Arlington (June 9, 2014) – Students in Ms. Cindy Christoferson’s Weston High School Forensic Science had first-hand experience of a crime simulation as they applied their knowledge of biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics and criminal justice to solve the mystery. The simulation began with a staged “murder” on June 5 and extended through June 6 when students processed all the evidence. The students wore their Weston CSI black and white T-shirts as they went to work on the assessment.

The pretend murder of Anthony Castenada, Arlington Public School’s computer technician, was set in his office at Weston High School. Students discovered his “body” face down on his desk with fake blood spattered around him. Once discovered, they reported the crime to Principal Amie Verellen-Grubbs who then contacted the Arlington Police Department. Ms. Christoferson had prearranged law enforcement participation. Arriving on the scene was Arlington Detective Mike Sargent, Sergeant John Ventura, Officer Erik Moon and Police Support Officer Val Copeland who all arrived minutes after being called. Also available to assist students in their investigation was Greg Frank, Washington State Patrol Forensic Scientist. The law enforcement team met with the WHS CSI students to talk about the investigation and how to proceed. At each step, they helped the students understand and experience the role of a forensic scientist.

Mr. Castenada did a great job of staying in character and didn’t move during the entire event as police and students measured, photographed and documented clues throughout the office and school grounds. The area was cordoned off with crime tape and students donned gloves and booties as protective gear before entering the crime area. All of the members of the class had a job to do and understood the importance of accuracy so they could present a likely suspect to the police.

Once the evidence was measured and collected, the CSI student team went back to their lab to begin developing their theory about when and how the murder occurred. This involved analyzing blood spatter patterns and measurements, hair, fibers, fingerprints, and DNA samples. Officer Copeland took an impression of the tool that was used to commit the murder and the students will be analyzing it along with a tire tread print as someone’s tire ran through the blood! The students will present their theory of who committed the crime to the law enforcement participants and a planned arrest will occur on June 12.

Seeing students use their learned knowledge in a real hands-on way has been exciting for staff, students and the law enforcement individuals. One senior, who graduated the night before, even came back to participate and was totally engaged!

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