

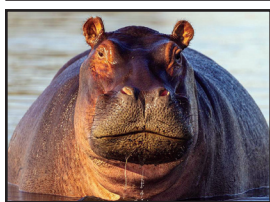
# The Purple Sage

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## Opinion



Who would win, a hippopotamus or saltwater crocodile?

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# Substitute teacher shortage hits WHS

Dominick Praksti  
News Editor

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts across the country have been struggling to find substitute teachers, including Waunakee High School.

According to Aesop, the high school's absence management system, the all-time average number of staff out is 7 per day for this school year. However, this number can fluctuate greatly depending on the time of year, with some days more than 20 staff being out. Unfortunately, finding enough substitute teachers for the day is not always easy.

According to Director of Human Resources, Brian Grabarski, "When there aren't enough subs (nearly a daily occurrence somewhere in the district) other staff are recruited to cover the openings for additional compensation, administrators cover the openings, classes can be combined or locations changed." In other words, teachers or administrators often need to give up their own prep/work time

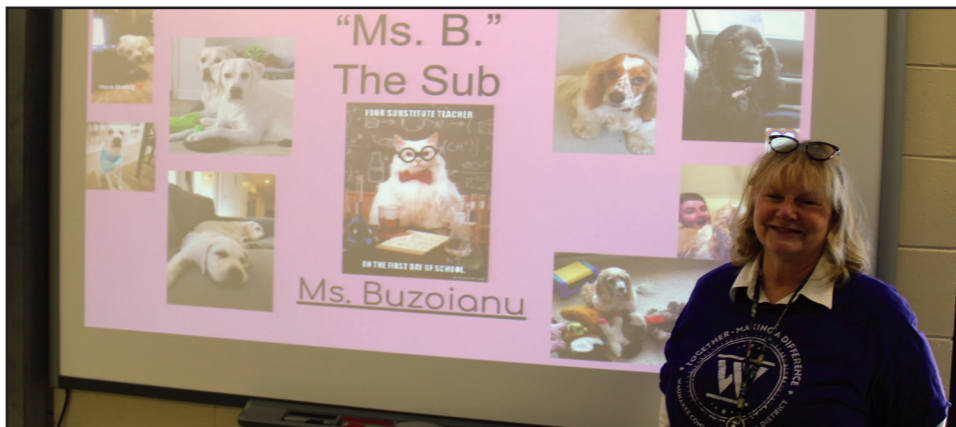


Photo by Dominick Praksti

**Pictured is Ms. Buzoianu (Ms. B), the WHS Building Sub. She has been substitute teaching in Waunakee since 2019. "My favorite part about Substitute Teaching is working with the students. Being a Building Sub allows me to have the opportunity to develop more of a relationship with students and staff," Buzoianu said.**

to cover for missing staff.

According to Denise Branshaw, WCHS Administrative Assistant, who works to organize substitute teachers each day, "As soon as I determine that I can't cover all of the classes needed, I send an email out to all the teachers asking if they will help sub for a class. Sometimes, teachers will sub during their prep for extra pay or they will offer to combine study halls, etc."

With other teachers stepping up to substitute for classes, the day

runs smoothly without any classes missing a teacher. However, there are some rare cases when it is simply not possible to find a substitute for every class. "On days when I have to find subs for several classes, it can become hectic and rushed. There was one time when I had to move a class to the large study hall because nobody was able to or willing to take the class. I didn't want to move the group to

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# How the PreACT is preparing students for their future

Caitlin Pisani  
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, April 17 WHS freshmen participated in the PreACT. The following day, WHS sophomores took the test.

Students who were not taking the test had a 3 hour late start.

Freshman Ginger Damasco said, "I thought it was pretty easy. It is a good opportunity to prepare for the real test."

The PreACT is a computerized standard test that is aligned with the ACT that juniors take. One of its most well known uses is its aid in assessing the college and career readiness of students through benchmarks created based on the scoring system.

Not only will the PreACT results assess college and career readiness, according to the informational email sent to students, it also is going to be used to help revise the curriculum. It will measure growth of students in the four areas being tested, English, Math, Science and Reading, throughout high school.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

**The PreACT took place for freshman on Wednesday, April 17, and sophomores on Thursday, April 18. "The PreACT is a good tool to evaluate our current performance and what we need to work on," sophomore Vishnu Kata said.**

The PreACT participation rate and results are also able to be seen on the State Accountability Report Card. The State Accountability Report Cards analyze school performance, which can help increase enrollment rates depending on report card results.

Students participating in the test receive a PreACT score for each of the 4 areas being tested, a composite score (an average score of the four areas being tested), and a STEM score (an average score of Math and Science). Scores are based on a two-digit scale.

The PreACT also has benchmarks that are linked to the ACT college

readiness benchmarks. Scores from the PreACT help predict whether students are on target to meet the ACT benchmarks later on, or not.

The benchmark scores for the ACT represent academic readiness that students must have to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher, or a 75-80% chance of obtaining a C or higher.

While assessing a student's academic readiness is one of the main purposes of this test, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website does acknowledge that one test does not measure a student's success.

## Revisiting Waunakee High School student policies

Skyler Cole  
Staff Writer

With the new school year approaching rapidly, it's important for students to know what policies are changing.

Recently, the 30/30 Rule has been enforced, meaning that students cannot leave the classroom in the first 30 minutes of class or the last 30 minutes of class. The 30/30 policy was implemented to limit students being out of the classroom during instruction time.

Although the policy has existed for the past 10 years, many staff members and students were unaware of it. Many believed that students could not leave class during the last 15 minutes of the period rather than 30.

A lot of confusion about this policy was created by COVID-19 and staff changes over the years. Through this policy, students are encouraged to use the restroom and grab snacks during their passing time rather than leaving the classroom.

In the coming school year, the phone policy will be altered to reaffirm expectations for students and set harsher consequences for phone use in class. Research has found that phones are a distraction for students and can negatively impact their performance in school.

Staff and students have complained in the past about the lack of consistency when it comes to phone use in school. Before the start of the school year, each department (math, sci-



Photo by Caitlin Pisani

**Pictured is a cell phone parking lot in Biology. As the high school works to create a more consistent cell phone policy, many wonder what the new expectations will be modeled after.**

ence, English, etc.) was asked to create their own phone policy for students. Even with these expectations in place, different classes have extremely limited expectations for phone use while other classes provide more flexibility.

Staff have asked for a universal policy for the phone policy so students have consistent expectations to follow. A team of staff members are currently working on developing the policy, and there will be more information to come in the following months.

The changes in these policies may come as a surprise to many students. Ultimately, these policies push for the improvement of student

learning and engagement in class. Students may have individual concerns or emergencies that require them to check their messages during class. With more communications between teachers and students, these situations will be handled accordingly. Teachers want the classroom to be a lot more understanding than students may expect. They want the classroom to be a positive environment for students.

In the words of Mr. Borowski, these policies entail, "students being respectful to their teachers and following expectations. Our goal is to educate students and encourage their success."

## SUBSTITUTES

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study hall, but when the clock is ticking and nobody is available, it is necessary to make adjustments," Branshaw said.

To find more substitute teachers for the district, "We continue to seek to be highly competitive in wages and benefits, and seek to retain a higher percentage of our employees than regional and state trends," Grabarski said. "Retention of current employees is considered our best recruitment strategy - keeping our current employees happy prevents openings and employees are the best recruiters. We offer climate surveys, and use the results at each building site to allow employees to work with administration to create action plans to improve the workplace."

Furthermore, it has never been easier to become a substitute teacher. WCSD attempts to target families by offering an in-person one-day training program to help those interested earn their substitute teaching license. "We

have kept our postings active all year and continually review applicants, adding them as they become available. We promote the opportunity on our website, in a state-wide network called WECAN, in the Tribune, at job fairs, community events and at a number of times via our social media," Grabarski said.

Substitute teaching is not the ideal job for many, so to solve the shortage, many have suggested incorporating substitute teaching into college majors. "One of my colleagues had an idea that I think was great. She suggested that college students majoring in education could be required to substitute teach a certain number of days or hours as part of their training. It could be beneficial to the schools and the college students," Branshaw said.

As the substitute teacher shortage continues to affect schools around the country, many hope that a solution can be found to better our schools, students, and teachers.

### Commemorating the Retirement of Randy Guttenberg

Friday, June 7, 2024  
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Waunakee Community High School

Students, staff, families, and community members are invited to join the celebration.

A formal presentation will begin at 1:30 p.m. honoring Mr. Guttenberg's service.

## WCSD Greenhouse Sale

Waunakee FFA is selling plants that they have grown at their greenhouse sale. Featured plants include tomatoes, peppers, herbs, flowers, and more. Proceeds go to benefit FFA activities, Waunakee Elementary Schools, and more!

May 2 - 11, 2024  
Monday - Friday at 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Waunakee High School Greenhouse