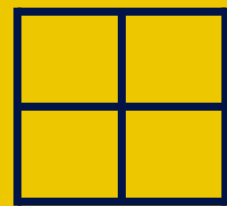


THE WHITNALL WINDOW



WINTER
24-25



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The Superintendent's Message

It's hard to believe we are well into the second semester, with spring just around the corner. Since the fall edition of the Whitnall Window, we've made significant progress across the district. Two key milestones I want to highlight are the launch of our strategic planning process and the completion of our staff and student engagement surveys. These initiatives provide valuable insights that will help us continue fostering a positive and supportive environment for all.

Strategic Planning for the Future

A major initiative underway is the development of Whitnall's new strategic plan. To guide this process, we have partnered with Elevated Performance, a professional organization with extensive experience in helping school districts set a clear path forward. In February, we gathered feedback from stakeholders to shape our vision for the future. This month, we will analyze the data and use it to guide our district's next steps.

Student & Staff Engagement

This winter, we also completed our student and staff engagement surveys, which provided valuable insights into the experiences of our school community.

- Student Engagement: One of the most encouraging findings was a 4.35% increase in agreement within the theme of Student Respect, reflecting the meaningful work happening in our schools to support and engage students.
- Staff Engagement: We received an incredible 92.2% participation rate, the highest to date! Additionally, staff members reported an overall satisfaction score of 3.85 (on a 1-5 scale)—the highest recorded since the survey began in 2020.

These results highlight the dedication of our students, staff, and community in making Whitnall a great place to learn and work.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward together. I know spring will bring great things for Whitnall!



#whitnALLIN

Little Women: The Broadway Musical

This winter, Whitnall Theater brought *Little Women: The Broadway Musical* to life with a heartfelt and emotional production that ran from December 13-15. Based on Louisa May Alcott's classic novel, the musical followed the journey of the March sisters as they faced love, loss, and dreams for the future. The cast delivered moving performances, capturing the spirit and resilience of these beloved characters.

A live pit orchestra added to the experience, providing a rich musical backdrop that enhanced each scene. With beautiful vocals, detailed set design, and the hard work of the cast, crew, and musicians, the production was a true showcase of Whitnall's talent. Audiences were left with a lasting impression of the show's themes—love, perseverance, and the strength of family.



Next Gen Trades Challenge

In February, Whitnall High School participated in the Next Gen Trades Challenge 2025 Greenhouse Grove at the NARI Spring Home Improvement Show, alongside seven other local high schools. Our Building Trades 1 students, led by CTE Teacher Chris Jackson and supported by Creative Construction of Wisconsin, Inc., showcased exceptional skill, teamwork, and dedication.

This semester-long project allowed students to explore all aspects of the building process—from design and blueprint reading to hands-on construction and final detailing. They developed problem-solving skills, applied industry techniques, and gained real-world experience.

Their hard work was recognized in a big way! Whitnall's team earned second place in the technical challenge, highlighting their precision and construction knowledge, and won first place in the Viewer's Choice category, a testament to their creativity and quality.

We are incredibly proud of their accomplishments and dedication to learning real-world skills. A huge thank you to Creative Construction of Wisconsin, Inc. for their support and to everyone who cheered on our students.

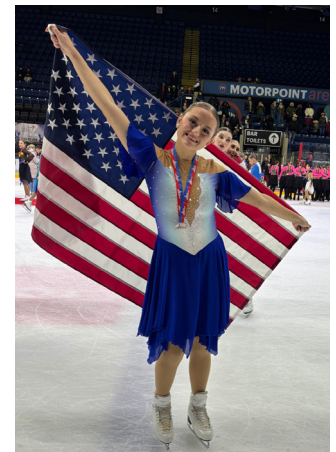


Skating for Team USA

Whitnall's own Sadie Rios has achieved an incredible milestone in her synchronized skating career. Named to Team USA in the fall of 2023, she has spent the last two seasons representing the United States at the highest level of the sport. Sadie's journey began at just four years old, and by six, she had already joined a synchro team. Her lifelong dream was to reach the elite level of Team USA, and through dedication and hard work, she has made that dream a reality.

Each year, U.S. Figure Skating selects its top skaters and teams for Team USA based on points and performance. These athletes, who compete at the highest level, have the potential to qualify for Olympic competition. While synchronized skating is not yet an Olympic sport, the goal is to be included in the 2034 Games. In the meantime, Team USA competes on the world stage, with top teams vying for a spot in the Synchronized Skating World Cup.

Sadie's team, the Fond du Lac Blades, was one of only nine teams in the country—and the only team from Wisconsin—named to Team USA. When competing internationally, they represent the United States and follow the same strict protocols as Olympic-level skaters. Domestically, they compete under their local team name. Most recently, Sadie and her team traveled to the United Kingdom for the Britannia Cup in Nottingham, where they earned an impressive second-place finish. They also competed in the French Cup, finishing fourth out of 20 teams from around the world. In March, they will head to Colorado Springs for Nationals.



We're excited to share the results from the third Winter administration of our Whitnall Student Engagement Survey! This survey, given to all students in grades 3-12, helps us understand how students feel about their school experience. Student engagement—how interested and enthusiastic students are about school—plays a big role in both learning and behavior.

A few years ago, we used a different survey tool but found it didn't give us the insights we needed. That's why we created our own Whitnall Student Engagement Survey, which focuses on our core values of Advancement, Belonging, and Courage. The feedback helps us keep improving our school culture and making Whitnall the best it can be for our students.

The survey is given twice a year, in Winter and Spring, so we can track progress over time. Students answer 31 questions on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These questions are grouped into three key areas:

Advancement – How students feel about learning, schoolwork, and expectations.

- My teachers expect me to do my best all the time.
- My schoolwork challenges me.
- My teachers meet my learning needs.

Belonging – How students feel about friendships, relationships with teachers, and the school environment.

- My teachers care about me.
- I feel an adult listens to me when I have something to say.
- I am happy to be at this school.

Courage – How safe and supported students feel in handling conflicts or concerns.

- If I hear or see something dangerous at my school, I know who to talk to about it.
- If I hear about a threat to school or student safety, I would report it to someone.
- I feel safe at this school.

At the end of the survey, students also answer:

- How likely would you be to recommend your school to someone else?
- Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

The Winter 2024 survey, given in December, had an **amazing response rate of 88.17%, with 1,624 students participating**. Overall, more students responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to questions aligned with our core values compared to last year's survey. Advancement had the highest percentage of agreement, while Belonging had the lowest.

In addition to looking at responses by district values, we also group them by themes to help guide action steps. We're happy to report that student agreement increased across all eight themes compared to last year's survey! One standout improvement was in the theme of Student Respect, which increased by 4.35%! This growth shows the hard work happening in our schools to support and engage students.

For a closer look at the December 2024 student engagement survey results, we invite you to check out the presentation from the January 13, 2025, School Board meeting. You can watch the recording on our YouTube channel, with the presentation starting around the 9-minute mark.

VALUE	DECEMBER 2024	DECEMBER 2023	CHANGE
ADVANCEMENT	79.98%	77.88%	↑ 2.10%
BELONGING	77.42%	75.01%	↑ 2.41%
COURAGE	78.73%	76.11%	↑ 2.62%

THEME	DECEMBER 2023 STRONGLY AGREE & AGREE	DECEMBER 2024 STRONGLY AGREE & AGREE	WINTER TO WINTER CHANGE
ADULTS	83.31%	85.13%	↑ 1.82%
LEARNING	72.35%	73.58%	↑ 1.23%
PROBLEM SOLVING	61.90%	63.61%	↑ 1.71%
SAFETY	89.07%	90.68%	↑ 1.61%
STUDENT RESEPECT	56.45 %	60.80%	↑ 4.35%
STUDENT VOICE	67.74%	70.63%	↑ 2.89%
TEACHERS- LEARNING	86.46%	88.25%	↑ 1.79%
TEACHERS- RELATIONSHIPS	78.86%	81.38%	↑ 2.97%

Scan here to visit the
Whitnall School District
YouTube Channel



How Schools Are Funded

The new legislative session has begun, and one of their key tasks ahead is developing the 2025-2027 Biennial Budget. Over the coming months, you may hear discussions about the budget and how it could impact school funding. To help families better understand how schools are funded, we've put together some key information.

How Schools Are Funded

School funding in Wisconsin is a complex system with revenue primarily coming from two sources:

- State Aid
- Local Property Taxes

State Aid, Revenue Limits & the Budget Process

The amount of state aid a district receives is determined by a formula that considers factors like student enrollment and community property values. Wisconsin has revenue limits, meaning there's an imposed cap on how much each district can receive from a combination of state aid and local property taxes.

Every two years, the governor proposes a budget (Biennial Budget), which is then reviewed and adjusted by the legislature before being signed into law. This budget sets funding levels for schools and determines revenue limits. If a new budget isn't approved by July 1 (the start of the school district's fiscal year), schools continue to receive funding at the previous budget's levels until a new plan is finalized. This delay can create financial uncertainty as districts attempt to plan for staffing, programs, and resources for the upcoming school year.

Local Property Taxes & Referendums

Property taxes also play a significant role in school funding. As state aid doesn't cover all of the school's costs, local taxpayers must make up the difference in the revenue limit. School districts can ask voters to approve referendums, allowing them to exceed the revenue limit for operational costs (staffing, programming, and resources) or levy additional funds for capital projects (building improvements and facility upgrades).

Other Funding

While most school funding comes from the allowed revenue limit, other funds from the Federal Government, categorical aid, open enrollment, and local income help support specific programs. This funding varies by school district based on specific criteria and student demographics.

WSD's Budget & Funding Breakdown

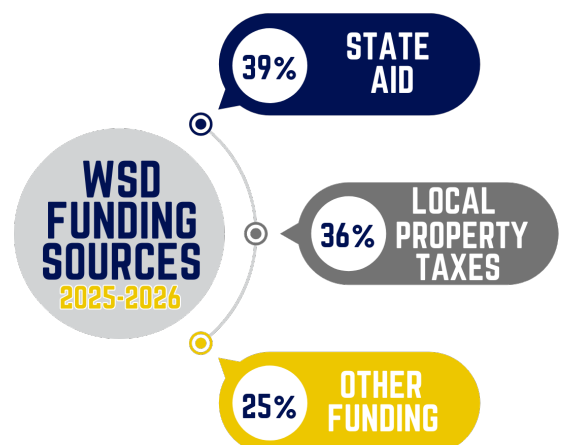
Like all Wisconsin districts, Whitnall must operate within its revenue limits. Not knowing what the upcoming Wisconsin State Biennial Budget will be makes long-term financial planning extremely challenging. The district carefully balances state aid, local tax revenue, and other funding to ensure students receive a high-quality education while being fiscally responsible.

For the current budget year, Whitnall's funding sources are approximately:

- State Aid: 39%
- Local Property Taxes: 36%
- Other Funding: 25%

Each year, Whitnall's budget is developed with community input, reviewed by the Board of Education, and adjusted based on state funding decisions. In recent years, the district has focused on maintaining strong academic programs, supporting student services, and investing in facility improvements while managing cost increases in areas such as staffing, transportation, and technology.

Community members are encouraged to stay informed about the budget process and upcoming financial decisions.



Project Progress Report | February 2025

WHAT'S NEW?

A core planning team, consisting of district administration, principals, and Bray Architects, has been established and meets every other Tuesday to drive the project forward. In addition, the district recently selected CG Schmidt as the construction manager, and they will now be joining the planning team for ongoing collaboration.



PLANNING & DESIGN UPDATE

The architects have conducted field verification and 3D scanning to document the current building conditions. Land surveys have been completed for both Whitnall High School and Edgerton Elementary School. In addition, the first round of user group meetings with teachers, staff, and coaches has taken place. To inspire the design for the upcoming additions and renovations, kindergarten and K4 teachers from Edgerton Elementary School toured several elementary buildings.



NEXT STEPS

The second round of user group meetings will be held with teachers, staff, and coaches. A schematic design process set will be issued for review and coordination with the district, consultants, and the construction manager. Additionally, we will continue to engage engineering consultants as we enter the design development phase.

Stay Connected

We encourage all community members to stay engaged in this journey by visiting our website for regular updates. If you have any questions or wish to request more information, we have established a dedicated email account for referendum related inquiries: referendum2024@whitnall.com. We also encourage you to attend or watch our school board meetings. All meetings are live streamed and saved on our district YouTube channel.

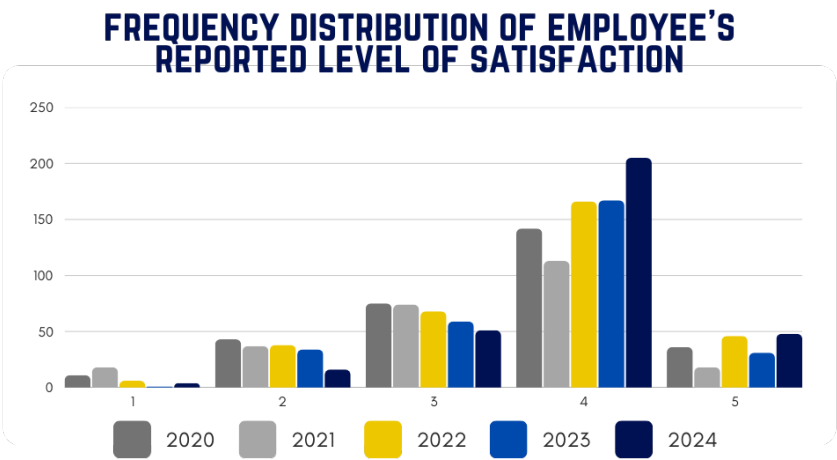
Scan here to visit the
Whitnall Referendum
website



6 | EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

In November of 2024, we completed the fifth round of our annual employee satisfaction survey. Administering this survey allows us to identify areas for improvement of the employee experience, while administering the survey at the same time each year allows us to measure our progress in those areas. The data analysis is done by an independent third party. In 2024, 345 employees completed or nearly completed the survey, resulting in a record 92.2% response rate!

The survey includes 48 items within seven different categories, plus two open-ended questions. Of all items asked, District employees reported an overall positive level of satisfaction working in the district (3.85 on a scale of 1-5), the highest overall level of satisfaction recorded since the survey was first administered in 2020.



Many positive increases were identified among individual questions from 2023 to 2024. Most notably, statistically significant increases were identified for the following questions:

SURVEY ITEM	2023	2024	INCREASE
I believe the District is headed in the right direction.	3.27	3.78	0.51
District Office Administrators act consistently with District defined values.	3.33	3.60	0.33
Meeting the needs of students is one of the District's top priorities.	3.57	3.89	0.32
I trust our District Office Administrators to make decisions that are in the best interest of the District.	3.30	3.62	0.32
The District clearly explains reasons behind decisions on key issues.	3.14	3.40	0.26

These items with the greatest one -year growth are inclusive of several items that have had the most significant increases since the first survey deployment in 2020:

SURVEY ITEM	2020	2024	INCREASE
I believe the District is headed in the right direction.	2.85	3.78	0.93
I trust my supervisor to make decisions that are in the best interest of the District.	3.02	3.95	0.93
I feel trusted and valued as an employee.	2.78	3.66	0.88
Building Administrators act consistently with District defined values.	3.00	3.87	0.87
The Building Administrators are transparent in their decisions.	2.80	3.63	0.83

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY | 7

The questions with the most positive overall results were within the themes of Belonging (Work Environment), Personal Factors, and Advancement:

SURVEY ITEM	2024
I feel my work has purpose.	4.39
It is important to me to have opportunities that support the advancement/development of my skills.	4.24
I feel personally connected to the people in my work area.	4.18
I am encouraged to collaborate as a member of the team.	4.13
I feel respected and supported by my colleagues.	4.13

Survey participants were also asked to leave comments in response to open-ended questions at the end of the survey. One of these questions asked, “What is the one thing you like most about working for the Whitnall School District?” The vast majority of responses to this question focused on relationships with colleagues, followed by the sense of culture within the District and relationships with students.

MOST LIKED ATTRIBUTES BY THEME	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
Relationships: working and collaborating with colleagues	49.85%
Culture (inc. culture of organization, sense of community, shared commitment to students, supportive environment direction of district)	15.69%
Students (inc. working with students, relationships with students)	12%

This year, our annual strategic plan goal for employee satisfaction centers on communication:

WE WILL INCREASE SATISFACTION WITH OUR WORKPLACE CULTURE BY POSITIVELY IMPACTING COMMUNICATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL, AS EVIDENCED BY INCREASING AN AVERAGE OF .2 IN THE AREA OF COMMUNICATION ON THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY BY SPRING 2025.

In order to measure our progress towards this goal, a follow-up survey will be distributed to employees in Spring 2025. This survey will include questions centered around communication. Over the past several years, we have seen growth in the area of communication, and we hope to continue this growth through increased and clarified communication with employees in the 2024-25 school year.

	2020	2023	2024	CHANGE FROM 2023	CHANGE FROM 2020
COMMUNICATION	3.22	3.51	3.60	↑ 0.09	↑ 0.38

Senior Dinner

On December 12, 2024, Whitnall High School continued a beloved tradition with the annual Senior Dinner & A Show, hosted by the WHS National Honor Society in partnership with the Whitnall Theater Department. This special event has long been a highlight of the season, bringing together nearly 100 community members for an evening of fine dining and live theater.

This year's performance, *Little Women: The Broadway Musical*, was no exception. This performance always marks the cast's debut in front of a live audience, adding an extra layer of excitement to the night.

Keeping traditions like this alive is what makes the Whitnall community so special. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to another successful year of Senior Dinner & A Show—we look forward to carrying on this legacy for years to come!



Children's Art Day

Before winter break, our WHS National Art Honor Society students partnered with young artists from our community for a fun-filled Children's Art Day! Together, they created festive projects bursting with color, creativity, and joy. Watching the smiles, teamwork, and incredible artwork come to life was truly heartwarming.

The event was such a success that plans are already in the works for a Spring Art Day on April 26th—stay tuned for more details! A big thank you to everyone who participated and helped make this special day possible.



WHS Expo

On February 5, Whitnall High School hosted its annual Expo, an event designed to help current 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students and their families make informed decisions about their academic and co-curricular options for the upcoming school year. With over 150 courses available, students had the opportunity to explore a diverse range of subjects, from core academic offerings to specialized electives that align with their interests and future goals. In addition to academic planning, attendees could learn about 40+ clubs, activities, and athletic teams, discovering ways to get involved beyond the classroom. Teachers, counselors, and activity advisors were on hand to provide guidance, answer questions, and help students build a well-rounded high school experience. The Expo continues to be a valuable resource, ensuring students feel confident and prepared as they chart their educational paths at Whitnall High School.



Community Community Community

HCE Penny Wars for a Cause

Hales Corners Elementary showed the power of kindness through Penny Wars, a Student Leadership fundraiser supporting the Education Foundation of Martin County's Hurricane Milton Crisis Fund. Thanks to the generosity of students, staff, and families, over \$1,000 was raised to help students and teachers affected by the storm.

From December 2-13, classrooms eagerly competed, adding pennies to their jars while using silver coins to mix up the scores. In the end, 1st grade claimed victory, earning a trophy for their hallway. But the real win goes beyond points and prizes—it's the generosity, teamwork, and compassion shown by the entire HCE community. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making a difference in the lives of those in need. Your kindness truly shines!



WMS Toy Drive

From December 9-13, the WMS Student Council partnered with the Salvation Army to host a Holiday Toy Drive that spread warmth and holiday cheer throughout the school. Each morning, Student Council members greeted students at the entrance with smiles and festive spirit, encouraging them to contribute to this meaningful cause.

Thanks to the hard work of the Student Council members and the overwhelming generosity of our WMS community, they filled two large barrels with brand-new toys. These donations went on to bring joy to children in need, making their Christmas season a little brighter.



The success of the toy drive is a testament to the kindness and compassion of our students, staff, and families. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed—you've made a lasting impact in the lives of others and truly embodied the spirit of the season. Here's to making more moments of joy and giving in the future!

EES Takes on the Kids Heart Challenge

Edgerton Elementary students and their families are making a heart-healthy difference by participating in the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge! This nationwide initiative encourages students to engage in heart-healthy activities, learn the importance of heart health, and raise funds to support the American Heart Association's mission. While students will officially participate in the challenge on February 28th, they are already surpassing expectations!

At the time of publication, our Kids Heart Challenge stats include:

- 226 students registered
- 54 students completed Finn's Mission (learning about heart health and lifesaving skills)
- 69 families learned hands-only CPR
- \$17,284 raised so far!

EES' goals for the 2024-2025 Kids Heart Challenge are:

- 200 students registered
- 54 students completing Finn's Mission
- \$21,500 raised

We are so proud of our students and families for their dedication to this important cause! Stay tuned this spring to see the final results of Edgerton's Kids Heart Challenge journey.



Wisconsin State Education Convention

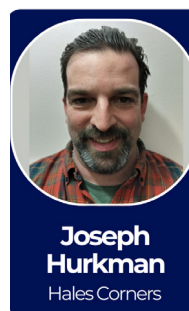
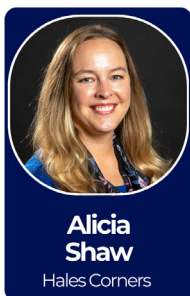
In January, Whitnall School Board members, along with Superintendent Dr. Brady Reinke, attended the Wisconsin State Education Convention, hosted by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB). This annual event gathers education leaders from across the state to exchange ideas, attend expert-led sessions, and explore innovative strategies to enhance student success.

With over 133 sessions to choose from, attendees explored a wide range of topics, including student achievement, school finance, leadership development, and innovative educational practices. This year's theme, "Learning Beyond Limits," encouraged participants to think beyond traditional educational boundaries and embrace new approaches to learning and leadership. The convention provided valuable opportunities for our board members to learn from statewide best practices and bring fresh perspectives back to Whitnall.



Whitnall School Board Elections | April 1, 2025

This year, the Whitnall School District has two open seats on the School Board, with four candidates vying for these positions. To help the community make informed decisions, we encourage residents to visit our website at www.whitnall.com to learn more about the candidates and the upcoming spring election.



Candidates are listed as they appear on the ballot

Additionally, the Whitnall High School Student Council will be hosting a Candidate Forum moderated by The League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County on Wednesday, March 19, at 6:30 PM in the Community Board Room. During this event, candidates will answer school board-related questions in front of an audience. For those unable to attend in person, the forum will be live-streamed and later uploaded to the district's YouTube channel, ensuring all community members have access to this important discussion.

Community members are invited to submit questions for the candidates in advance using the QR code at the bottom. Question cards will be available at the event for those who prefer to submit their questions in person.

To register to vote or to find your polling place visit myvote.wi.gov.

Scan here to submit
questions for
the Candidate Forum





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Jason Craig	Clerk, Franklin
Sarah Blonsky	Member, Greenfield
Quin Brunette	Member, Greenfield
Jesse Stachowiak	Member, Greenfield



High School Play

Whitnall High School is putting on the Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde. The performances are March 14 & 15 at 7PM and March 16 at 2PM. Tickets must be bought in advance; you can buy them by visiting whitnall.com!

Middle School Musical

Whitnall Middle School is putting on Bye Bye Birdie: Youth Edition. The performances are May 3 at 7PM and May 4 at 2PM. Tickets must be bought in advance; you can buy them by visiting whitnall.com! WMS will also be hosting their first Senior Dinner and A Show on April 30. Tickets will go on sale in March and will cost \$7. To purchase a ticket for the Senior Dinner please visit the middle school website or stop by the middle school main office during school hours to pay with cash or check. The deadline to purchase tickets is April 17.

Newsletter feedback?
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blitza@whitnall.com

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@whitnallschools for all three!