

# WGST 3.0: The World's Greatest Student Television

For some of you, the words in the title above might have triggered happy thoughts of your own child as one of the anchors or the meteorologist on our morning student news show. For others, who haven't had students in fourth grade yet, you might just see a mishmash of alphabet soup that means nothing. Let me give a little background for the latter group.



In 2001 two teachers, David Wartik and Joe Mazza, had an idea. They wanted to create a news show with and for students. After receiving an initial grant from the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, the two got to work wiring the school and building a studio in the basement of Hubbard

Woods. By January, when the studio was ready, students eagerly began broadcasting. They recorded the show each morning before school. Shortly thereafter, the broadcast was 'aired' via VHS tape over our closed circuit system. The station continued in much the same fashion for several years. Eventually, the station began recording the show onto digital video recorders. The studio also expanded to encompass two basement rooms. It went on this way for another bundle of years. [HERE is a story that was done by WGN back in 2001.](#)



Then, two years ago, the studio 'cut the cord.' Rather than deliver the show via our closed circuit system, the show was uploaded to a web server and available online. Along with the new delivery method, several behind the



scenes changes took place. The titles, transitions, etc. were generated using a digital broadcasting program called [BoinxTV](#). This simplified the process and enhanced the overall look of the show. We called this WGST 2.0. Last week, WGST celebrated its 2000th episode. You might have [read the story in the Winnetka Talk](#), or [seen the special report on WGN](#). Just to give you a sense of how many episodes that is, it took more than six hosts to record that many Tonight Show Episodes before Johnny Carson! Carson went on to do over 4,000 episodes!

## Hubbard Woods celebrates 2,000 episodes of 'World's Greatest Student Television'



Hubbard Woods students talked with former Hubbard Woods fourth-grade teacher Joe Mazza, who joined via Google Hangout on May 18 for the 2,000th episode of "World's Greatest Student Television." (Bridget O'Shea, Pioneer Press)

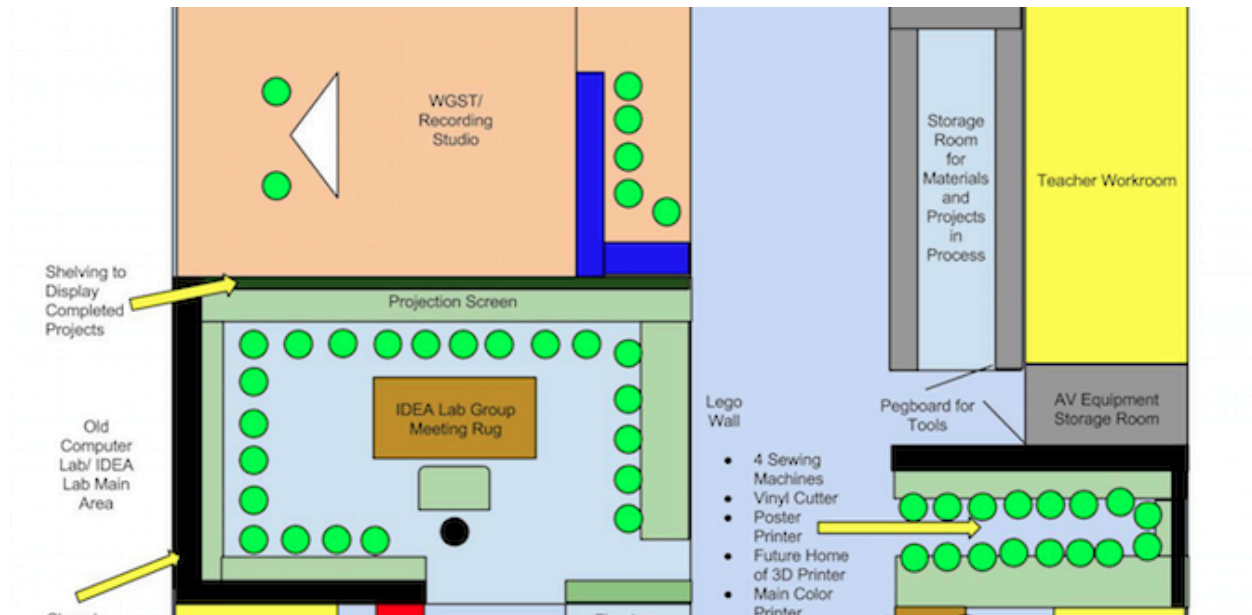
Now, we are at another exciting point. The studio, which has been in the basement for 14 years, is on its way upstairs to the Resource Center. The new location will allow for increased usage by the entire school. When the new studio is ready, it will not only be used to record the news, students will also use it to record interviews, audio books, musical compositions and more. The transition to the new space will also allow us the chance to truly broadcast a digital signal. For the past two years, the analog signals from the cameras, audio and video

switchers have been converted into a digital signal, but it was still quite poor. This summer, thanks to yet another grant from the Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, we will finally be upgrading all of the equipment to HD quality.



In addition to the new location, the television broadcast is going to undergo a few other changes behind the scenes. In the past, students have submitted their stories to us the evening before. From this point forward, we are going to be working with a 'production company model.' We plan to meet with students a month in advance of their broadcast. They will be given their schedule and deadlines. They will be in charge of every aspect of their story: research, writing,

gathering images and inputting their work into the teleprompter for the day they are on air. In addition to traditional stories, we are excited to think about what else the students can create. We envision video segments, interviews and weather reports from all over the world. Imagine how cool it would be for a student to do a special report on a field trip, or to interview the oldest person in their family and then share that edited interview with the whole school on WGST.



Every time I present or share information about our studio, I get asked, "How old are these kids?" When I tell them nine or ten, I get looks of amazement. How could kids so young do so much? "Well," I tell them, "when you believe in them, kids can do anything!" As the Winnetka Foundation slogan said fourteen years ago: **"The Possibilities are Endless!"** It's never been more true. The new slogan for the foundation is **"Dream Bigger, Do More!"** I can't wait to 'dream bigger' with the new crop of fourth graders.

One last thing! It's been a long time since we've had a Hi WGST! Sign. We are giving one sign to every student before the end of the year. In the past, we've had students and families take pictures with the Hi WGST! Sign and they have shown up at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean and the top of mountains. We would love to have you take one of our signs with you and take a photo with it. Send your photo to Mr. Burleson [toddburleson@winnetka36.org](mailto:toddburleson@winnetka36.org) and he will make sure that you and your photo show up on a WGST Episode in the near future! You can download the sign [HERE](#).