# **West Orange High School**

# Institute for the Humanities IH 9 & IH 10 Newsletter



May 2025

# **Honors English 9 IH**

Janine Sullivan, Language Arts Teacher, IH Program Coordinator

This is our final newsletter of the year. It has been a pleasure teaching your children, and I am confident that they will continue to excel in IH next year. To celebrate all they have accomplished, our final trip will be to Lincoln Center to see the Metropolitan Opera's performance of Puccini's masterpiece *La Boheme*. Look for permission slips to come home in the next two weeks.

We began our study of Shakespeare with his sonnets, discussing how the passion and sincerity we see in his poems was a direct response to the "courtly love" conceit of the Middle Ages. As we begin Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, students observe how Romeo evolves from a courtly lover into a far different character. In the course of our unit, students will perform scenes in our classroom, evaluate performances by professional actors, and engage in close readings of the beautiful and complex language of the play. Later this marking period, we begin our interdisciplinary unit on World Literature. Students will analyze contemporary short stories and poems from writers born in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. The unit will culminate with our last Socratic Seminar, where both sections of IH will come together in the LMC and answer original questions drafted by their peers.

Right before we began our Shakespeare unit, we were lucky to welcome The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey to our auditorium last month. The troop performed an abridged version of *Romeo and Juliet* for IH 9 and 10 students. The reviews are in:

Throughout the whole performance, the actors were all extremely engaged and kept the show interesting. They were able to bring an entire world to life with just one movable set piece, which was very impressive. The actors who played 2+ roles were also very interesting to see perform, and it was really amazing seeing them switch between roles with not even a scene in between their character changes.

-Lilah Rae Brown

I really enjoyed [the] performance of Romeo and Juliet. As someone unfamiliar with Shakespeare I was super surprised with the amount of humor and emotion the story conveyed. I also though the actors were so talented and beautifully portrayed the tragically beautiful love story.

-Mimi Deer

It was my first time ever seeing Romeo and Juliet and I can say that I am very excited for when we read the actual book.

#### -Kael Delisca

I found this performance of Romeo and Juliet to be quite enjoyable and despite being abridged really managed to give the whole experience with the

true intense emotion of the piece. Additionally there was never a boring moment from the fights to the humor to the pure drama.

-Apollo Hooks

The wonderful acting and portrayal of Shakespeare's work made it clear what was going on in the play, even though I haven't read or watched it before, and allowed me to better understand the story line behind Shakespeare's most famous work.

-Leah Klimek

The actors were amazing. They did such a great job at portraying each character, sometimes I forgot they were real people.

-Guershna Lovaincy

This performance was a strong first impression of what Shakespeare has to offer as I've never watched or read any of his work.

-Soleil Castillo

Another highlight of this marking period was our trip to NJPAC to see the world-renowned Alvin Ailey Dance Theater. Here's what a few of our students had to say about the experience:

I very much enjoyed the performance. I have seen some of the pieces before, but it was amazing to see how other dancers articulate, and interpret the movement . . . Seeing the dancers warm up however was interestingly one of my favorite parts of the show because it was fun seeing them do pieces of their dance, and going over it, giving me the opportunity to predict it, as well as just seeing how they weren't too nervous, but focused on doing the important parts of their dance to make sure it looked even better when they performed it, and I related to that.

-Kyley Cherubin

Seeing the Alvin Ailey dance company perform in person was something that I did not expect to change my appreciation for the arts. I have always loved the creative arts but seeing "Revelations" truly has made me appreciate dance in the arts even more. Seeing Black culture expressed through the dance has never made me prouder of my heritage and has even inspired me to go out and research an analysis of the dance and music choices.

-Sal Pierre

I really enjoyed the performance on Friday specifically the visual aspects of the performance. I thought that the way the performance used lights and colors of cloths and accessories added to the show and made it that much better.

-Justin Frederic



## **Honors Modern World History IH**

#### **Timothy Miskimon, Social Studies Teacher**



We have come to the end of a busy school year. Throughout the second half of the year, the students in Honors Modern World History have been exploring various regions of the world, including the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. With each region, the students have been exposed predominantly to events that are currently in the news. The intent of this approach to global studies is to give the students a greater understanding of the world they live in today. In addition, we have engaged in many anthropological studies as the students have learned more about cultures from around the world. The intent for this has been to create a greater appreciation for the cultural diversity that exists in order to dispel the conflict that grows due to cultural differences. As we prepare to begin our final regional unit on Asia, the students will be completing their final DBQ assessment focusing on the impacts of poverty on human society. In addition, the students will be preparing for their final PBA/joint-IH project, which is a Socratic Seminar focusing on contemporary world literature. It has been an absolute pleasure working with your children this year. Have a wonderful summer!

#### **Honors English 10 IH**

#### **Elicia Baker, Language Arts Teacher**



Hello and Happy Belated Mother's day to all of the IH moms!

We finished our unit on Duality of Human Nature and the students had to write a literary analysis that identified a characteristic of human nature in the text and complete an ethnography project that they are presenting this week. We will start the Pursuit of Justice unit next week and discuss the elements of drama and the background information about the playwright, Lorraine Vivian Hansberry. The students will complete an anticipation guide during the introductory activity where we will analyze seven statements about the topics related to the text, answer specific questions about the discussion, and understand how this task will set the stage for the play, *A Raisin in the Sun*. Racism, resilience, stress, housing discrimination, assimilationism, and the American dream are some of the topics that will be discussed during this unit. The students will complete a topic tracker and group project where they will create a scene for their own play based on a social issue that was discussed in the text.

Since this is our last newsletter for the school year, I just wanted to say that it was a pleasure teaching the IH students. Thank you for working with me to help educate your child. The students put an enormous amount of effort into this program and it definitely showed throughout the academic year. I wish each student the best and I hope your family has a relaxing and enjoyable summer! ©

## **Honors US History 1 IH**

#### Wilson Du, Social Studies Teacher



We are almost at the end of the school year! There are only a few weeks left and the year will be over before we know it. I want to thank you again for all of your support. It has been a delight and pleasure to teach the IH students this year and you have all played a supportive role in their education.

Since the last newsletter, we have covered a great deal of content. Students are continuing to hone their skills. For Unit 5, students worked on a research project about a historical figure involved in westward expansion and utilizing online databases to search for primary sources. It was a different experience not being able to simply use Google to find information, but the students benefited greatly from having to scour a database such as the Library of Congress website to find good primary sources.



Library of Congress newspaper database screenshot

We are midway through Unit 5, which encompasses the study of the Civil War. We will soon be entering the final unit (Reconstruction, the West, and the Gilded Age). The last two units are vital in understanding how post-Civil War history still reverberates through society today.

This group has grown tremendously in their skills and topical knowledge. Looking back at the beginning of the year, it is evident that everyone has come a long way. Here's to finishing the year strong!

Sincerely, Mr. Du

## **School Counseling News**

#### **Rachel Rosen, School Counselor/IH Committee**



Dear Parents,

Congratulations! We are almost done with the 2024-2025 school year! We are so proud of all that was accomplished this year and are busy planning for the 25-26 academic year. In June, you will be receiving a copy of your child's course selections in the mail. As we begin preparing for summer break, please note that many classes will require summer assignments to be completed prior to the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year. All summer assignments will be posted on the school website, www.woboe.org. We hope you have a safe and restful summer and look forward to seeing you in September!

Best Wishes,

Rachel Rosen, School Counselor