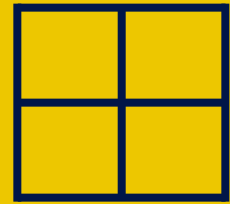


THE WHITNALL WINDOW



FALL
2022



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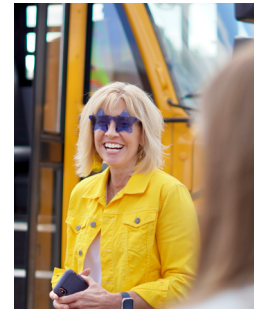
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The Superintendent's Message

It's Thanksgiving time, and there are multiple ways you could approach the holiday. You could try to emulate the Thanksgivings you see on social media or TV, but I believe this would lead to disappointment, as you'd be comparing a real experience to a curated image. You could try to recreate the Thanksgivings from your childhood, but you'd be comparing a real experience to memories—memories that have likely taken on the gleam of nostalgia. Finally, you could choose to forgo comparisons to others or the past and instead make your Thanksgiving, *this* Thanksgiving the best it can be. And the same is true for our progress as a district.



We shouldn't be trying to emulate another school district, because each district is unique, with unique community priorities, unique demographics, and a unique history. And we shouldn't be measuring ourselves now against a nostalgic view of ourselves in the past. I have heard community members call for a return to the time when Whitnall was "one of the top districts in the state." But as we've been delving into our current data, we've also looked at historical data on state rankings and state test scores going back nearly thirty years and have found that that was never the case. So we are working to improve student outcomes, not so we can look more like another district and not so we can recreate some idea of the past, but because we want to be the best Whitnall we can be.

And we are seeing glimpses of becoming the best Whitnall we can be. This fall, we are celebrating progress in student achievement that is the result of the continuous improvement work we have been engaging in over the past five years. I encourage you to review the spread on our 21-22 state assessment results (pages 4-5). Thank you to all those internal and external who have contributed to and supported this work. Let's be the best Whitnall we can be!

Lisa L. Olson

Dr. Lisa L. Olson, Superintendent

#whitnALLIN

Beyond the Board Room

School board meetings are incredibly important because they are the only occasion when the school board can act as a board and, therefore, take official board action. Yet, our board members do much more than just attend the regularly scheduled meetings. Our board members belong to school board related organizations, attend community events, partner with parent groups at our schools, and engage with staff at internal events.

Each of our board members belongs to the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), an organization that educates and provides resources in an effort to produce more effective school board members. WASB has achievement levels ranging from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest honor. We would like to congratulate board president Kevin Stachowiak on his recent advancement to Level 3 status! He joins Quin Brunette at Level 3, with Jonathan Cagle and Nancy Zaborowski at Level 2, and Karen Mikolainis at Level 1.



Our board members connect with fellow community members by attending community events. They attend socials for the Hales Corners Chamber of Commerce, they represent the board in local traditions like the Greenfield 4th of July Parade, and, recently, Quin Brunette participated in the Holz Motors Golf Outing! To the left is a photo of Quin at the event with Dave Pentek, our Athletics & Activities Director (left), Jon Duhr, our Director of Business Services (right), and Pam Nerby, and employee from Holz Motors (front center).

Our board members also partner with the parent organizations at our schools, from attending meetings as board liaisons to helping out with events and fundraisers. To the right are photos from when Quin Brunette and Jesse Stachowiak joined Greenfield Fire Chief Jon Cohn in selling 50/50 raffle tickets for the Whitnall Falcon Booster Club at one of our home football games!



Board members also have opportunities to connect with our staff members by being present for internal events. Some recent examples—when we welcomed our new teachers at the end of August, Kevin Stachowiak took them on a bus tour of the community! And when all staff returned for the 22-23 school year, Kevin spoke at the districtwide kickoff. Pictures to the left.

While the official work of a school board occurs at school board meetings, we cannot underestimate the commitment our board members show beyond the board room. From statewide organizations to local events to personal connections with parents and staff, our board members represent our district in many arenas and they do so very well. Thank you, Whitnall School Board!

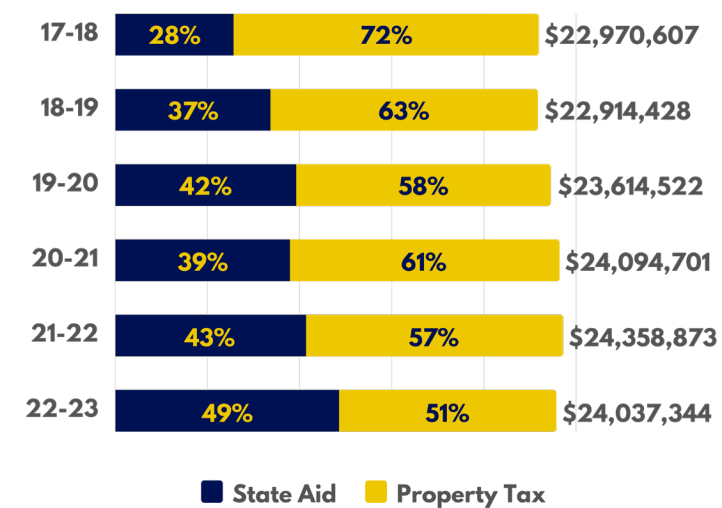
Revenue Limit & Mill Rate

With your annual municipality tax bill on its way, we would like to ensure that you understand how the Whitnall School District's portion is derived. Public schools are funded mainly through two sources—state aid and local property taxes. The state legislature sets the maximum amount a public school is allowed to receive through these sources; this is called the “revenue limit.”

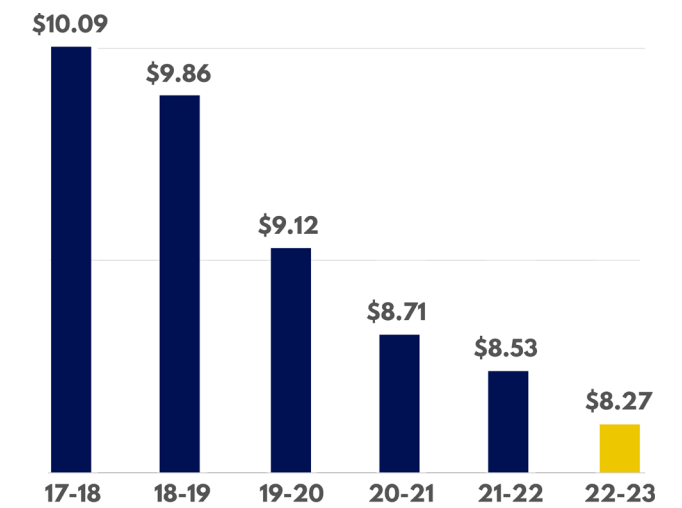
Although we are in the midst of a 8+% inflationary period, the current state biennium budget (2021-2023) includes zero additional dollars for Wisconsin school districts (see revenue limit chart below). Therefore, we have been very diligent in our budgeting process, ensuring that we continue with a balanced budget and meet the school board's goal of lowering the mill rate.

The mill rate refers to how many dollars (on average) a taxpayer will pay in the school portion of their tax bill for every \$1,000 of assessed property value. The mill rate decreased again this school year—from \$8.53 to \$8.27 (a 3% decrease). This would normally decrease what you pay in the school portion of your tax bill. However, with the large increase in assessed values (9.6% to 11.3% on average depending on your municipality), even with the reduced mill rate, you may not see any reduction in the school portion of your tax bill this year. The district succeeded in decreasing the mill rate overall, but we cannot control assessed values, which play a large part in your overall tax bill. Below is a graph that shows the make up of revenue limits over the past six years, a graph that shows the 18% decrease in mill rate by Whitnall over the past six years, and a graphic that shows the increase in assessed values by municipality.

Revenue Limit Breakdown



Mill Rate



Increase in Assessed Values



21-22 State Assessment Results

Each spring, students participate in state assessments, and the results are released to the public the following fall. In the spring of 2021-2022, our students completed the following Wisconsin state assessments:

- Wisconsin Forward Exam (taken by students in grades 3-8 for English language arts and mathematics, grades 4 and 8 for science, and grades 4, 8, and 10 for social studies)
- ACT Aspire (taken by students in grades 9 and 10 for English, reading, mathematics, science, and writing)
- ACT with writing (taken by students in grade 11 for English, reading, mathematics, science, and writing)
- DLM (measures the academic progress of students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-11)

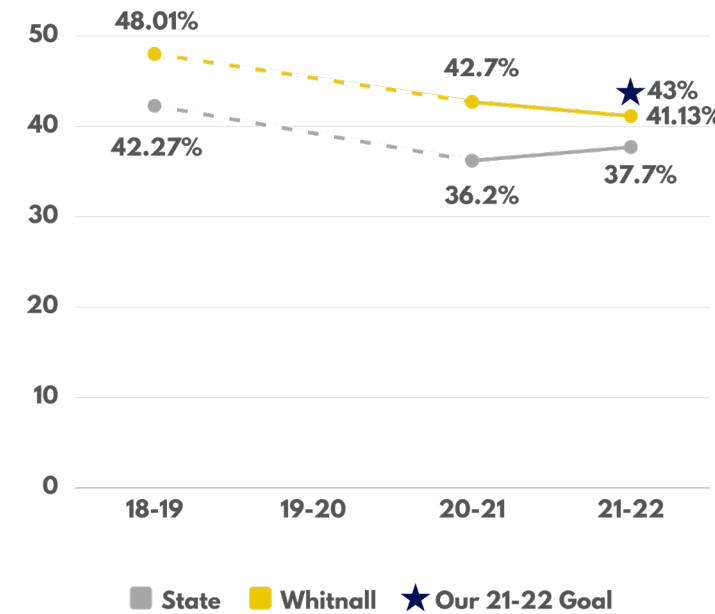
The results from these assessments provide information about what students know in core academic areas and whether they can apply what they know relative to state academic standards. In addition, the results inform our district roadmap for continuous improvement. The results from the 2021-2022 school year have been released, and we would like to highlight some key data points.

The percentage of Whitnall students scoring at advanced or proficient levels exceeded state averages for literacy and mathematics at all tested levels (elementary, middle school, and high school). We saw increases in the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced levels in elementary literacy, elementary math, high school math, and high school literacy. The most significant growth was seen in the area of high school literacy, measured by ACT scores in the area of English Language Arts (ELA), where the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced levels increased by over 18% from the previous academic year! While this increase was partly due to a dip experienced in 2020-2021, it is a notable 5% increase from the trend prior to the 2021-2022 academic year. Beyond just the ELA portion, our average ACT composite score increased by 1.7 points, a significant one year jump that moved us above the state average.

Below and continuing on the next page are graphs that show Whitnall's state assessment data over the past four school years. Each graph also includes state averages and our 21-22 district goal for that level / content area. Please note that the elementary and middle school graphs are missing data points for 19-20; there was no state testing at those levels that school year due to the pandemic.

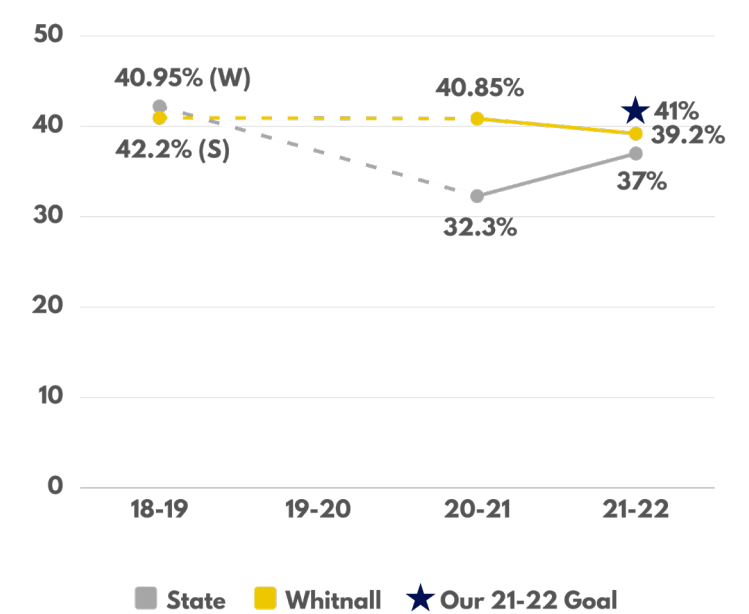
Middle School Literacy

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



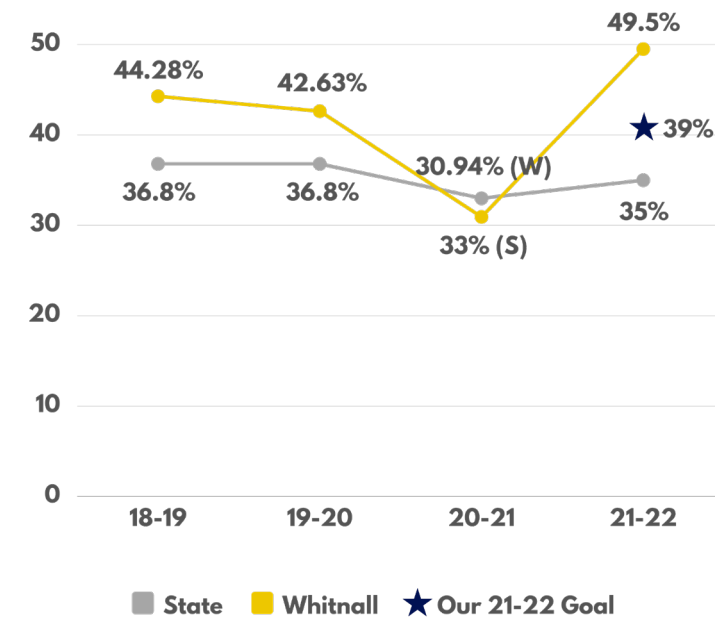
Middle School Math

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



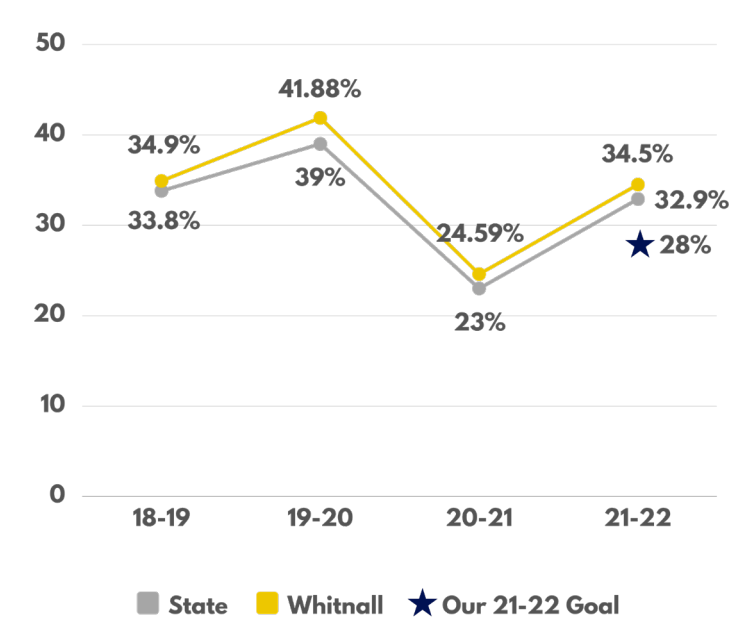
High School Literacy

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced (ACT)



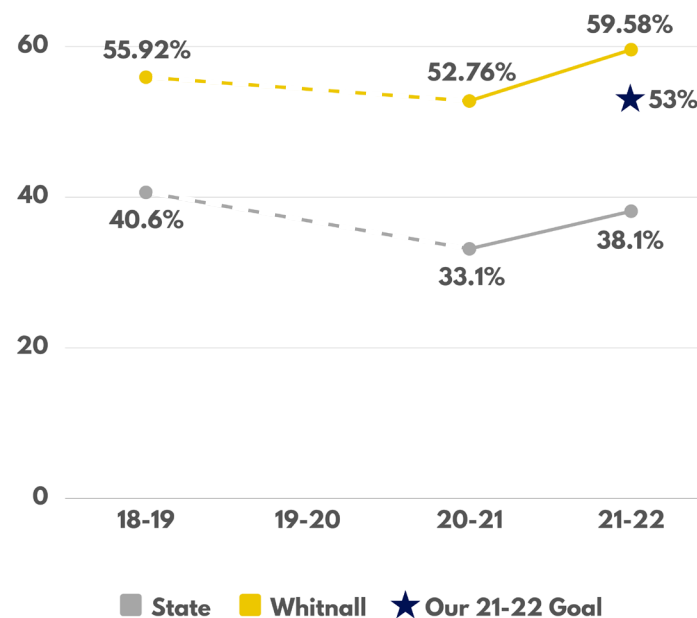
High School Math

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced (ACT)



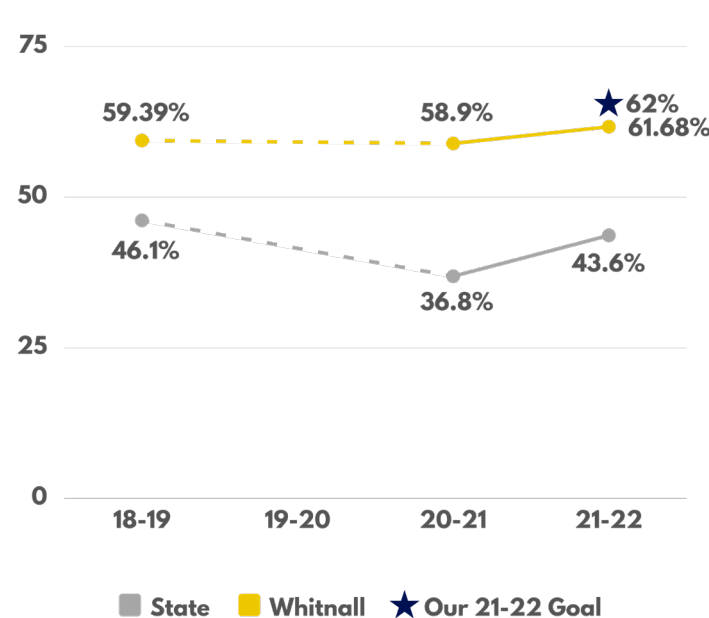
Elementary Literacy

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



Elementary Math

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



This fall, we are using these results to measure progress toward our annual benchmark goals and three-year strategic plan goals and to inform decisions around curriculum and instruction. We remain committed to each Whitnall graduate being college and career ready. For a more comprehensive look at the results, you can watch the presentation from the October 10 board meeting. Just scan the QR code to the right and go to 44 minutes!



The Whitnall School Forest

In 1991, the Whitnall School District purchased the forest next to the middle school and opposite the high school. The Whitnall School Forest has gone through many changes; teachers in the district have led teams to hold clean up days, remove invasives, plant trees and pollinator gardens, build learning spaces, and write lesson plans.

Today, the forest has something for everyone to enjoy. There are hiking trails, signs to learn about the flora and fauna, a lending library, dog waste stations, and wheelchair accessible trails. But development of subdivisions around the forest has created rainwater runoff that travels through the forest and pools on the trails. Therefore, Dennis Fermenich, the Greenfield Forester, submitted for a \$41,000 grant from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District on behalf of the Whitnall School Forest Committee. Currently, there are four teachers on the committee, one from each building: Dee Schroeder (Edgerton Elementary), Jill Matusin (Hales Corners Elementary), Kelly Kempen (Whitnall Middle School), and Daniel Rathmann (Whitnall High School). In addition to Dennis Fermenich, the committee also receives guidance from DNR Forester Mike Seager, a Whitnall alum! With the money from the grant, hundreds of native trees will be planted in the forest to reduce the rainwater runoff. In the next year and a half, you may notice invasive and dead trees being removed in order to make room for the new trees.

The Whitnall School Forest is a unique educational site that provides learning opportunities in a natural environment. It also serves as a connection between our schools and the community. We hope to see you in the forest soon. Remember, not all classrooms have four walls!



The Whitnall Hall of Fame

So many impactful athletes, coaches, and supporters have come through Whitnall and Whitnall has so many strong traditions that it's hard to believe there has never been a Hall of Fame. But that has officially changed.

The process started by creating a committee of district employees, coaches, and community members. This committee met many times to discuss the criteria, the nomination protocols, the vision for the induction ceremony, and the design for the display.

All of this hard work came to fruition when we inducted three athletes (Michael Adam, Michael Johnston, and Katie Haeger Sleigh) and two coaches (Richard Dodd and John Quinlan). These individuals were announced at halftime during our Homecoming football game and then attended the ceremony the following morning. At the ceremony, we heard from the nominators and the inductees themselves. The speeches were heartfelt and inspiring. Following speeches, the brand new interactive display was unveiled. We encourage you to attend an upcoming sporting event and check out the display located at the athletic entrance of Whitnall High School.

We are very excited to have officially begun the Hall of Fame, and we are looking forward to continuing to honor our athletes, coaches, and supporters. If you would like to nominate someone, you can visit the Hall of Fame page on Whitnall High School's website after January 1, 2023.



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Jonathan Cagle	Member, Hales Corners
Karen Mikolainis	Member, Hales Corners
Nancy Zaborowski	Member, Greenfield



The Taming of the Shrew

Shakespeare... but make it 50s. This fall, Whitnall Theatre is putting a unique twist on a classic! Performances are December 2 at 7 PM, December 3 at 7 PM, and December 4 at 2 PM. Tickets are on sale now! Adult tickets are \$12. Children (ages 2-12), senior citizens (60+), Whitnall staff, and Whitnall students are \$5. Go to Whitnall's website to purchase tickets!

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