

# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## Rising to the Challenge

Lakyn Davis, Lauren Mock, Lexi Ursua, class of 2021  
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**S**mall school, big plans. The Student Council proved this to be true this year when members from eighth-tenth grade won a bid to host a statewide PASC (Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils) conference in 2019.

“I quite honestly wasn’t confident we would get it, only because it is usually big school bias. I knew our council would put together a great bid, and I was proud but didn’t have any expectations. Then we won, which is awesome,” council adviser Mr. Rutledge said.

A pitch was put together and presented over video chat to the board members of PASC on January 13. Two other schools twice the size of Westmont were also competing for this opportunity and presented their own ideas in person.

“It was scary to go against bigger schools, but it just goes to show all the recognized potential we have here at Westmont,” said sophomore council member Max Wilkinson.

Hours later, the students were informed that our school would indeed be the lucky winner of a two-year workload, leading up to an event bigger than any other to happen at Westmont Hilltop. One that will last two days, take the entirety of two years to plan, and bring in over 1,000 PA student council members and advisers.

“The hardest part will be moving that amount of people around the school, from the gym to the classrooms and in the Knowledge Commons for lunch. I have no doubt that our council will put on an amazing conference, but things like that will be challenging,” Mr. Rutledge said.

The whole idea of hosting a state conference came from Wilkinson, now overall conference co-chair, who attended last year’s at Red Lion Area High School and loved the experience.

“The past state conference was incredible. They had great things going on there, and it helped me envision something like this happening in our school,” said Wilkinson. “Hopefully students will leave our conference with a new knowledge of leadership. I want them to go back to their own schools and make changes that they see fit. It makes schools better for everyone!”

The conference will be rewarding for each person attending, most of all for our own student council members



8th grade Student Council conference chairs Lauren Anderson and Nicole Leiden display the presentation that gave WHHS the opportunity to host the 2019 PASC state conference.

*Source: Lakyn Davis*

planning it.

“I want each member to grow personally as a leader. To be able to put something like this together is a big task and they will grow individually and as a council. Over the next two years, they’ll be working together a lot and will build tight bonds,” adviser Mr. Rutledge said.

The next two years will be packed full of meetings, phone calls, budget checks and more.

“I’m the chair of the hospitality and troubleshooting committee, so most of my job is done during the conference. I’ll try to anticipate any problems we come across and have a solution ready,” eighth grader Nicole Leiden explained.

When November 7, 2019 comes around, the hard part will be over and they will be able to sit back, relax, and enjoy the conference.

“I’m just looking forward to seeing 1,000 people here in our gym. It’s an honor to be hosting one of the biggest conferences in Johnstown’s history,” said Wilkinson. ❖

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This feature story was created by students in yearbook journalism with faculty oversight and is intended for WHSD students, faculty and community members. All efforts will be made to ensure the accuracy of this publication. Please report any mistakes to yearbook advisor Korbin Shearer at [kxs@whsd.org](mailto:kxs@whsd.org)