



# Watsonville High School Parent Newsletter

Vol. 117 No.3 April 27, 2010 250 W. Beach St. Watsonville, Ca. 95076 Tel 728-6390 Fax 761-6013 <http://www.watsonvillehs.net/index.php>

## Watsonville High's Academic Performance – Accreditation and State's Designation

### Dear Parents (of our Incoming Students also),

We are now with only about six weeks left of school and I wish to use this newsletter to address our academic performance, highlight some important upcoming events for seniors and get our school ready for next year. Parents read headlines a few months back about our accreditation and some were legitimately concerned based on the report written in the Santa Cruz Sentinel. Parents now have concerns about the new designation that the state is imposing on 188 schools in California, including WHS.

Accreditation reviews generally take place every six years. The WASC Visiting Team expressed strong concerns about the academic performance of our school in 2005 and awarded the school with a 3 year term of accreditation. They came back last year and were pleased with our progress but wanted to keep the pressure on us by approving a one year term of accreditation. I disagreed with their term designation but the pressure did help our students and staff with a renewed sense of urgency. It's been a very dynamic year with a strong focus on state standards and staff development that is intended to improve the level of achievement of our students. Although we started off the year with this WASC concern, we also learned at the same time that our STAR scores rose by 21 points from last year to this year. Last year's WASC Visiting Team came just before the STAR tests were given so they did not have the benefit of the good news about our growth while the WASC Visiting Team was here. This year's WASC Visiting Team was even more impressed and they were able to see this rise in our academic performance as seen on the STAR test. They also studied our Exit Exam results which have improved almost 15% over the last three years. They also saw that, according to the State of California, our dropout rate improved from 31.5% to 7.5%. They visited classes, met students and staff and will send their report to the school the first week of May. They saw a very positive and intense focus on our students' learning. From benchmark assessments to the strategies that highly engage our students in our classrooms, the WASC Visiting Team left with very high praise for the school, especially the students' feelings for their high

school. WHS has sent graduates to the top schools around this country for many years. We have graduates at Cal, MIT, Stanford, UCLA, UCSB and MANY, MANY more colleges and universities. Over 85% of our graduates go on to college, including community colleges. We are fully accredited and will always maintain this important status.

Recently, the State of California, in order to qualify for about \$450 million in federal funds, created a list of the bottom five percent of all schools in California. This ranking is based on STAR and California Exit Exam results and includes only the last five years. School districts, in order to qualify for the funds, must choose one of four options. Those options are:

To apply for a federal School Improvement Grant, schools must choose one of the four models:

### Turnaround

Replace principal and 50 percent of staff and give new principal flexibility in staffing, scheduling and budgeting.

### Restart

Close school and reopen under a charter school operator or private management company.

### Closure

Close school and enroll students in other higher-achieving schools.

### Transformation

Replace principal and take steps to improve teacher effectiveness; implement comprehensive instructional reform; increase learning time; provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

The state has not specified a timeline for implementation or an enforcement mechanism.

Our staff has already raised the bar on this campus. We received a million dollar grant four years ago to implement Smaller Learning Communities and we are now with seven fully funded California

Partnership Academies. As already mentioned we have shown good improvement in our STAR and CAHSEE results. Our district's initiative to focus on student achievement data will help our entire district fare better on STAR and Exit Exam assessments. Our use of a reading program called Read 180 is helping our students still developing basic reading skills and is growing next year. I am confident that the road WHS has taken over the last few years will lead to an improved level of student achievement. The State of California, in using this

designation, looks at our last five years of student achievement data, a disadvantage at this time. If one looks only at the last four years, we have grown 26 points. I do believe that our students can perform at a higher level and are beginning to do so. I am proud of our faculty's work and am confident about the future of our school. Please call me directly if you have any questions or feel free to send me some email at [Murry\\_Schekman@pvusd.net](mailto:Murry_Schekman@pvusd.net).

## **Registration Process for Summer 2010 - Parents Will Need to Come to WHS**

We are asking all parents of Watsonville High students to come in to the school during the summer to conduct the registration process and become more familiar with our large high school. During this process parents will complete all of the registration forms, meet with staff, get access to our online grade book program to monitor their children all year and have any of their questions answered. We will have an open ended process beginning with the last week of July and the first week of August. We will stay open all day and some evenings to accommodate our working parents. Students will also be encouraged to come with their parents for this orientation and registration process. We will still have our incoming students come in the week before school to provide a half day orientation to our programs, classes, clubs and facilities. We put this process in place last year

and we were able to get better information and parents got a better feel for our large high school. Students who come to school on the first day, but have not had a parent come in, will not receive their schedule of classes. We will call those parents directly on that day, August 11, 2010 and they will need to come in and fill out the proper paper work so their son/daughter can start school. Our students do better when parents know what's going on at school and we believe that requiring all parents to come in during the summer will truly assist their children, our students. More information will be mailed to you in June with our summer registration packet.

### **WHS Mock Trial Team Excels!**

The WHS Mock Trial Team participated in a county-wide competition on Feb. 6th and 13th. The students had practiced a first degree murder case, taking on the roles of attorney, witness, or other court officers. The practices started in August. Students worked on aspects of law like pre-trial arguments, opening and closing arguments, objections, handling of evidence, etc. The team was mentored by three of Watsonville's finest attorneys from the Grunsky Law Offices. Thomas Dwyer, Robert Wall and Rosemary Rovick contributed their time and expertise to mentor the mock trial team in their role as attorney coaches. These three attorneys worked tirelessly with the team. Our team met during their advisory class, as well as weekend, perfecting their law skills.

In January the WHS team scrimmaged with the team from Alisal High School. It was a huge success, which the teams have committed to repeating on an annual basis. While our team did not win the county competition, some of our team members did win county overall recognition. Sandro Renteria won best pre-trial defense attorney. Andrea Ortega won overall prosecution attorney. In addition Jovanna Vera won courtroom artist and advanced to the state competition. Our students represented WHS with a lot of heart. We ended the season with comments from the judges saying that our team will be the team to beat next year. The team and their attorney coaches are awesome and inspiring. They can't wait until next year to begin preparation on the next criminal case.

### **Recognizing Our Wildcatz Staff**

On May 5, 2010, we will be honoring all of our WHS staff for it's Staff Appreciation Week. We are going to serve root beer floats and show some fun videos of our students honoring the staff. If you would like to honor the staff also, please feel free to bring some sort of treats to the school, put

your name on it and we'll serve your treats to the staff in their honor. The WHS staff is very dedicated, talented and gives everyday on behalf of our students' learning. Let's take a pause and recognize them for their efforts.

## Watsonville High and UCSC Receive 2.1 Million Dollar Grant

Watsonville High's Environmental Science and Natural Resources Academy, in partnership with the Environmental Science Department at UCSC, was awarded a 2.1 million dollar grant to make science

come alive at WHS. Thirty graduate students, as well as a number of UCSC Environmental Science Professors, will be working with our WHS faculty on a variety of research projects, land development

### Beautification Day May 8, 2010 - 8:00 am to Noon

**May 8 Beautification Day** – We will be looking for adult volunteers to help with this project. If you would like your room cleaned up please just plan on coming to our May 8 Beautification Day from 8 to noon. Please let me or Barbara Castro know if you can attend. Call the school at 728-6390 to let us know that you can help out!

### Senior Information Cabrillo Information

#### Running Start for Seniors planning to attend Cabrillo in the Fall of 2010

*Please share this information with your friends!!*

*Participate in Running Start and be ready to go to Cabrillo this coming Fall 2010.*

#### In order to participate in the May 21<sup>st</sup> Running Start fieldtrip to Cabrillo in Aptos

#### You must complete the Assessments and Orientation

**Don't Miss It!!!! Be there!!**

**Questions? Stop by the Guidance Office or Cabrillo across from the Plaza in Watsonville for assessment and orientation information.**

### CSU Information for Seniors

Make an appointment with your counselor to ensure you have the requirements needed for graduation. If you are planning to attend a UC or CSU make sure to sign up for their placement exams. The UC writing exam is on May 8<sup>th</sup> and CSU exams are on

May 1<sup>st</sup>. See your counselor for more information. Updated Scholarship List is available at [www.watsonvillehs.net](http://www.watsonvillehs.net) and then select the "scholarship" button

### Club Sociedad Cultural Bilingue

Watsonville High School's club Sociedad Cultural Bilingue has been around since 1976. Throughout these 24 years, the club members have worked hard, not only academically, but also within the community. In order to get where we are: the club has brought students of Mexican and Mexican-American heritage to give them a sense of dignity, unity, and a sense of pride and to become our future leaders and role-models of this community.

Like in every other club, there is a lot of hard work involved within every activity we do. Some of the activities we do are candy sales, cookie dough sales, car washes, food sales, etc. The club's upcoming Cinco de Mayo and Canta de Verguena Reunion Program which

was traditionally a popular cultural show that we had for many years. We will be bringing it back on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to the Mello Center at Watsonville High School for our students and the community this year. We have not had this program since 2002. In May, we will also be organizing and coordinating our Mexican traditional food sales during Cinco de Mayo week starting on May 5<sup>th</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup> during lunchtime at W.H.S.

These activities serve as fundraisers for our end of the year trip as the club's reward for a year's worth of hard work. We also will be donating \$20,000 in Scholarships to 20 graduating Seniors in Pajaro Unified School District. Ten thousand dollars was donated by Driscolls to help with this scholarship process.

## **WHS/ROP Win Auto Tech Skills Contest at Monterey Peninsula College**

On April 16, 2010, a team from WHS' ROP Auto Technology program won the Automotive Technology Skills Competition at MPC. The team was made of

Carlos Martinez from WHS and Robert Shimizu from Pacific Coast Charter.

### **Yearbook Still Available**

**All Students Buy your Yearbook NOW!** Place a deposit on your yearbook in room 131 or pay in full! The yearbook price

is \$85.00 but will go up in 3 weeks when the yearbook arrives!

### **Grad Nite is Almost Here**

For 22 years now, parents and other very giving volunteers have organized an all night sober celebration on the evening of graduation to honor our graduates and ensure that they have a fun and safe place to celebrate. The tragedy of alcohol and driving is avoided and the community is honoring the graduates. Our Grad Nights have been quite ROBUST. Our kids dance, eat, play cards, have sumo wrestling, rock climbing, more food, jump houses, karaoke and MUCH, MUCH more. This year it will cost \$40.00 for each student. It is also the LAST YEAR that our Grad Night Chairperson will be running this committee. Trina Coffman-Gomez has run the Grad Night Committee for 11 years now. Her daughter, Gabrielle, is graduating and the school will need other parents to step up to

the plate for the Class of 2011 will merit the same quality of celebration and recognition. We need to continue this tradition. If you are interested in ensuring that Grad Night continues to work so well, or if you have questions, please contact our Principal, Murry Schekman, at 728-6390. Thank you to Trina for her years of hard work and leadership. WHS has been blessed with so many parent volunteers, alumni who serve and other members of the community who simply want to help. We know that we have other parents and members of our community who recognize the importance of Grad Night and will want to volunteer!!!!

### **Tutoring Available**

Students at WHS (and other schools) can now get regular tutoring Tuesdays from 1:15 to 5:30 pm, Wednesdays 3:00 to 5:30 pm and Thursdays from 3:to 5:30 pm. This is taking place one block from WHS at the YOUTH N.O.W. Learning Center at 31 Carr Street. For more information please contact Nicole March 768-7998 or 708-8605. They also have a website –

[www.etsernityworks.org](http://www.etsernityworks.org). This is a very dedicated group, mostly volunteers, who are committed to helping our young people in Watsonville with all aspects of their learning in schools. Their emphasis is individualized academic support. They encourage students to bring their materials from class for this will allow their tutors to help with a specific focus on work in school.

## School Site Council – Get Involved at Watsonville High!

The School Site Council is the one place with all of our school's stakeholders involved – parents, students, staff, the principal and members of our community. We meet the 1st Wednesday of each month. We will have openings for parents, staff and students to serve next year. Our School Site Council deals with the many issues we face at WHS. For example, this year each of

our Smaller Learning Communities came and presented to the SSC because of the special impact our SLC's are having on our campus. If you would like to serve or if you would like to nominate another parent, please use the form below and turn it in to the office before the end of the school year.

### School Site Council Nomination Form

Please use this form to nominate an individual to serve on the School Site Council at Watsonville High School or feel free to nominate yourself. Please return this to the Main Office at Watsonville High School by June 4, 2010. Thank you.

M. Schekman, Principal

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Student (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Experience with School Activities \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goals for School Site Council \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Forma de Nominación para el Concilio Escolar

Por favor utilice esta forma para nominar a una persona para pertenecer al Concilio Escolar de WHS. O siéntase con confianza de nominarse a usted mismo. Favor de regresarla en la Oficina de WHS no mas tarde que el primer de Julio 2010.

M. Schekman, Director

Nombre de la persona nominada \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Alumno/a \_\_\_\_\_

Teléfono de Casa \_\_\_\_\_ Celular \_\_\_\_\_ Domicilio \_\_\_\_\_

Experiencia con actividades escolares \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Metas para el Concilio Escolar \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Firma \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha \_\_\_\_\_

# Watsonville High School

## Senior Calendar of Events 2010

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**On Sale Until May 10th**  
**On Sale Until June 4<sup>th</sup>**

Prom Bids - \$75.00 (single) & \$150 (couple) all week sold at Break, Lunch & after school – Room 9  
 Grad Night Tickets - \$40 – 8:00am- 3:00pm – See Lupe in the Office

### May

**Saturday & Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>**

FINAL SHOWS - Spring Drama ~ Grease

**Week of May 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>**

SLC Olympics & Cinco De Mayo Week – Sport competitions during break & Advisory. – AND-  
 May 5<sup>th</sup> - Cinco De Mayo Week ~ Mata Car Show 5/5 ~ Food sales at lunch 5/5 - 5/7

**Monday 3**

AP Government Exam

**Tuesday 4**

AP Spanish Language and AP Statistics

**Wednesday 5**

AP Calculus AB and BC  
 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Progress Reports Due

**Thursday 6**

AP English Literature

**Friday 7**

AP US History and AP European History  
 Progress Reports Delivered in Advisory  
 Club Latino Mother's Day  
 Sociedad Reunion

**Saturday 8**

School Beautifications Day – 8:00-12:00 noon – Sign up in room 131  
 Sociedad Culture Bilingue Canta Sin Verguenza Reunion Dance

**Monday 10**

AP Biology and AP Physics  
 LAST DAY TO BUY YOUR Prom Bids - \$75.00/\$150.00 ~ Break, Lunch & after school – Room 9

**Tuesday 11**

CAHSEE Exam – ELA

**Wednesday 12**

AP English Language and AP Art History  
 CAHSEE Exam - Math

**Friday 14**

AP Spanish Literature  
 Cabrillo Running Start  
 Faculty Follies

**Saturday 15**

Prom! Gilroy Gardens – Gilroy – Theme “Masquerade Ball” Meet at school at 6:30pm

**Week of May 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>**

VA Film Festival – AND - Senior Dead Week

**Wednesday 19**

Senior Class Meeting – Mello Center during Advisory

**Thursday 20**

Principals Awards  
 Graduation Performance Audition

**Friday 21**

Kiss a Senior Goodbye Rally  
 Hall of Fame  
 Graduation Performance Audition

**Saturday 22**

Senior Migrant Banquet – Mello Center

**Week of May 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>**

Senior Finals Week

**Monday 24**

ALL SENIORS (incl. grads, summer grads and non-grads) Pick up your “Pinks” - Senior Clearance forms from Registrar in the office

**Tuesday 25**

Scholarship Night 7pm -10pm

**Friday 28**

ALL SENIORS (incl. grads, summer grads and non-grads) Return your “Pinks” Clearance form to Registrar in front of Cafeteria

**Monday 31**

No School!

### June

**Tuesday 1**

Senior Week Begins ~ Senior Panoramic Photo (\$25) – 10:00 am Geiser Field & Senior BBQ

**Wednesday 2**

Graduation Practice for Performers – 9:00am – New Gym  
 Graduation Practice –10:00 am - New Gym

**Thursday 3**

Graduation Practice for Performers – 9:00am – Geiser Field  
 Graduation practice – 10:00am – Geiser Field

**Friday 4**

Line-up - 400 building - 12:00 (noon) – Be on time and dress appropriately.

Graduation Ceremony 2:00pm – Geiser Field – Professional photographer will take your picture  
***Pick-up actual diploma immediately following ceremony in the D-5-11 Building***  
Grad Night – 9:00pm-3:00am

**Saturday**

**5**

SAT Test