

School Nominee Presentation Form

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

X Public ☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Private ☐ Independent ☐ Rural

Name of Principal: Mrs. Lisa Deorio

Official School Name: Weston High School

Official School Name Mailing Address: 115 School Rd. Weston, CT

County: Fairfield State School Code Number *: CEEB 070913

Telephone: 203-221-6500 Fax: 203-221-1252

Web site/URL: www.westonps.org E-mail: lisadeorio@westonps.org

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.



Date: 2/13/2019

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent: Dr. William McKersie

District Name: Weston Public Schools

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.


(Superintendent's Signature)

Date: 2/13/2019

Nominating Authority's Certifications

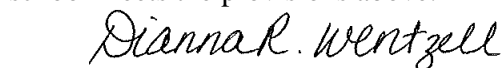
The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: State of Connecticut Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.



Date: 2/15/2019

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: March 31, 2021

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.

Summary

Weston High School (WHS) is a suburban high school serving 840 students in grades 9 through 12. The school serves the town of Weston and has a student body that is 13% minority and 3% eligible for free or reduced lunch. 63% of WHS students participate in AP coursework, with a 94% passing rate on AP testing.

WHS's mission is to provide a safe and intellectually challenging environment that empowers students to become innovative thinkers, creative problem solvers, and inspired learners prepared to contribute to the global society. Through this commitment, WHS has embraced countless programs, policies, and initiatives that create a safe and healthy environment for their students while also creating a curriculum and culture that trains and encourages students to improve both their local and global community. In doing so, Weston High has become a model for local school systems in terms of sustainable action.

Weston's commitment to sustainability is visible in every hallway and every classroom of the school. Weston has made it part of their curriculum objectives to incorporate the United Nations' 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* which are displayed on posters in each classroom and throughout the hallways. This serves as a daily reminder to students that they are part of a larger global community and that the purpose of their education is in part to contribute to the achievement of these goals. As a further illustration of this commitment to sustainability, the hallways of several school wings are decorated with murals that promote sustainable initiatives. But, while posters and murals are a nice reminder, they mean little without actions to back them up. While the sustainability goals are incorporated in all disciplines, they are a particular focus of the science and social studies curriculum. In science, courses in Standard and AP Environmental Science are offered with approximately 50% of all students in the school taking such a course before graduation. Further, courses in Advanced Science Research and Project Lead the Way (an engineering and STEM focused course) are offered to teach students the necessary skills to tackle real world, 21st century problems. All of these courses encourage students to step beyond the classroom in order to experience these challenges first hand in both the local and global community. For example, students in the environmental courses are given numerous opportunities to work directly with local organizations and government officials. Students have done everything from physical volunteer work to attending presentations and town meetings. Groups with whom they have worked include: the Weston Sustainability Committee, the Weston First Selectman, the Lachat Town Farm, the Nature Conservancy and Devil's Den Nature Preserve, Earthplace nature center in Westport CT, the Wakeman Town Farm in Westport CT, Trout Unlimited and Trout in the Classroom, among others. Further still, Weston has embraced a relationship with a local service organization known as Builders Beyond Borders in which students do local community service and travel to Latin America during school vacation to do construction projects in underprivileged communities. Approximately 10% of Weston High's population participates in this global program which is further illustration of Weston's commitment to having students contribute to their global community.

While it is clear that Weston High is committed to educating students about sustainability, it is equally committed to creating a physical plant and environment where the health and well-being of its students is a priority. Weston High is fortunate to be located in an area surrounded by rich forest and wetland ecosystems. Classes are regularly conducted outdoors to take advantage of these areas. The school's vegetable garden is also incorporated into the curriculum of several courses and the special education program. The building is dotted with numerous outdoor courtyards which bring natural light to classrooms and a perpetual connection to nature regardless of your location in the school. These areas

provide a refuge for students to de-stress along with quiet meditation rooms in the library where students can go to calmly collect themselves during the day.

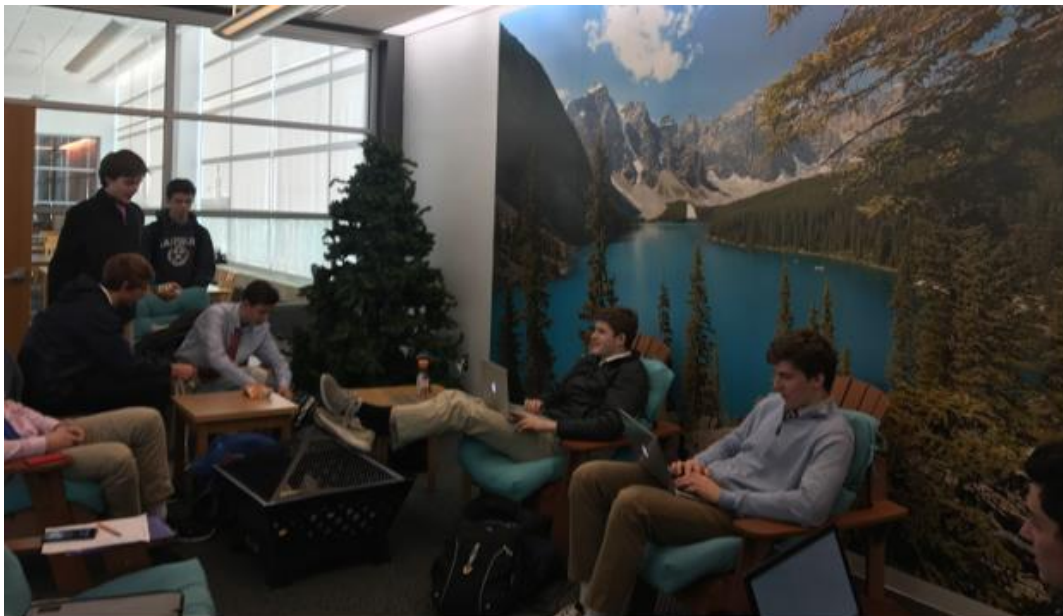


Figure 1 A group of WHS students work on homework in the Library's "Tranquility Room"

From the healthy array of food options offered in the cafeteria, to the rigorous and comprehensive health and physical education program offered in the school, WHS students are the benefactors of a school committed to physical and mental well-being.

Commitment to the education and well-being of Weston students is clearly a strength of the high school, but the structure and operations of Weston High also showcase a commitment to sustainability. When Weston High added a new science wing in the past decade, they did so in compliance with LEED Silver certification. The school has retrofitted lighting with LEDs along with motion sensor detectors for classroom and hallway lighting. WHS actively recycles plastic, purchases green cleaning products, participates in the Tools for Schools air quality program, and has found efficiencies in their bus transportation system to reduce CO2 emissions. Water bottle filling stations are located throughout the school to reduce plastic bottle consumption. Teachers' paper copies are tracked and enumerated through a software known as Papercut so that they can see the environmental impact of their paper use, thus encouraging them to reduce paper usage. And this is just the beginning. With the recent formation of the Weston High School 'Green Team' which is a collaboration of all sustainability-minded clubs, classes, and groups in the school, the school is enacting a host of new initiatives in and around the school. This includes collection and recycling of textiles, e-waste, ink cartridges and batteries. It includes composting in the cafeteria, the installation of electric vehicle chargers on campus, the creation of nature trails in the surrounding forests, and the incorporation of bee hives and pollinator gardens around campus. WHS is building stronger collaborative relationships with the surrounding community so that the sustainable efforts that have been developed at WHS extend throughout the district and community.

Of particular note, students led the drive to seek Green Ribbon honors, and wrote most of this application.

Green and Healthy Outlook

Concerned by a school-wide lack of a regard for the environment, students started the Weston High School Environmental Activists Club in the fall of 2017. The club's first priority was to persuade the school to offer AP Environmental Science in the following year's course catalog. Gathering 40 signatures on their petition, the club successfully convinced the administration that the course would be a popular offering, and to run it during the 2018-2019 school year. Throughout the fall the club held weekly meetings where they discussed environmental issues and potential club plans hit the ground running in the spring. In April, the club ran an Earth Day bake sale in which they raised \$150, 100% of which was donated to the NRDC. In May students, in conjunction with the Community Classroom, a self-contained special education program, revived the school's on-site garden, which had been unused for a



Figure 2 Students working together to refurbish the school garden and get it ready for the spring crops.

few years. They bought and planted vegetables and herbs in the garden, and tended to them over the summer and made multiple trips to Connecticut's Open Door Homeless Shelter in Norwalk to drop off excess produce. In August they sold vegetables at the Lachat Town Farm farmers market, recruiting other eco-conscious students for the effort. They raised \$150, which they again donated to the NRDC.

In the spring of 2018, students formed a team to complete the Connecticut Green LEAF self-assessment, our first step toward quantifying WHS's green efforts. Collaborating with a team of administrators to gather the necessary information, they finished and submitted the assessment in August, working hard to establish a benchmark of where Weston High School (WHS) currently is in environmental progress, and to propose goals of what can be done to raise that benchmark.

As a result of student lobbying, teacher Michael Aitkenhead, joined the WHS staff and has brought a new sense of energy and guidance to our school's environmental efforts. Brought in primarily to teach the school's new AP Environmental Science Class, he has offered the Weston community far more than that. This year the Environmental Activists club has consolidated with the Green LEAF team to form the Green Team, and begun to implement a new school recycling procedure, continued work in the school garden, and partnered with the Weston town Sustainability Committee. While selling produce at the August market at Lachat Town Farm students met members of the Weston Sustainability Committee. Since then, they've maintained a relationship with the committee, aiding them in movements such as passing a town plastic bag ban ordinance. With this effort, the green team ran a

reusable bag design competition that encouraged WHS students to create a logo or design that would be printed on reusable bags to replace the plastic bags used at town businesses.

Environmental and Sustainable Literacy:

At Weston High School, there are many available courses which focus on environmental systems and how they relate to human systems. These include:

Honors Science Research- Students create an application to join the class, which allows students to pick their own science-related inquiry. Those in the class have access to a laboratory to conduct their own research. Many students choose topics focused on sustainability and energy. Examples of projects in progress are research on ocean acidification, or attempting to produce more efficient plant cells.



Environmental Science- Applies interdisciplinary science content and skills to real-world problems in the environment. This course uses a case-based approach to examine problems and solutions in the area of sustainability, ecological management, population growth, conservation, pollution control, and the use of natural resources like water, air, and energy. It will expose students to environmental careers in the Sciences as well as in other areas like law, business, development, and engineering, and involves outdoor field study throughout the seasons.

AP Environmental Science- This newly added class has a strong focus on interdisciplinary learning about humans and how they interact with their environment. Topics of study include Earth systems and resources, ecosystems and energy flow, population biology, land and water use, energy resources and consumption, pollution, agriculture, conservation and global change. Laboratory work, case and field studies, and field trips are an integral component of this course.

Figure 3 AP Environmental student experiments with trout habitat as part of Trout in the Classroom.

One of the course's main goals is to prepare students for the AP exam given in May. The students of this class are encouraged to engage in extracurricular activities such as volunteering at the Lachat Farm in Weston, attending town meetings regarding sustainability and the environment, or attending lectures on climate change.

Other classes that include environmental concepts are AP US History, which includes reading and assignments on environmental preservation in the Progressive Era, or Introduction to Economics, which emphasizes sustainable practices and economic effects. The AP Microeconomics and AP Macroeconomics courses also emphasize sustainability and green practices as they serve as positive externalities in a market.

Students engage in 3-dimensional learning highlighted by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), enabling them to comprehend science more as an interrelated world of inquiry and phenomena rather than simply a set of science concepts and disciplines. By implementing the NGSS, teachers of each discipline focus on engaging students in core content ideas by integrating science and engineering practices with crosscutting concepts that are applicable to all disciplines of academic study.

One outdoor learning feature of WHS is the garden, which is utilized by the Community Class, a self-contained Special Education program for students who require specific functional skills training. The garden allows students to learn about cultivating and harvesting plants. The garden is also being used as part of the curriculum in both the AP and Standard Environmental Science courses.

In a recent survey of 15 students conducted by students of the Green Team, 93.33% of students stated that in their opinion WHS exceeds in educating their students about environmental sustainability and literacy. Of the students surveyed, 90% reported that the school provides a large quantity of opportunities for students to improve and expand their knowledge in environmental sustainability and literacy. These same students reported that the opportunities were provided equally by classes and extracurricular programs run by students. Of the 6.67% minority that stated that Weston High School fails to educate students about environmental sustainability and literacy, all but one had failed to partake in any extracurriculars involved with the environment. Those at WHS who wish to be educated receive a phenomenal education regarding environmental sustainability and literacy.

At WHS one of the main goals is to assure that all students graduate with environmentally knowledge. All students upon entering the school are given the opportunities and capabilities to lead an environmentally friendly, and green, life. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary for our curriculum to include a diverse selection of classes, both required and elective, that educate students about the benefits and necessity of a green and environmentally friendly society. Aside from these classes, there are many extracurricular clubs and activities that promote environmental sustainability and literacy. These classes and extracurriculars are a significant aspect of WHS and the Weston community. They allow our school to stand out among others as it is a top priority to prepare students to save the environment in an ever-changing society.

Healthy School Environment: Each school within the Weston district has an air quality committee. This committee makes sure that air-conditioning filters are replaced frequently. This helps ensure an asthma-friendly environment for students. Members took a refresher course in November of 2016. To help maintain this healthy air quality the school has also begun to implement an anti-vaping system in order to educate students about this dangerous practice. Signs warning students about the dangers of vaping are posted throughout the school and in the bathrooms. Students have also been made aware of the consequences of vaping (detentions and temporary suspensions). This helps to minimize exposure of all students to harmful chemicals. This awareness is a joint effort guided by the administration and student government.



Figure 4 Student poses with anti-vaping messaging on the bathroom door.

Assemblies, sometimes hosted by the school resource officer, are also used to provide awareness about drug abuse, a topic that is a major part of the health curriculum. The school also uses only green cleaning materials in compliance with the CT Green Cleaning Products in Schools law.

All WHS buses were inspected and certified by the State of CT in order to comply with operation requirements, including the emissions law. Bus routes were revised in order to cut the amount of emissions released. Buses are allowed to idle for a maximum of 3 minutes if the outside temperature is 20 degrees or higher. Below 20 degrees, the buses may idle to allow the heat to run and for the engine to stay ready to operate.

When WHS underwent renovation in 2011, it made sure to do it in a sustainable fashion that met the standards of LEED Silver certification. The new science wing was constructed using cost efficient, locally sourced and recycled building materials.

Healthy Nutrition:

WHS prides itself on its excellence in nutrition and health. Students, staff, and families alike all work towards ensuring healthy nutrition for all. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. All those employed to work in the cafeteria are highly-trained – they must have previous culinary experience. The school system uses Chartwell meals which, among the students and staff, are commonly agreed to be both healthy and nutritious. WHS has a garden, used to supply vegetables for the cafeteria, which is maintained by the many clubs devoted to educating students about nutrition and the environment, including the Green Team.

With food and drink options for all, the school distributes a diverse array of healthy meals, snacks, and drinks; this includes the salad, assorted grain, and custom sandwich bar. These healthy options are available from the cafeteria before school, during school hours, and after school. If one wants to purchase a healthy snack from the cafeteria later in the night, they have access to the healthy vending machines which are available 24/7. As WHS prides itself in offering all types of meals, including vegetarian and vegan options. Many of the daily meals fit into these categories, but if they don't, students who prefer always have access to the salad and fruit bar, among other vegan/vegetarian snacks and drinks. The cafeteria also highlights multicultural meals from around the globe. Everyday Asian cuisine and Latin cuisine are featured along with traditional choices along with diverse foods such as Mediterranean and European foods.

As briefly mentioned earlier, WHS has its own vegetable garden. Various classes and clubs maintain this garden – the Environmental Science courses (AP and standard), Biology courses (AP, Honors, and standard), and Special Education department often do research, examine, and work in the garden. At WHS, the clubs have an equal, if not greater, importance in maintaining the garden. Various clubs plant, harvest, and cook with the vegetables in the garden. By using the garden's yield to prepare our own food, students effectively learn how to live a nutritious lifestyle, how to make healthy meals, and what meals and ingredients are healthy. The garden contributes to the overall healthy, nutritious, and green environment at the school. By learning about healthy food and nutrition in a hands-on manner, it allows the students to lead healthy lifestyles. The garden is further used to supply the cafeteria with vegetables which make sure that the students at Weston High School are eating only the freshest organic vegetables. WHS participates in purchasing of local foods, as well. To effectively promote good health and nutrition among the students of Weston High School, it must be implemented in the curriculum. Along with various clubs that specialize in the health of students, multiple classes offer insight into nutrition, and leading a healthy lifestyle. These include AP and standard Environmental Science, and the four years of required health courses. The Environmental Science courses focus more on creating a healthy and green environment, while the health courses work towards assuring our students are well educated on nutrition and health.

Physical Well-Being:

At Weston High School there is a great deal of opportunity to improve physical health; outdoor scientific experiments have always been incorporated into our science curriculum as outdoor learning is well known for being beneficial to the physical health of students. Other opportunities include Physical Education where various strenuous team-building activities take place and in Student Government where they regularly host outdoor events. As spending time in natural environments is beneficial, if not essential, to human wellbeing, the campus is situated in a natural environment that is conducive to outside class time. Weston High School recognizes the advantage of our setting and provides the students access to explore scientific questions pertaining to their own environment. Mrs. Cole, a science teacher at Weston High School, said that she “believes that having class outdoors have allowed her students to better develop their cognitive abilities.” She is one of many teachers who believe in the benefits of outdoor education in students.

Students generally do better in school when their days are balanced with activity. In many schools, Physical Education (PE) is not a requirement, which means those who do not compete in school sports lack options to be active. WHS understands that after-school sports provide an organized outlet for physical exertion contributing to the overall well-being of students. In PE, students routinely play games such as, Ultimate Frisbee, Flag Football, and more. These activities, both inside and outside of the gym, build physical skills and fitness, while generating a feeling of health and wellness. WHS surpasses expectations in PE by implementing Project Adventure, a program based on team-building that establishes challenging yet achievable goals. It requires applying critical thinking, learning, and teamwork to the improvement of peer relationships and self-esteem.

Weston Student Government holds events throughout the year that provide students with the opportunity to get outside. For example, *Food, Friends, and Funk* is an event that exercises all the benefits of being outdoors.

Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation:

Maximizing Efficiency is one of the central focusses of Weston High School. Students, staff and families are involved in monitoring and reducing energy and water usage throughout the school and district as a whole. This is exhibited in the school’s continuous efforts to limit the amount of heat and light used during the winter months and their focus on conserving water in different locations within the school. Moreover, school buildings run by WHS families, such as the “Booster Barn,” also focus on saving energy and water.

Over the past few years, this school has been diligent about correcting the unintentional waste of energy. The school has implemented lighting controls in every classroom and hallway that turn off automatically if motion is not detected. Lights in the high school were also replaced in most of the building with new LED lights. LED lights are up to 80% more efficient than traditional lighting such as



Figure 5 Students collecting recyclable bottles from the room bins.

as fluorescent and incandescent lights. While the demand for electricity for new classrooms and technology continues to increase each year, WHS has been able to stay steady in electricity consumption and has seen a significant decrease in kilowatts of energy used over the past two years.

The school is compliant with CT DEEP Air Quality Regulations. The “Tools for Schools Program” which trains district teams to assess and approve indoor air quality has been used throughout WHS’s existence. There was a recent refresher training session for staff members regarding this program, and a walkthrough of every classroom and room to assess air quality.

Weston High has made considerable efforts in the conservation of water within the building. Most toilets in the school must be manually flushed rather than automatically which limits the amount of randomly triggered flushes throughout the school day. The school also has water-efficient appliances such as sinks that automatically turn off after a short period. When it rains, the school has controlled runoff streams that lead to drainage pipes. WHS has implemented Elkay EZH2O water fountains which conserve water and motivate students to use reusable water bottles. The District is on a well-

water system and maintenance is controlled by the town administrator. Water is tested annually.

As it was mentioned earlier, Weston High has revised bus routes by creating a shared bus route system including the middle, high, elementary, and intermediate schools in order to conserve energy and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released from school transportation. The school actively encourages students to bike and or walk to school by providing multiple bike racks and sidewalks throughout the entire campus.

Green Purchasing and Waste Management:

Sustainability and reliability are crucial tenets of WHS. Whether it be for waste management, recycling, or anything in between, Weston High School stresses these values while keeping the environment a priority.

Throughout the school there are blue recycling bins designated for cans and bottles. The majority are in the lunch room with others scattered around the schools in the hallways. These cans and bottles are collected and taken to the “Onion Barn,” a building that lies in the center of town, where

sports teams sort and redeem them as a fundraiser for the school's athletic fund. Weston citizens are also encouraged to bring their recyclables to this building to be organized by the teams. As part of the Green Team initiative, students have started creating recycling bins to be placed inside classrooms in the science wing, and eventually, the whole school.

Waste management is inevitable no matter what type of property, yet Weston has chosen one of the most environmentally friendly options. Weston has a packaged sewage treatment system which is able to perform as well as Mother Nature in transforming sewage waste to clean, harmless substances, mostly water and nitrogen gas. This treatment system creates an environment which facilitates the growth of bacteria that break down sewage into non-polluting end products. This water, once treated, is discharged directly back into the ground. This onsite treatment plant is aesthetically pleasing and transforms the solid and liquid waste from all four town schools and the Administration Building. The water from this plant was tested in 2007 and, according to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) report, the treated water was in 100% compliance with BOD, Biological Oxygen Demand. The higher the BOD, the more biodegradable organic material in the sewage. It was also in 100% compliance with Total Suspended Solids, and Fecal Coliform. Also, the water was in 94% compliance with Total Nitrogen. Total Nitrogen is an extremely important factor because, in abundance, this element causes plant growth and algae blooms, leading to dead zones in Long Island Sound. Weston High School ensures the health and safety of their students and faculty by choosing the most sustainable waste management practices.



Figure 6 WHS students walking by the Renewable Energy mural in the school hallway.