



ISSUE 1 | VOL 2 | WINTER 2010

# The Viewpoint

## CONNECTING TO OUR COMMUNITY – WHITNALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Eight Benefits of Better Communication

You spoke through the community survey; we listened.

We've been putting a lot of emphasis on communication lately. Why? We're doing great things at Whitnall, and we want you to be in the know.

Last year, our Strategic Planning Committee developed a community-wide survey. The survey identified communication between the school district and the community as an area where we could improve. This summer, we completed the communications planning process, and this fall we implemented some new tools to communicate more effectively.

This fall you received the newly designed Viewpoint newsletter in your mailbox. We're going to send it out four times a year instead of six, and also make it available electronically, so printing and postage costs will be less than last year.

In addition to the newsletter, we are working on email strategies, crisis communication and press tools, and we are exploring other cost-effective outreach

methods such as podcasts and social media.

Whitnall Schools have always been at the heart of our community. We believe it's important to keep the lines of communication open with families and community members for these reasons:

- 1. A better informed community helps us work better together to solve problems.** We are facing challenges in our district that will require creative solutions and community input. Perhaps you aren't aware of budget issues, volunteer opportunities, or ways your business can partner with our schools. We can't work efficiently together if you're not informed. Too often we hear: "I would have helped...but I didn't know about it!"
- 2. Community support benefits everyone.** We have wonderfully talented musicians, actors and athletes at our schools. You can't get better value for your

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### COMMUNICATIONS GOALS

#### Fiscal Responsibility

Finding creative ways to cut costs and be responsive to our taxpayers.

#### Technology

Students and staff are immersed in technology every day.

#### Globalism

Preparing students to embrace the challenges of our dynamic global society.

#### Personalized Academics

Programs are available for every student to succeed in the real world.



entertainment dollar than a Friday night basketball game, concert, or play. Your attendance is motivating for our students and helps financially support these programs.

**3. Increased community involvement has bottom line value.** Volunteers and business partnerships provide real value to school districts. For example, in the Hamilton School District, a comprehensive community outreach and public relations program resulted in significant impact for their district. Since 1999, their Seniors & Students volunteer program has logged a total of 25,000 hours of volunteer service (a \$500,000 value in volunteer hours.)

**4. Communications efforts let us share positive news.** In our digital age, news outlets may only have the manpower to focus on “breaking” or controversial issues and may only report “negative” stories. We want to consistently provide news outlets with factual and positive information, because there are amazing things going on every day in WSD, and you should hear about these too.

**5. Investing in communications reduces administrative time.** Many hours can be spent trying to correct misinformation, responding during a crisis, or repeating the same information over and over. A communications plan and tools can prevent problems before they happen, allowing administration to focus on things that positively affect education.

**6. Communication efforts include everyone in the conversation.** As a district, we tend to focus on parents with students in school. However, all taxpayers deserve to know what is going on with their school district, from families with very young children to retirees who have supported us for years.

**7. Communication can improve internal morale and staff efficiency.** Keeping our staff well-informed and all on the same page can enhance morale, help our school community feel more connected, and reduce wasted time.

**8. Communication is a 21st century business skill we can model for our students.** Colleges, universities, trade schools, and employers respond with the exact same “wish list” of skills that they look for in their employees – reading, writing, mathematical, communication skills and critical thinking. By making communication a priority for our district, we are modeling a 21st century skill for our students that businesses, colleges and trade schools deem as being critically important.

## Budget Update

### Whitnall School District Budget and Levy Update

After a community advisory vote, The Whitnall School Board certified a levy increase of 5.5% at their regular School Board business meeting on October 26, 2009. The final mill rate came in at \$9.57 per \$1,000 of property value, which is lower than last year’s rate of \$9.72.

The final 2009 levy numbers are as follows:

Final total all funds levy amount	\$16,283,025
Percent levy change from last year	5.5%
Final mill rate	\$9.57
Equalized property growth rate	\$2,217
School Portion of taxes on a \$100,000 home:	\$957
School Portion of taxes on a \$150,000 home:	\$1,436

The final decrease in state aid for the current school year ended up being \$1,261,112. Because the state used federal stimulus money to offset the decline in state aid dollars in 2009, we are predicting even less state aid for the 2010-2011 school year. With less state aid, the district must look at either increasing the local tax revenue or look at decreasing the total budget. Currently we are projecting the need to reduce the budget between \$1,000,000 and \$3,000,000 for the 2010-2011 budget, depending on where the state goes with giving districts state aid.

We are currently meeting with staff, parents and other constituents about ideas for streamlining both processes and practices in the district as well as looking at all salaries, benefits and possible staff reductions. These discussions have been valuable both in educating people about the problems as well as for gaining insights as to what is important and what can be done differently as we move forward. If you are interested in following the progress on building next year’s budget under continued constraints, you can log onto the district website at [www.whitnall.com](http://www.whitnall.com), go to the School Board page and click on the budget planning link.

## Community Connection

The residents of Layton Terrace retirement community began a community project in which they collect box tops from cereal, paper products or snack foods to give to our school. As you know, the Edgerton Elementary PTO organizes box top collections throughout the year. These collections often yield over a thousand dollars for our school annually. Thank you to Ellen Wessel, Activities Specialist at Layton Terrace, for supporting Edgerton Elementary!





# BOYS ATHLETICS

## BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Jan. 8, 2010	Pewaukee H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Boys Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Jan. 12, 2010	Cudahy H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Boys Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Jan. 29, 2010	Greendale H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Boys Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Feb. 2, 2010	Dominican High School	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys - JV (S) & Boys Freshman Basketball (S) Boys - Varsity - Basketball (S)	Home
Feb. 5, 2010	Wauwatosa West H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Boys Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Feb. 16, 2010	Greenfield H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys - JV (S) & Freshman - Basketball (S) Boys - Varsity - Basketball (S)	Home
Feb. 19, 2010	New Berlin Eisenhower H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Boys - JV (S) & Freshman - Basketball (S) Boys - Varsity - Basketball (S)	Home
Mar. 2 - Mar.18, 2010	WIAA Regionals/Sectionals/State Tournament	TBD	Boys - Varsity - Basketball (S)	TBD

## HOCKEY

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Feb. 3, 2010	Whitefish Bay	6:15 PM	Boys - Varsity - Ice Hockey (S)	Pettit Center
Feb. 5, 2010	Waunakee	8:00 PM	Boys - Varsity - Ice Hockey (S)	Middleton-Waunakee Ice Center
Feb. 9, 2010	Wisconsin Dells	7:00 PM	Boys - Varsity - Ice Hockey (S)	Pettit Center
Feb. 13, 2010	Fondy Springs-Fond du Lac	12:00 PM	Boys - Varsity - Ice Hockey (S)	Blue Line Ctr-Fond du Lac
Feb. 16, 2010	Regionals	TBD	Boys - Varsity - Ice Hockey (S)	TBD

## WRESTLING

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Jan. 23, 2010	Zelinski invite	9:30 AM	Boys Varsity Wrestling (S)	Home
Jan. 27, 2010	South Milwaukee H.S.	7:00 PM	Boys Varsity & JV Wrestling (S)	Home
Feb. 13, 2010	Boys Wrestling WIAA Regionals	TBD	Boys - Varsity - Wrestling (S)	Whitnall High School
Feb. 16-25, 2010	Boys Wrestling WIAA Sectionals/State	TBD	Boys - Varsity - Wrestling (S)	TBD
Mar. 5, 2010	Boys Wrestling Team State @ Madison	TBD	Boys - Varsity - Wrestling (S)	TBD



# GIRLS ATHLETICS

## BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Jan. 9, 2010	Lomira H.S.	1:00 PM 2:45 PM	Girls - JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Girls - Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Jan. 13, 2010	Franklin H.S.	5:45 PM	Girls - Freshman & JV Basketball (S)	Home
Jan. 15, 2010	New Berlin Eisenhower H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Girls - JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Girls - Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Jan. 21, 2010	Wauwatosa West H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Girls - JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Girls - Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Feb. 12, 2010	South Milwaukee H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Girls - JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Girls - Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Feb. 26, 2010	Greendale H.S.	5:45 PM 7:30 PM	Girls - JV & Freshman Basketball (S) Girls - Varsity Basketball (S)	Home
Mar. 13-20, 2010	WIAA Regional/Sectional Finals	TBD	Girls - Varsity - Basketball (S)	TBD
Mar. 25, 2010	WIAA State Tournament	TBD	Girls - Varsity - Basketball (S)	The Kohl Center, Madison

## GYMNASTICS

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Feb. 4, 2010	Mukwonago H.S.	6:30 PM	Girls - Varsity - Gymnastics (S)	Mukwonago H.S.
Feb. 13, 2010	Mukwonago H.S.	10:00 AM	Girls - Varsity - Gymnastics (S)	Mukwonago H.S.
Feb. 18, 2010	Waukesha West H.S.	5:30 PM	Girls - Varsity - Gymnastics (S)	Waukesha West H.S.
Feb. 25-27, 2010	WIAA Sectionals - Mukwonago H.S.	TBD	Girls - Varsity - Gymnastics (S)	Mukwonago H.S.
Mar. 5-6, 2010	WIAA State Tournament - WI Rapids H.S.	TBD	Girls - Varsity - Gymnastics (S)	WI Rapids H.S.

# GO FAI!CONS!

See  
[www.whitnall.com](http://www.whitnall.com)  
 for away schedules

# Essential questions build critical thinking and problem solving skills

Wouldn't it be nice if you asked, "What did you learn in school today?" and your young scholar responded with excitement? What if the student stated, "Today we were talking about the ancient Greeks and did you know that in some places in Greece women had their own sports competitions and owned land just like today?"

Since the beginning of the year, Whitnall teachers have been learning to design lessons that get at the heart of true learning. This is the type of learning that is achieved when teachers plan lessons based on essential questions -- or "big ideas."

Known as Understanding by Design (UbD), this process helps teachers of any subject clarify what students need to know and how they will demonstrate their learning. When students and teachers are clear on expectations and focus on the big ideas, lessons are more engaging and relevant.

For example, in 8th grade language arts an essential question might be: "Why does an author combine fiction and non-fiction to tell a story?" Adults will recognize many historical fiction pieces, both classic and bestseller that use this writing method. Students will discuss this question during a lesson about figurative language and write their own pieces that blend fact and fiction. They'll learn to recognize this specific type of writing in other works as well.

See [www.whitnall.com/curriculum](http://www.whitnall.com/curriculum) to learn more about Understanding by Design and essential questions.

## Sample "Essential Questions"

- *When is the correct answer not the best solution?*
- *What impact do mountains have on climate?*
- *To what extent can understanding cause and effect help us to solve problems and make decisions?*
- *How can you determine if evidence is valid and reasonable?*
- *How is sound organized to make music?*
- *How has art changed throughout time?*
- *What physical fitness aspects are you strengthening when playing Ultimate Frisbee?*
- *How do food preparation choices affect individual health?*
- *What benefits do diverse technologies bring to human beings?*
- *How does a varied vocabulary and a consideration of word choice improve a piece of writing?*



[www.whitnall.com](http://www.whitnall.com)

## SHARE YOUR EMAIL WITH US

We will be making our Viewpoint newsletter and other information about our district and schools available by email. If you would like to share your email address with us, please visit [www.whitnall.com](http://www.whitnall.com) and look for the "email sign up" box. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Visit [www.whitnall.com](http://www.whitnall.com) to easily upload all home athletic events and activities into your Outlook or iCal calendar – at the click of a button!



## INTRODUCING FALCON TV

It's live, it's on-demand, its 24/7, and it's all online. Not able to attend a School Board meeting? Want to relive that fantastic football game? Now you can by tuning in to Falcon TV on [whitnall.com](http://whitnall.com).

This web service is free for our school district, and is supported by advertising. We hope you enjoy FalconTV!

## SEE US ON FACEBOOK

Whitnall School District is now on Facebook! With more of our students and parents using Facebook to keep in contact with the communities they care about, we wanted to be part of the conversation.

 facebook

By being a fan, you'll receive timely updates in your News Feed about what's going on in the school district. You will not be giving WSD access to any personal information on your Facebook page if you have your privacy settings turned on.

Social media has amazing potential for building community connections - please use it responsibly.

# Whitnall High School

REAL WORLD LESSONS IN THE CLASSROOM



Deborah Dorn, English

## Essential Questions in Action

In Ms. Dorn’s English classroom, a recent lesson focused on the novel, “Angela’s Ashes.” Small groups of students worked together to determine how the text reinforced important themes, or “essential questions” in literature and life. The discussion started with one student posing the thought: “I think this is a good question, but it might not be essential because it is too specific. What do you think of: ‘How can people become so mesmerized by religion that they ignore the needs of their families?’” Her group then began citing specific passages from Angela’s Ashes where the question was reinforced, and began referring to instances in current events regarding the same topic.

Not once were students asked to merely identify characters or recall events from the novel. Instead students were engaged in high-level critical thinking– what is the underlying message and how does it apply to our society and our lives? The lesson’s structure, focus, and execution helped students engage in 21st century learning processes, where students collaborate, create, and evaluate as a result of their individual experiences, as well as fostering critical thinking.

### Dear WHS,

“I want to let you know of the cooperation, understanding and effort I feel we are receiving from the high school teachers....They seemed to instinctively know how and what to say. I could not have written better scripts for them. I feel we were treated as an individual family receiving their genuine interest. The insights that each had into my child confirmed to me they took time to know her...”



Congratulations to the cast of “And Then There Were None” on a fine performance this fall at WHS.

## Grammy nomination

Congratulations to Todd Stacey, middle and high school vocal teacher. Todd also sings bass in the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, and their CD recording of Missa Latina is up for two Grammy awards this year.



## NEW: Do you love Whitnall Schools? Be an Ambassador

You may have seen people at school events wearing special “Ambassador” polo shirts. These volunteers have offered to be a resource for the community to better connect with our schools. Ambassadors are happy to share information with you, and help you find out more if you have questions about our schools. Check the district website for information about this new program.

# Middle and Elementary School News

EDGERTON / HALES CORNERS ELEMENTARY, WHITNALL MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Edgerton Elementary: Striding for Fun Club

Parent volunteer inspires fitness, fun and community with running club



Mrs. Maria Meyers, an Edgerton Elementary and Whitnall Middle School parent, started a 4th grade running club this year with the goal of inspiring a love for running.

Through the course of a year, she will be helping the students train and track the running of a marathon, broken up into smaller segments. Mrs. Meyers meets with 4th graders every Friday during the noon

recess to run one-half mile. Running during PE class also counts toward their goals.

Mrs. Meyers worked with the Edgerton PTO and local businesses: Badgerland Striders, Wheel and Sprocket, InStep Physical Therapy and The Wisconsin Athletic Club to get the program off the ground.

Thirty-two 4th grade students are currently enrolled in Mrs. Meyer's program. Striding 4 Fun is intended to open the door to adventure and enjoyment of running and a lifetime of healthy habits.

## Cultural Awareness Club

Volunteers help expose our students to different cultures



You're never too young to have fun learning about all the diverse cultures in our world. That's why Edgerton Elementary parent Brenda Millman started the Cultural Awareness Club for students in K5 through second grades. Each month's meeting introduces interested students to different languages and cultures, with help from volunteers

from the school and community.

Our first volunteer was the Pook family who shared the culture of Russia. The children were treated to dance demonstrations, re-enacted a Russian fairy tale, played with some traditional Russian toys, and tasted a variety of Russian treats and sweets.

In the upcoming months, the club will welcome more volunteers to explore the cultures and languages of Germany, Japan, France, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Mexico. If you'd like to share a culture that's a part of your heritage, please contact Brenda Millman through the Edgerton PTO.

## After School Spanish

In partnership with Futura Spanish, elementary-aged students can take Spanish after school. With ten levels of Spanish available, these students can get a head start -- and have a lot of fun--learning to speak Spanish! Please contact your elementary school principal if you'd like to learn more about the program.



## Connecting to our world with technology:

Pen pals go high tech

With a website called epals.com, Jennifer Budahn, a new Spanish teacher at the high school and the middle school, is looking at ways to connect with a teacher in a Spanish speaking country.

Through this site, students can send letters back and forth or even collaborate on a blog related to a research project together.

Ms. Budahn is using the site to give more purpose and relevance to students' writing, and to help students practice the use of correct language (verbs, formal vs. informal, etc.) in their correspondence.



# The Viewpoint



**WHITNALL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Community Newsletter**  
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 Send your suggestions and comments to the Board of Education and Superintendent:

Bill Osterndorf	President.....	327-2584
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TJ Anderson	Treasurer.....	349-9361
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Suzette Larson	Member .....	425-7042
Bernard Shaw	Member .....	425-0465
Mike Clarizio	Member .....	525-1477
Dr. Karen Petric	Superintendent.....	525-8411



## K4 Enrollment

- Information Night: January 19
- K4 and K5 Registration: January 26

Give your child a GREAT start in school by enrolling in our CORE 4 (Collaborating on Readiness Education) Charter School.

CORE 4 provides instruction for 4 year olds, half day, at two locations, Edgerton Elementary School and Hales Corners Elementary School, both located in Hales Corners, WI.

Come learn more about our 4 year old kindergarten schools by attending K4 Information Night on Tuesday, January 19 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the District Board/Community Room.

Building tours by appointment to be held on Thursday, January 21. Sign-up on January 19 or by calling your resident school.

K4 and K5 registration is on Tuesday, January 26 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the District Board/Community Room.

## JANUARY

January 11, 2010	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m, Board/Community Room
January 15, 2010	Hales Corners Elementary Family Fun Night
January 19, 2010	K4/K5 Information Night, Board/Community Room
January 21, 2010	End of Second Quarter; K4/K5 Tours by Appointment
January 22, 2010	NO SCHOOL - Teacher Inservice
January 25, 2010	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m, Board/Community Room
January 26, 2010	K4 & K5 Registration
January 28, 2010	6:30 p.m., 8th Grade Open House

## FEBRUARY

February 8, 2010	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m, Board/Community Room
February 18, 2010	All school 1/2 days. WMS conferences, 11:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.
February 19, 2010	EES All School Dance
February 22, 2010	NO SCHOOL
February 22, 2010	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m, Board/Community Room

## MARCH

March 5, 2010	End of 2nd Trimester
March 8, 2010	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m, Board/Community Room
March 9, 2010	EES, HCE conferences, 6:00 p.m.
March 10, 2010	Senior Citizen Dinner & Play, WHS Cafeteria and Auditorium
March 11, 2010	EES, HCE conferences, 12:30 p.m.
March 11-13, 2010	WHS Players: Bye, Bye Birdie
March 22, 2010	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m, Board/Community Room
March 24, 2010	WHS Orchestra & Concert Band Concert, 7:00 p.m.
March 25, 2010	End of 3rd Quarter
March 26, 2010	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break BEGINS

*The Whitnall School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap as required by WI Statute 118.12.*