Gwynedd Township, the Borough of Ambler and Whitpain Township.

# WE ARE INNOVATORS

At Wissahickon, we understand the importance of not just teaching students the answers, but teaching them to ask questions about what they are learning and to think outside of the box to find solutions. Beginning in elementary school, classroom instruction prompts students to use their curiosity and creativity as they explore new ideas and different ways of doing things. Whether it's building an "Alphabet Tree" with blocks and letters or building a robot, students learn to overcome obstacles and innovate through exploration and trial and error.

Our teaching staff also understand that it is empowering to make physical things. Dedicated MakerSpaces in all elementary schools and the middle school provide a hands-on learning space equipped with modern technology, materials and resources to support invention and learning by doing.



In the new Fabrication Laboratory (Fab Lab) at Wissahickon High School, students collaborate, design, test and build innovative solutions using leading technologies, tools and materials. Students work with equipment that is used in the engineering and manufacturing industries to prepare for the real world - computer design software, tabletop milling, wood, metal, manufacturing, routing, cutting and etching equipment and 3D printers.

[WATCH VIDEO OF THE FAB LAB OPENING](#)



# WE ARE LEADERS

At Wissahickon, we know that leaders are not born to lead, but are prepared to lead. Through classroom and extracurricular activities, we encourage our students to embrace leadership and mentoring opportunities. Through these activities, students gain the soft skills they need to be effective leaders and mentors, including how to communicate well, motivate other people, listen to feedback, embrace flexible problem-solving and handle or delegate responsibilities.

## 289

Extracurricular leadership positions at Wissahickon High School



## and MENTORS



## 60+

Members of Team 341 Miss Daisy celebrated the WHS robotics team's 20th anniversary in 2019! Although the team of more than 60 students participate in the construction and programming of a robot, its overall goal is "to build people, not machines." As a recognized leader in robotics, the students mentor teams in the local community and across the globe. They also provide elementary and middle school presentations to get younger students excited about technology.



Beginning in elementary school, students may start developing their leadership skills by joining Student Council. These students organize and lead activities such as pep rallies, assemblies and fundraisers.

## 35

Student Council leaders at Lower Gwynedd Elementary



To help mentor our kindergarten students, 5th graders in our elementary schools are assigned a "Kindergarten Buddy". Throughout the year, the buddies do art projects together and participate in school events with the 5th grader "showing the ropes" to our younger students.



## Points of Pride (2018-19 School Year)

12

Consecutive years the WMS MathCounts Club has been awarded Gold Level Club Status by the National Math Club - one of only 13 teams in PA to achieve this honor

17

National Merit Commended Scholars (in the 97th percentile of the 1.6 million students who took the 2018 PSAT)

90.6

Points awarded to the WHS Law Club at Montgomery County's Mock Trial Competition to win the victory and claim the highest score in Wissahickon Law Club history

127

Juniors and seniors inducted into the National Honor Society for demonstrating an ongoing commitment to academics, community service, leadership and character



# WE ARE SCHOLARS

## Class of 2019

312

Total Graduates

76%

Attending Four-Year College

16%

Attending Two-Year/Trade/Technical School

7.7%

Pursuing Gap Year/Work/Other

0.3%

Entering the Military





# WE ARE ENTREPRENEURS



**500+**

Cups of coffee or hot cocoa prepared, sold and delivered to staff by the WMS Functional Skills students as part of their "Wiss Morning Joe" business

At Wissahickon, we know that students in today's classrooms will create new industries, find new cures and solve tomorrow's world problems. As such, our schools provide learning opportunities that build the skills of entrepreneurs and visionaries - creativity, initiative, problem solving, organizational skills, communication and independence. We encourage our students to be forward-looking – to analyze and anticipate trends, opportunities and future challenges. And, we emphasize the importance of hard work and commitment.

**130**

Students in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)

## and VISIONARIES



**1,092**

Downloads for "Lunch with the Blue Sharks" - a new podcast series created by 3rd graders at Blue Bell Elementary. Students share their vision with the school community by writing and producing their own stories, classroom project reviews, poetry and school news segments



# WE ARE CITIZENS



At Wissahickon, we believe that our graduates should be civic-minded, knowledgeable and productive citizens who serve their community. This school year, students from our National Honor Society demonstrated their commitment to civic responsibility by volunteering at the polls on Election Day 2018, registering new voters, and being first-time voters.

Student Council provides students with the opportunity to participate in a form of representative government within their school setting. Officers and representatives are elected by the student body to work with the school administration and staff to provide input on school-related issues and organize activities to benefit all students.

**4** Executive Board Members, **16** WHS Class Senators and **60** Homeroom Representatives are elected to serve on the WHS Student Council



To show their support for those who serve in the armed forces, students, families and staff in every school contributed to fundraising efforts for the new Wissahickon Veterans Memorial at the high school. The memorial, unveiled in May 2019, will serve as a solemn place for our students and school community to honor and recognize the sacrifices of the brave men and women who serve our country.

To further educate our students about military service, Ali Meltzer '20 and Olivia Welsh '21 helped create bios and videos of current staff veterans and alumni veterans who lost their lives in service. These "Trojan Tributes" are featured on the Wissahickon Wall of Honor at WHS and on the WSD website.



[WATCH VIDEO OF THE MEMORIAL UNVEILING CEREMONY](#)



# WE ARE PERFORMERS



**60+**

Musical and drama performances held districtwide each year

At Wissahickon, we strive to develop students who are imaginative and confident performers, who understand and appreciate the world of music and art, and are inspired to express their own individuality and creativity through the visual and performing arts. Additionally, we encourage our students to adopt a physically active and healthy lifestyle through our health and physical education curriculum and more than 30 extracurricular athletic offerings.



**86%**

High school students who participate in athletics or an extracurricular club

## CREATORS



### ARTIST STATEMENT

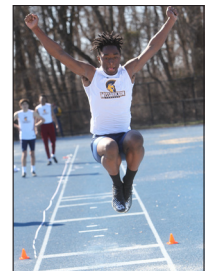
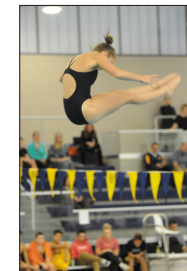
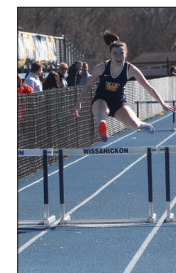
Ashley Frey 5L

My purpose of putting these masks together is because I like the African mask and the Trojan helmet is protecting the African mask. The Trojan mask shows strength and glory. I love the style of the African mask and its unique properties. The meaning of this is that you can be unique in your own special way. The mask is so unique, and the helmet shows that you are being strong about standing out. I didn't make a simple mask, like a parade mask, a Halloween mask, or animal mask. This is because I wanted my mask to be different and stand out. My inspiration was me. I have celiac disease, and the rarest hair color in the world, red hair. I don't wear what is in style. I just wear what I like, not what others like. That is my mask.



[WATCH VIDEO ABOUT ART AT WISSAHICKON](#)

## and ATHLETES





# WE ARE VOLUNTEERS and PARTNERS

Our tagline, *Bleeding Blue with a Heart of Gold*, exemplifies Wissahickon's school spirit and focus on teaching students to be volunteers and partners who help others to make our schools stronger and our communities a better place to live. Students in all six schools participate in character education activities and community service. By partnering with local, national and international charitable organizations, our students' efforts make an impact locally and across the nation and world.



**\$30,091**

Raised and donated to the Four Diamonds Fund by Wissahickon High School students at their first annual Mini-THON to raise awareness of childhood cancer

**500 LBS.**

Sneakers donated by Stony Creek Elementary to children around the world who need shoes to attend school

**\$6,781**

Raised by Lower Gwynedd Elementary students, staff and families to support the new Wissahickon Veterans Memorial



**200+**

Books donated by Shady Grove Elementary students for community book bins. Student Council also raised money to purchase baby board books for families with new babies



**\$225**

Raised by the WMS Interact Club in its partnership with the Blue Bell Rotary Club. Proceeds from the 'Pie Your Principal' fundraiser supported schools in Nairobi



**\$15,000**

Raised from Blue Bell Elementary's 1st Annual Boosterthon Fun Run to support the expansion of the school's community walking trail










# WE ARE GROWING

Wissahickon is considered a highly desired community in which to live and raise a family as evidenced by increasing enrollment in the district. Our ranking as a top school district and favorable living conditions attract many young families from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Over the past two years, enrollment at the K-5 level increased by 5.6% and is anticipated to continue growing for the next five years.

To accommodate the K-5 growth, the WSD administration and school board spent the last year meeting with stakeholders and analyzing various renovation/construction options within the elementary schools. In addition to providing adequate learning space, the hope was to find a plan that would not require redistricting students (e.g. changing school attendance boundaries). In June 2019, the school board approved a final plan that achieved those goals as follows:

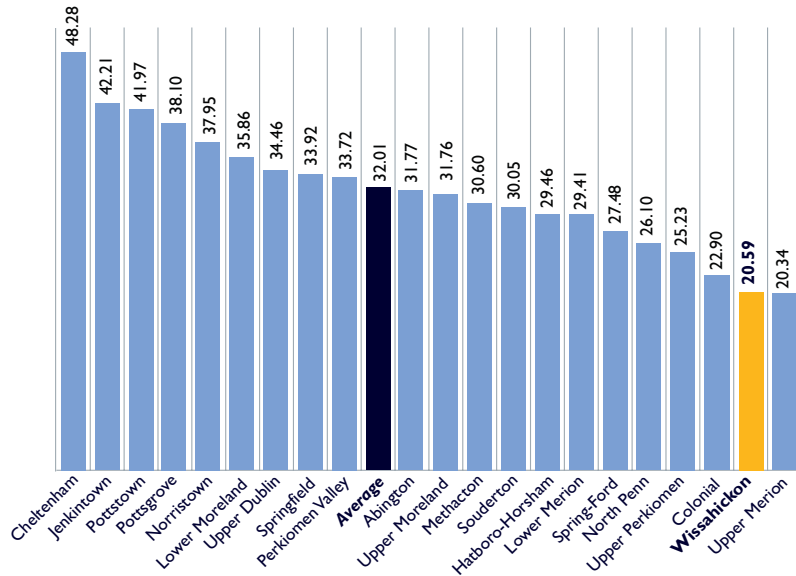
- 🍏 A construction project at Stony Creek Elementary will provide six new classrooms (with an option for three additional classrooms), thereby increasing the capacity at the school by 133 (200 students if three additional classrooms are needed).
- 🍏 Our Autistic Support Program will be moved into specially designed spaces at Stony Creek Elementary, thereby increasing the capacity at Shady Grove Elementary (where the program is now) by 67 (three classrooms).
- 🍏 A new all-purpose room at Stony Creek Elementary, mirroring the one at Lower Gwynedd Elementary, will provide an expansion of the school's core spaces, as well as a valuable, new after-hours/weekend community-use asset (e.g. gym space). The existing gym and cafeteria will be converted to a learning space as part of the construction.
- 🍏 Estimated cost of the project is roughly \$20 million (in the form of new debt) with the target completion date in the 2022-23 school year. During construction, additional modular classrooms will be used at Stony Creek.

2018-19 Student Enrollment		Student Enrollment Projections (over next 5 years)
	Districtwide 4,699	5,190
	Blue Bell Elementary School - 437	522
	Lower Gwynedd Elementary School - 593	617
	Shady Grove Elementary School - 623	684
	Stony Creek Elementary School - 544	677
	Wissahickon Middle School - 1,105	1,198
	Wissahickon High School - 1,397	1,492

**NOTE:** *Wissahickon Middle and High School have the capacity to absorb the projected enrollment increase without construction/renovation*

# WE ARE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

## Montgomery County School District Millage Rates 2019-2020



*Property taxes in Wissahickon are well below the average and second lowest among the 21 districts in Montgomery County.*

*(To calculate your property tax, multiply the assessment of your property by the mill rate and divide by 1,000)*

### Wissahickon School District

601 Knight Road  
Ambler, PA 19002

Nonprofit Organization  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 10005  
BOYERTOWN, PA

## 2019-2020 Budget Highlights

### Funding Sources

Local Revenue	\$84,211,986
State Revenue	\$20,525,824
Federal Revenue	\$571,625
Other	\$40,000

**\$106 Million**  
Total Budget

**20.59**  
Millage Rate

### Where the Money Goes

<b>67%</b>	Classroom Instruction
<b>28%</b>	Classroom Support Services
<b>3%</b>	Noninstructional Services
<b>2%</b>	Other/Financing Uses

**2.85%**  
Property Tax Increase

**\$118**  
Annual property tax increase  
for a household with a median  
assessed value of \$207,000

# WE ARE A COMMUNITY

There are many ways community members can get involved with our schools and support our students:

- 🍏 Volunteer in our Schools
- 🍏 Be a Career Day Speaker or Class Presenter
- 🍏 Provide a Business Internship
- 🍏 Join our Alumni Network
- 🍏 Sponsor our Programs, Teams & Clubs
- 🍏 Attend School & Athletic Events (**FREE** for residents 62 and over with a WSD Gold Card)
- 🍏 Support WEOF - our Education Foundation - [weof.org](http://weof.org)
- 🍏 Subscribe to WissNation Quarterly Newsletter at [wsdweb.org](http://wsdweb.org)
- 🍏 Follow Us on Social Media

