

NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2022

BOLD BEGINNINGS | ESSER FUNDING PLAN | **NEW ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**

INSIDE >>



Lycoming Valley Intermediate School music teachers Jennifer Wright and Nicolle Maioriello received a \$6,600 grant last fall to support the purchase of wireless and overhead microphone systems for the school's Theatre Club productions. From left: WASDEF Board President Dr. Brooke Beiter, Wright and Maioriello, and WASDEF Executive Director Greg Hayes.

SO FAR THIS YEAR, FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR DISTRICT PROGRAMS, PROJECTS TOTALS \$129,501

Thanks to the continued generosity of donors, WASDEF has awarded 17 grants to fund a multitude of programs and projects across the district this school year.

Since the start of the school year, contributions made to district projects and programs have totaled \$129,501.

The foundation has been able to award 17 grants supporting academic, cultural, athletic, and health-and-wellness programs across the district.

"We're thankful for the generosity of those who continue to support the education foundation each year to enable us to provide this level of support to district programs," said WASDEF Executive Director Greg Hayes. "We're proud to grant funding to each of these program areas that will bring added value, experience and opportunity to student learning and skill development."

"We continue to be impressed by the innovative proposals received from district educators and are grateful for our community's financial commitment to enhancing the student experience in WASD," said WASDEF board President Dr. Brooke Beiter.



Scan the QR code to watch a playlist of videos featuring some of this year's WASDEF-funded programs.

In addition, WASDEF also facilitated the receipt of more than \$37,000 in grant funding to support three other programs via the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania through Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) donations.

EITC dollars used to support these programs were from C&N, First National Bank of PA, M&T Bank and Woodlands Bank.

2021-2022 EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN RAISES \$9,822

Returning campaign sponsor **Larson Design Group** (LDG) helped to double the impact of staff giving this year.

With a matching contribution from Larson Design Group (LDG), WASDEF was able to raise \$9,822 through its third employee giving campaign this winter, a 40% increase over last year's results.

"LDG is pleased to continue its support for the WASDEF and enhanced opportunities for students in the community," said President and CEO Dave Martin. "This investment in our students will help to create the architects, engineers, and technical professionals needed tomorrow for the success of LDG and the city of Williamsport."

"We're incredibly grateful for LDG's continued commitment to our campaign," said WASDEF Executive Director Greg Hayes. "Their generosity allowed us to double every new and increased pledge made this year. Ultimately, these collective contributions increase the foundation's granting power when it comes to reinvesting these dollars in our schools to provide new and enhanced learning opportunities for students."

WASDEF has experienced a 92% increase in annual commitments through its payroll deduction program since the end of its 2020 fiscal year. At the close of this year's campaign, 110 employees are enrolled, accounting for nearly \$13,000 in donations a year.

"We like to say it's one of the easiest ways to give, and we've been very grateful for the response," Hayes said. "A small bi-weekly contribution deducted from each paycheck can add up to make a huge difference within the larger volume of support."





Williamsport Area School District Education Foundation

2780 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17701

Phone: (570) 327-5500, ext. 40602

Visit us on the web at www.wasdeducationfoundation.org

The WASD Education Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, is the official gift-receiving entity for WASD.



NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2022

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BOARD MEETINGS

April 19

May 3

May 17

June 7

June 21 (BUDGET ADOPTION)

All meetings begin at 6 p.m. Please monitor our website for how meetings will be conducted.

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ON THE COVER

WAHS junior **Avery Sauers** poses with a few of her art pieces. Read her story, "Bold Beginnings," on page 7.



A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Community,

Earlier this year, I presented to our school board our plans to emerge as a stronger district when we come out on the other side of this pandemic. I believe in many ways we already are as a result of the resiliency and fortitude we've demonstrated so far, but I also believe you, as a community, will continue to see us grow even stronger.

That's not to say along the way we won't have challenging decisions to make. As you may be aware, the district-wide feasibility study we entered into in 2019 is complete, and the board is weighing decisions on options that must be made with the best interest of the district and our students' educational experience in mind.

Included in the range of options that cost upwards of \$87.4 million in building improvements is whether to close Stevens Primary at the end of this school year. That decision will be made during our May 17

school board meeting. (Visit our website for more information on our feasibility study.)

Whatever the outcome as we continue moving forward, with many changes to come, I trust that our families and community will have a strengthened school district in which they can continue to be Millionaire Proud.

I invite you to take a few moments to page through this newsletter to read about all the ways our faculty, students, staff and administration help to keep our position as an exceptional district. As we close out what I believe will be another successful school year, I hope you'll take the opportunity to join us to celebrate even more accomplishments, recognitions and achievements this spring.

Sincerely,

Dr. Timothy S. BowersSuperintendent



around wasd



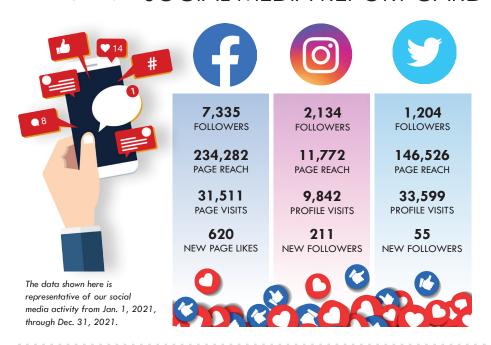
WAHS ART STUDENTS had a hand in helping to create this 40-foot mural that adorns the exterior of Firetree Place facing Little League Boulevard. The mural, inspired by a line in a sermon by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was a community-led effort and funded by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania.

THANKS TO CRAYOLA, students at Jackson Primary received a first reading of Alice Walker's new children's book, "Sweet People Are Everywhere," straight from the author herself during a school-wide virtual event held last fall. The Pulitzer Prize-winning writer led students through a 45-minute readalong/draw-along session that also featured the illustrator of her book, Quim Torres.



OUR 'TOP HATS' OFF TO LYCOMING VALLEY for helping to donate 7,900 pounds worth of canned goods during the holiday season to help support The Salvation Army in Williamsport.

BY THE NUMBERS > SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT CARD



WASD RELEASES PLAN ON HOW IT WILL SPEND ITS SHARE OF RELIEF FUNDS

WASD was allocated \$17.7M through the American Rescue Plan's (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant. Funds from this grant may be utilized for various allowable expenses, as outlined in the grant, dating back to March 13, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2024.

The state's priorities of this grant: Return to In-Person Learning, Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations, Addressing the Academic and Other Impacts of Lost Instructional Time, and Investing in Summer Learning and Expanded After-School Programs.

Additional ESSER funding available through ARP is intended to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our most vulnerable students. The funding should be used for mitigation strategies that include addressing the interrupted instruction, meeting students' social, emotional, mental health and academic needs, summer programming, and staff capacity.

WASD is planning to utilize the allotted ESSER funding, in compliance with the grant requirements, to support its efforts and the general operating budget in employing a wide range of strategies to address needs in the areas of student academics, social, emotional and mental health in the following ways:

- Utilizing staffing models that employ the expertise of a building-based team composed of school counselor(s), a school psychologist and additional school nurses in each of its eight school buildings by hiring additional trauma and mental health professional staff.
- Upgrading facilities to provide healthy learning environments.
- Purchasing educational materials for students in grades K-12 for learning recovery and/or accelerate learning to close any learning gaps.
- Establishing a summer learning recovery program that extends the school year for the most vulnerable students.
- Providing credit recovery services for secondary students.
- Hiring long-term substitutes to assist with classroom coverage due to professional staff shortages.

For more history or information, visit www.wasd.org/ESSERPlan.



Dr. Richard Poole Named as WASD's New Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Richard Poole will take over as the district's new assistant superintendent on July 1. Poole, currently the district's student services director, will replace Dr. Susan Bigger, who is set to retire on June 30.

of Or. Poole has been an integral member of our administrative team in each of the positions he's held over the years," said Superintendent Dr. Timothy S. Bowers. "He brings with him a rich professional background that's rooted right here in the district. I'm pleased to welcome him as the new assistant superintendent. I have confidence that he has the leadership ability to continue moving the district in a positive direction."

"I look forward to working with faculty and staff on building relationships with our students and community," Poole said. "I'm focused on continuing to drive strong instructional practices and developing safe schools where our students can continue to grow academically in an environment that promotes problem-solving and meets the social and emotional needs of all our students."

He began his career in education as a health and physical education teacher at Williamsport Area High School in 2001. He became the assistant principal at Jackson Elementary School in 2004 until 2009. From there, he continued in his role as assistant principal at Curtin Middle School, Williamsport Area Middle School and WAHS over the course of six years. He became principal of Hepburn-Lycoming Primary School in 2015 before taking on his latest administrative post at the start of the

2016-2017 school term.

Among the number of responsibilities held as student services director, Poole has worked to centralize and streamline the new student and kindergarten registration process. He's worked to make significant strides in meeting the mental and emotional health needs of all students through curriculum and systems development in the areas of suicide prevention, trauma and counseling services. Additionally, he's coordinated all aspects of school safety, including the implementation of more than \$1.5 million of school safety improvements. He's also led the district in executing its comprehensive safety plan through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Poole earned his bachelor's degree in health and physical education from Lock Haven University. He holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from LHU and in educational administration from Duquesne University. He earned his doctorate degree in educational leadership from Immaculata University, and holds his superintendent, principal, and health and physical education certificates.

A native of Northampton, England, he played soccer for Leicester City and came to the U.S. to attend LHU in 1995. He and his wife, Teresa, also a local educator, live in Williamsport. Their children, Connor and Emma, attend WASD schools.

CLASS OF '85 MEMBER RECEIVES DIPLOMA AFTER 37 YEARS

It took nearly four decades, but Williamsport resident **David Keene** finally received his high school diploma.

Keene, a member of the Class of 1985, left for Parris Island, S.C., as United States Marine Corps recruit just seven days before he was scheduled to graduate from WAHS.

The alum successfully completed his high school career, though, despite his attempts over the years, never received or was able to obtain an official (or original) copy of his high school diploma other than transcripts — until now.



Shown above, flanked by Director of Student Services Dr. Richard Poole, left, and Superintendent Dr. Timothy S. Bowers, Keene proudly displays his diploma—dated June 1985—after being presented with it on Feb. 24 at the District Service Center.



EDUCATION CELEBRATION ▲ Williamsport Area Middle School health-and-physical education teacher Sara Watson (above, left) and WAHS senior Kendall Kelley (above, right) were recognized during the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce's annual Education Celebration held on March 3. The two were recognized as part of this year's cohort of Outstanding Educators and Outstanding Students.



THE WAHS MUSIC DEPARTMENT

brought back the first musical production its been able to conduct in two years on March 18 and 19 with "Into the Woods."

SEVEN WAHS STUDENTS

performed with the 2022 PMEA All-State Ensembles, the highest level a high school musician can achieve, in early April. Those students are: Chase Bower, Olivia Ciabattari, Lydia Hall, Michael Harry, Benjamin Manetta, Sam Radulski and Sydney Smith.

TWENTY WAHS STUDENTS

competed in the regional SkillsUSA competition at Pennsylvania College of Technology in February, with four earning first-place and will move on to the state round in April.

THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS AT **COCHRAN PRIMARY** took the

month of February to research and learn about prominent African American leaders in honor of Black History Month.

In a video, they were asked to speak about which quality of those they studied they would best like to represent — from those like

Jackie Robinson to Mae Jemison, Scan the QR code at right to watch the video and hear what they had to say.









WASD MUSIC TEACHER TO RECEIVE PSU'S **OUTSTANDING MUSIC EDUCATION AWARD**

Lycoming Valley Intermediate School (LVIS) teacher Jennifer Wright has been selected to receive the Penn State School of Music 2021-2022 Outstanding Music Education Alumni Award.

According to the music school, the award recognizes "outstanding Penn State alumni for distinguished service to K-12 music programs."

Wright, a choral and general music education teacher, will be recognized at this year's Penn State School of Music Awards Ceremony later this month.

Wright has been a music teacher at WASD for 13 years, having taught at Curtin Middle School for four years and at LVIS for the last nine years.

She has led and continues to lead several school community programs. She's involved with leading the LVIS Theatre Club. Before the pandemic hit, she ran two extra-curricular music ensembles, Millionaire Mallets, for both fifth- and sixth-grade

students. Those groups performed with WAHS's Millionaire Singers at the state Department of Education's annual holiday party. They also traveled to perform at PSU.

In the community, she is involved in her church's children's ministry, teaches private piano lessons and runs a summer music camp at St. John School of the Arts. She's president of the Twin Tiers Orff Schulwerk Association, a local chapter for professional development for general music teachers. She's presented during Lycoming County's PMEA and PSU's "Orfftoberfest" professional development days.

She also consistently hosts student teachers from PSU and Susquehanna University.





CONFERENCE CALL ▲ Orchestra teachers Matthew Radspinner (WAHS) and Anna Radspinner (Curtin Intermediate) both presented at The Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Conference in Chicago in December.



Avery Sauers' life has been anything but ordinary. Never taking the adversities life has dealt her as an excuse, she has cleared her own path to her ultimate passion: digital art.

orn deaf, the 16-year-old Williamsport Area High School junior's interest in digital art grew from her love of cartoons and video games — an interest cultivated and nurtured by her parents and teachers alike that is now driving her toward a career in animation or game design.

The young artist recently was accepted into Moore College of Art and Design's premiere Summer Art and Design Institute (SADI) in Philadelphia. The four-week, pre-college summer program will provide Sauers with the opportunity to explore popular tracks of study for credit, including animation, illustration, painting and game design.

"Art has and continues to be the way in which I can express myself to others and to the world," Sauers said. "It has given me a voice to share my views and the way in which I see and experience the world."

"We knew something was off when she was just a few months old," her mother, Erin, recalled. "We did not know at birth due to an unknown reason for passing the hearing screening at Williamsport Hospital."

At 9 months old, after months of doctor appointments, Sauers was diagnosed with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, thus qualifying her as a candidate for cochlear implants to help her hear.

"We did a lot of research and decided to start the process when she was 1 year old," Erin said.

Sauers underwent her first implant surgery at 21 months old, followed by a second at 35 months old. She continues to use the cochlear implants to this day.

"Life isn't easy, but if you work hard and believe in yourself, anything is possible," Sauers said. "Every person with hearing loss is unique, along with their needs and best learning environment. I am grateful for the supportive teachers at WASD who recognize not only my challenges but my potential."

The high school junior, who also plays the saxophone and piano, already has a running list of awards from art shows.

"My brain works creatively, so drawing has always felt comforting and exciting to me," she said.

While self-taught in some respects, Sauers said she's grateful for the guidance received from her teachers to help make sure she's successful in high school and beyond.

"I have seen WASD's visual arts program help Avery develop her skills as an artist in many ways," Erin said.

"I hope to be able to create things that

I'm proud of and that may inspire or bring joy to others," Sauers said, "just like how those things inspired me and made me happy when I was younger."



sport shorts

JOINED BY FRIENDS,
TEAMMATES, FAMILY AND
COACHES, three student-athletes
committed to play at the collegiate
level on National Signing Day on
Feb. 2: Charles Crews, football,
Bloomsburg University; Keith
Freeman, football, Seton Hall
University; and Damier Sams-



Glover, football, King's College.

THE WAHS CHEERLEADING TEAM won the District 4 championship in the co-ed division in January.



A BANNER WRESTLING

season ended at the Class AAA tournament in Hershey, with three earning spots on the podium:
Charles Crews (5th), Riley
Bower (7th) and Cael Nasdeo
(6th). Coaches Brian Nasdeo
and Drew Dickey also were
named the PA Coach of the Year
and PA Assistant Coach of Year,
respectively. Sophomore Marissa
Rumsey won the girls wrestling
state championship, sponsored
by sanctionpa.com and MyHouse
Clothing.

THE WAHS SWIM TEAM HAD
THREE DISTRICT CHAMPS: Junior
Sydney Kelley captured first place
in the 200 freestyle race, senior
Mallory Pardoe the 100 butterfly

race and freshman **Keller Griswold** won the boys 100 butterfly race. **Dominick Horning** and **Lyndie Peters** also won district diving titles.



WAHS SADD CLUB WINS 1ST PLACE IN SUICIDE PREVENTION VIDEO CONTEST

A WAHS video produced to help raise awareness on mental health stigmas and suicide prevention received **first place** in a statewide PSA contest conducted by Prevent Suicide PA (PSPA).

The video, created by members of the high school's Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) Club, earned the top spot in the 60-second category through online votes received from both students and the broader public.

"Facilitating this group of young leaders has been extremely rewarding," said Jeremy Steppe, the club's advisor and health and physical education teacher. "Our students have identified concerns within our adolescent community and worked diligently to create innovative ideas and advocate for resources that address these needs. The maturity and compassion demonstrated by the members of WAHS SADD Club will ignite hope for our future generations."

The high school's winning video depicts a sequence of students staring into the camera with tape across their mouths while holding up posters that display some of the myths surrounding mental health issues and suicide. The second half the PSA shows the same students tearing off the tape, representing their commitment and advocacy to "break the silence" and to speak up to save a life.

Those responsible for the video are Steppe and WAHS SADD Club members AnnaKate Gillespie, Kennadi Godfrey, Madeline Pennings, Matthew Gerrity, Micai Harris, Ava Matz, Connor Poole, Holden Furey, Patrick Nardi,
Michael Harry, Madeline
Shaffer, Kanina Lattie,
Shamika Johnson and
Christian Mumford, with
production assistance from
Greg Hayes, the district's public relations

The club will be recognized for their winning production at a Pittsburgh Pirates game on April 29.

The aim of the annual contest is to empower and give rise to youth voices in the prevention conversation using "new and creative ways to share resources with our communities," according to PSPA.

"Facilitating this group of young leaders has been extremely rewarding. Our students ... worked diligently to create innovative ideas and advocate for resources that address these needs. The maturity and compassion demonstrated by members of the WAHS SADD Club will ignite hope for future generations."

JEREMY STEPPE WAHS SADD Club Advisor

Summer Reading Program

Share your reading adventures with us on social media this summer with this hashtag
#MillionairesRead





Here's how it works!

While automatically enrolled in the summer reading program, incoming kindergarten through fifth-grade students are required to fill out and return their Summer Reading Pogram Log when they return to school on August 29. Students who complete the program will be honored at their schools in September with a personalized, brandnew book to first read and then donate to their school library.

KICKS OFF JUNE 8, 2022! Help build your school (and home) library collection by reading this summer!

By completing the Williamsport Area School District's summer reading program, #MillionairesRead, incoming kindergarten through fifth-grade students can earn a brand-new book for their school library, dedicated in their name, through the WASD Education Foundation's "Building Libraries Through Literacy" program. Those who complete the program also will receive a \$5 gift certificate to Otto Bookstore in downtown Williamsport to put toward a purchase of a new book for your own home library!











SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ▲ Members of the WAHS Red Cross Club donated \$900 to the American Red Cross's Disaster Relief Fund in early February. The club raised the money by selling cookies — 105 dozen, to be exact — to help support the humanitarian nonprofit. Pictured above are club members with regional ARC representatives, Marge Smith and Hope Roaten (at center, left and right, respectively), and club advisor John Eck (left).



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO END HERE! Want more? Our online presence continues to grow! Keep up-to-date with announcements, photos, news and events happening around the district on a daily basis by following us on social media. Join the conversation and become a part of the WASD online community that has grown to more than 11,400 people!



FROM THE VAULT 🗸



This photo is published in WHS's 1967 "La Mémoire." According to the caption printed above it, "Miss Taylor uses current news magazines to supplement her U.S. history course."

The yearbook's foreward that year emphasizes the focus it would pay on the individual as they prepare for their future at time when things were changing on the social and political front.

"'La Mémoire' hopes to portray in pictures and words the student in his school society preparing himself as an individual for his future society. To represent the computerized society in which he will live, we have planned our divider page layouts to suggest the IBM card with which we have all become familiar, especially this year with the introduction of the IBM report cards."



CHILDREN'S WASD EXPERIENCE INSPIRED PARENTS TO ENDOW A SCHOLARSHIP FUND

When Tom and Sarah Gehret purchased their first home as a newly married couple in 1981, school districts and educational benefits were not on their minds, but they are more than happy with the choice they made.

The two eventually sent their children, **Monica** and **Jim**, to WASD schools and watched them each earn WAHS diplomas in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

"The educational and extracurricular activities offered (to them) included many exceptional teachers, music, both instrumental and choir groups; technology programs; science labs; sports; and more," the two stated. "The 13 years our children spent in the district gave them opportunities that formed the basis for their college educations and their present successful careers."

As a result of that experience, it prompted the two to endow the Football and Girls Soccer Academic Fund so that "future graduates have additional help with their continuing education expenses."

Monica graduated with the highest GPA on her soccer team and Jim had the highest GPA on his football team, so the two endowed the fund in their honor.

"We are hoping the scholarships may encourage the girls soccer and football team members to study harder to become scholarship recipients," they said.



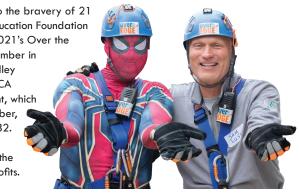
This June, their scholarship fund will have paid out \$6,000 to 12 WAHS graduates since 2017.

The couple, who now reside in Lititz, Pa., said they want the endowment of their fund to serve as a measure of appreciation for the district and the city. It also represents their appreciation for all the "teachers and support personnel who continue to provide challenges and opportunities to all students in the district."

Scholarships distributed through the education foundation allow donors to provide and connect graduating WAHS students to powerful resources and opportunities after high school.

In 2021, \$69,925 was awarded from among the foundation's 150 scholarship, award and prize funds to 84 students.

OVER THE EDGE ▶ Thanks to the bravery of 21 individuals, the WASD Education Foundation raised \$25,188 during 2021's Over the Edge event, held in September in partnership with River Valley Regional YMCA and YWCA Northcentral PA. The event, which returns again this September, collectively raised \$98,532. Since 2018, it has raised more than \$275,000 for the three participating nonprofits.



SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT: SHAHEEM HIII '21

Williamsport Area High School graduate

Shaheem Hill '21 hopes to make his life and
the lives of people around him better.

A first-generation college student, Hill now attends Bloomsburg University, where he's majoring in business management and minoring in philosophy, thanks, in part, to financial assistance provided through one of the foundation's scholarship funds.

In 2019, alumnus **Jim Sullivan '70** and his wife, Annette, did just that by endowing the Sullivan Family First-Generation Collegian Scholarship Fund at the education foundation.

The scholarship was created to assist first-generation college students who have a financial need and who agree to participate in a mentorship program throughout his or her college tenure.

Hill is the first recipient of the scholarship. While at WAHS, he was a state-ranking member of the cross-country and track team, and Petros Club.

Hill plans to pursue a career in human resource management.

A first-generation college attendee himself, Sullivan, now a resident of Appleton, Wisconsin, and CEO and

founder of Sullivision.com, understands that families are usually positively transformed when a high school graduate pursues higher education.

"Without the scholarships and aid I received, there would be no other money to pay for my tuition," Hill said. "I'm extremely grateful to have this opportunity, which helps me get through my next chapter in life."





Williamsport Area School District Education Foundation

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Phone: (570) 327-5500, ext. 40602

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SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYEES WALNED



Williamsport Area School District

Join our team! The Williamsport Area School District is seeking substitute employees in all areas. The district is searching for certified and non-certified substitute teachers with a bachelor's degree. We're also looking for qualified substitute aides, custodians, food service workers, etc.



For more information on these positions, email our Human Resources Department at jobs@wasd.org.

The Williamsport Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and handicap in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX Education Amendment of 2020, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disability Act of 1990.







