

Press Release: September 1st, 2017

## **WIHI ranked #3 in the state of Michigan and # 1 for SAT scores**

Washtenaw International High School (WIHI) earned rankings of #3 in the state and #1 in Washtenaw County in recently released results from the statewide April 2017 SAT.

Additionally, senior students Anna Simpson earned a perfect ACT score and Elanor Tang earned a perfect SAT and ACT score. WIHI attributes the scores to supportive families and knowledgeable, engaging educators teaching the International Baccalaureate curriculum in a caring and collaborative culture.

The IB curriculum challenges students to think critically and solve unfamiliar problems in creative and innovative ways.

While Anna and Elanor are academically and intellectually driven, they are also well-rounded and compassionate student leaders. Anna, a South Lyon resident enrolled through Whitmore Lake Public Schools, plays in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra Civic Youth Ensembles and is the principal violin in the WIHI orchestra.

Elanor Tang, Ann Arbor resident, home schooled prior to WIHI, plays tennis for Pioneer, is an avid pianist, a novice rock climber and recently travelled to Burundi, Africa with her family to support a medical mission and complete a career mentorship at the Kibuye Hope Hospital.

Both Anna and Elanor serve as mentors to Washtenaw International Middle Academy (WIMA) students and attribute their success to their parents, Teresa and Donald Simpson and Janet and Duc Tang, as well as WIHI.

WIHI celebrates the success of students while recognizing that students need support maintaining balance. The public consortium school serving students from Washtenaw county promotes mental health awareness and self-care by embedding mindfulness and mental health awareness in curriculum and instruction. Teachers have mindfulness breaks during classes, counselors facilitate growth mindset and mental health awareness discussions in all classes, and the school works to recognize students for being balanced, caring, open-minded, and reflective; all integral values the staff strive to model everyday.

WIHI also attribute the scores to policies and practices that promote deep thinking and learning. For example, all classes practice standards-based learning where students have multiple opportunities to reflect on their learning and re-assess if they didn't learn the skills the first time. Teachers are available for an additional hour at the end of the day to work with students individually and in small groups. Students are assessed in diverse and authentic ways including presentations, projects, and proposals with action-based solutions to global and local problems. Positive relationships among staff and students are a priority and at the heart of the program.

Feedback Friday is another example of a school policy that promotes learning and leadership. In exchange for wearing jeans on Fridays, staff write a positive email message to students and parents. The goal is to make a personal positive connection with every single student and family each year.

Biology Teacher and Instructional Coach, Alyson Thompson, states "In a world that focuses too much on what kids are doing wrong, we want to spend our time catching students being caring, principled, and open-minded. Positive, specific feedback makes a world of difference in motivating students."

WIHI also has a middle school, Washtenaw International Middle Academy (WIMA), housed within the same building with a shared IB curriculum, staff, and mission. Nearly 90% of WIMA students move on to attend WIHI. Preparing students at an early age to think critically and globally lays a strong foundation for intellectual inquiry and promotes balanced and open-minded thinkers eager to make a positive impact on the world.

WIMA associate principal, Jessica Garcia states, "At WIMA, we are committed to preparing students to be well-rounded learners and leaders. As a result of our shared mission and values, we have created a seamless transition from middle to high school for students and it's been integral in their academic and developmental success."

Principal of WIHI and WIMA, Nhu Do, states, "Ultimately, it's more important to us as a school, in partnership with families, that we prepare students to be compassionate leaders, life-long learners, and advocates of social justice to make the world a better place. High test scores are not a goal; they are an outcome of the culture of growth and love of learning we all work tenaciously to cultivate as a community."

For more information about WIHI and WIMA, go to [wihi.org](http://wihi.org) or call 734-994-8145.