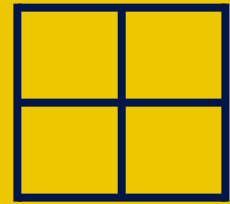


THE WHITNALL WINDOW



FALL
23-24



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The Superintendent's Message

When we looked at the results of our recent community survey, a common response to what makes Whitnall unique was that we are a close-knit community, which allows for a more personal approach to the educational experience.

As superintendent at Whitnall, one of the ways I engage in that personal approach is by attending events outside of the school day and by visiting buildings during the school day.



A focus of this year's annual district goals was for district-level staff to be in buildings even more often. To accomplish this goal, we established "District Office & Desserts." Every Thursday, district office administrators (including myself) split up and visit the buildings for a few hours, bearing delicious desserts made by our incredible food service team. This has been a great opportunity for more face to face interaction with building staff, and it has been a great opportunity to see the learning happening in classrooms.

In one of my recent visits, I was fortunate enough to spend some time in a K4 classroom at the start of the school day—something I highly recommend that everyone does. After the students greeted each classmate by name, I watched them learn the letter G, the month of November, the day of the week. I was struck by the pure, unfiltered enthusiasm for learning, and I was reminded that that joy is why we do what we do.

Lisa L. Olson

Dr. Lisa L. Olson, Superintendent

#whitnALLIN

National Merit Semifinalist

We have a National Merit Semifinalist at Whitnall High School! Senior Thaiton Nguyen scored in the top 1% of the state on the PSAT. This is a huge (and rare) accomplishment and qualifies Thaiton to continue in the competition for a National Merit Scholarship. To be considered for a National Merit Scholarship, semifinalists must meet additional standards and fulfill several requirements. These include having a record of very high academic performance in college preparatory course work, submitting SAT or ACT scores that confirm PSAT performance, and being endorsed by high school officials. And as part of completing the detailed scholarship application, each semifinalist must write a personal essay. Around 7,000 National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring, totaling nearly \$28 million dollars from approximately 320 sponsors. Congratulations, Thaiton, and best of luck as you move forward in the process!



Perfect AP Score

Results from last spring's Advanced Placement (AP) exams were released this fall and 2023 graduate Anneliese Thao received a perfect score on the AP Drawing exam! AP exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Anneliese not only received the top score of 5, but was also one of only 308 students in the world to earn every point possible! To the right are some examples of Anneliese's work.

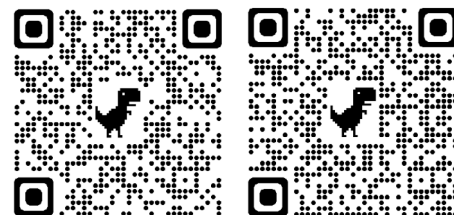


Athletics

Fall sports are wrapping up and we are awaiting some accomplishments, while already celebrating some!

Boys Cross Country Henry Gapinski: State Qualifier, 115th Place **Girls Cross Country** Emily Teixeira: State Qualifier, 63rd Place **Girls Swim & Dive** 14th Place at State • Levi Crosby: State Qualifier, 10th Place in 200 Free Relay, 13th Place in 400 Free Relay • Rianna Dobbie: State Qualifier in Diving, D2 State Champion in Diving • Lily Jenich: State Qualifier, 13th Place in 400 Free Relay • Aubrey Kasten: State Qualifier, 10th Place in 200 Free Relay, 13th Place in 400 Free Relay • Chelsea McDowell: State Qualifier in Diving, D2 State Runner Up in Diving • Mya Miles: State Qualifier, 8th Place in 100 Free, 9th Place in 50 Free, 10th Place in 200 Free Relay • Emma Schneble: State Qualifier, 10th Place in 200 Free Relay, 13th Place in 400 Free Relay **Girls Tennis** Conference Champions **Girls Volleyball** Conference Champions

If you are interested in coming out and supporting our winter sports (boys basketball, boys swim and dive, cheer, dance, girls basketball, gymnastics, ice hockey, and wrestling), please reference the athletic calendar through the QR code on the left. All tickets for games are cashless and need to be purchased online using Ticket Spicket. You can access Ticket Spicket through the QR code on the right.



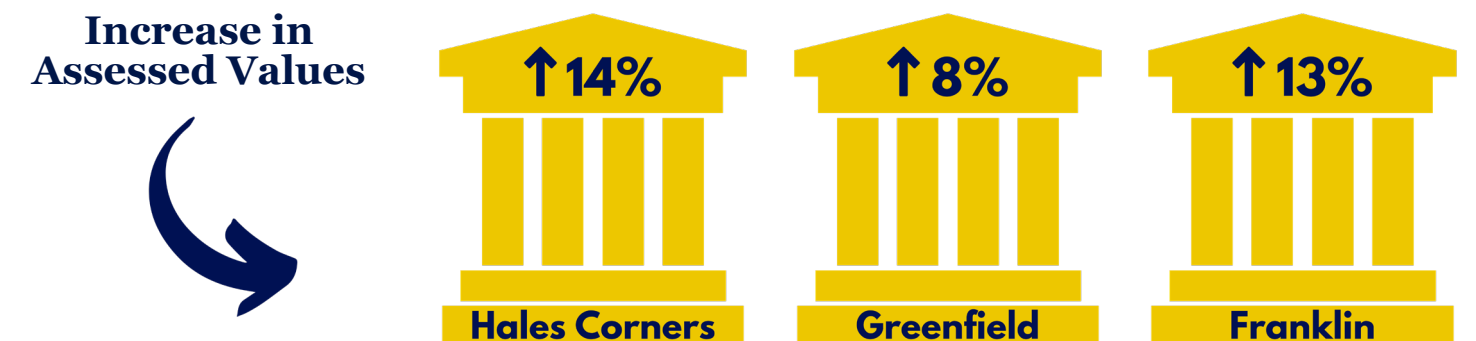
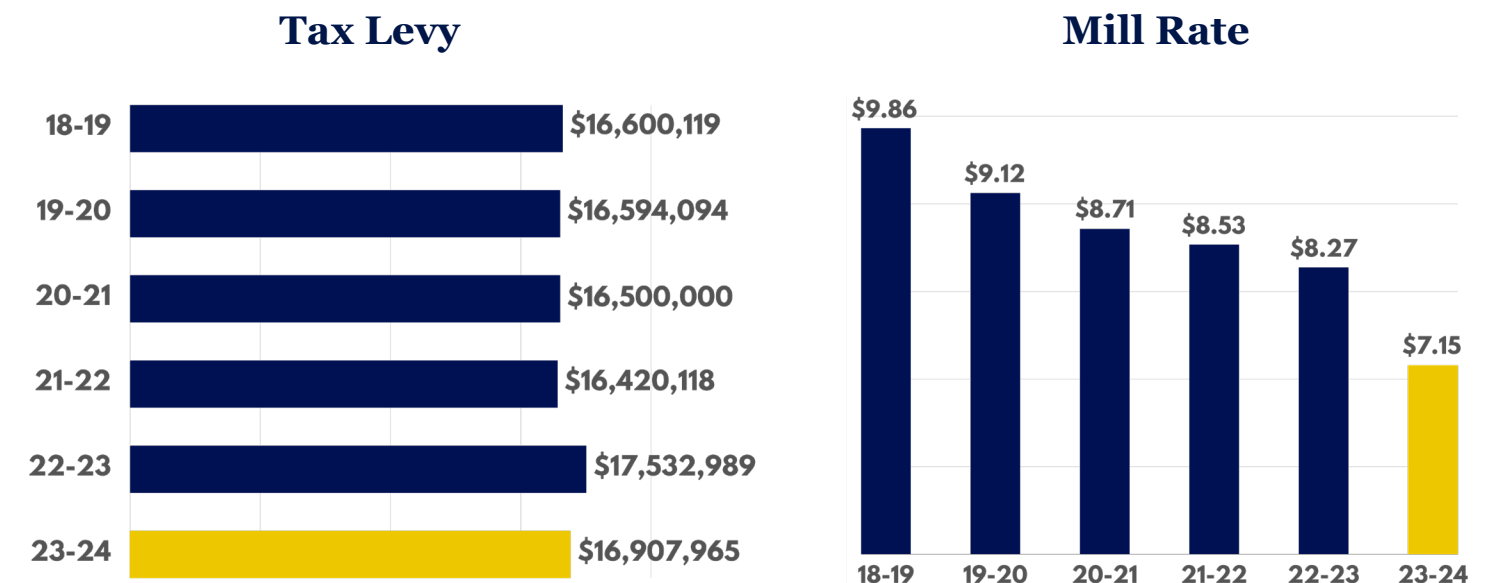
Tax Levy & Mill Rate

With your annual municipality tax bill on its way, we would like to review how school finance impacts your bill.

Public schools are funded mainly through two sources—state aid and local property taxes. This year, we were able to decrease the total dollar amount received through local property taxes (the tax levy) by over 3.5% from last year, saving taxpayers nearly \$625,000.

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. This year, the mill rate decreased for the ninth year in a row. The mill rate went from from \$8.27 for the 22-23 school year to \$7.15 for the 23-24 school year, which is a 13.5% decrease. This would normally decrease what you pay in the school portion of your tax bill. However, with the increase in assessed values (8% to 14% 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 tax levy over the past six years, a graph that shows the decrease in mill rate by Whitnall over the past six years, and a graphic that shows the increase in assessed values by municipality.



22-23 State Assessment Results

Each spring, Wisconsin students participate in state assessments as part of the Wisconsin State Assessment System (WSAS). In the spring of 2023, 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)
- PreACT Secure (taken by students in grades 9 and 10 for English, reading, mathematics, and science)
- 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)

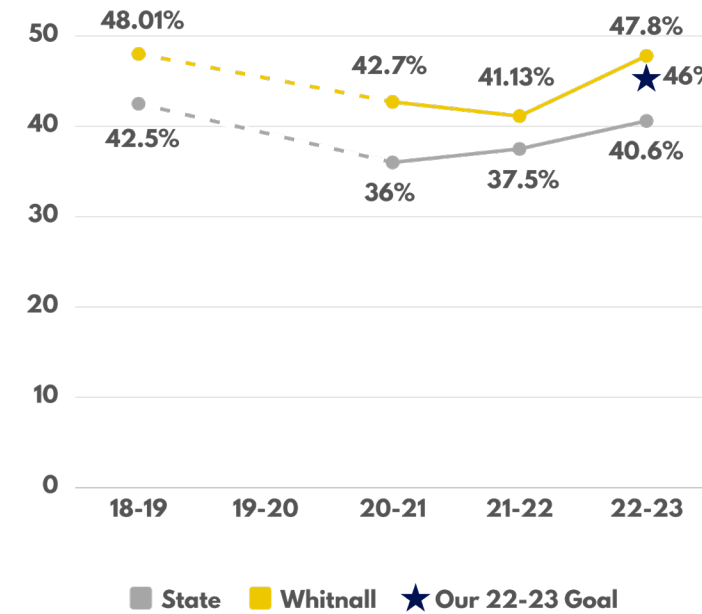
The results from these assessments provide information about what students know in core academic areas and whether they can apply what they know relative to state academic standards. In addition, the results inform our district roadmap for continuous improvement.

For the 2022-23 school year, the percentage of Whitnall students scoring Proficient or Advanced in English language arts and mathematics increased at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Our middle school showed the greatest change over the previous school year's test scores, with a 6.7% increase in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in English language arts and a 7.0% increase in mathematics! The percentage of our elementary students scoring Proficient or Advanced in both English language arts and mathematics was the highest that it has been in the past five years, with 60.9% of elementary students scoring Proficient or Advanced in English language arts and 65.4% of elementary students scoring Proficient or Advanced in mathematics. Our high school ACT proficiency rates also continue to improve, with our average ACT composite score increasing by 0.5 from 20.3 to 20.8, the highest average ACT composite score in the past five years!

For the second year in a row, the percentage of Whitnall students scoring at Proficient or Advanced levels on state assessments exceeded state averages for English language arts and mathematics at all the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. This is reflective of the hard work done by our students and teachers during the school year!

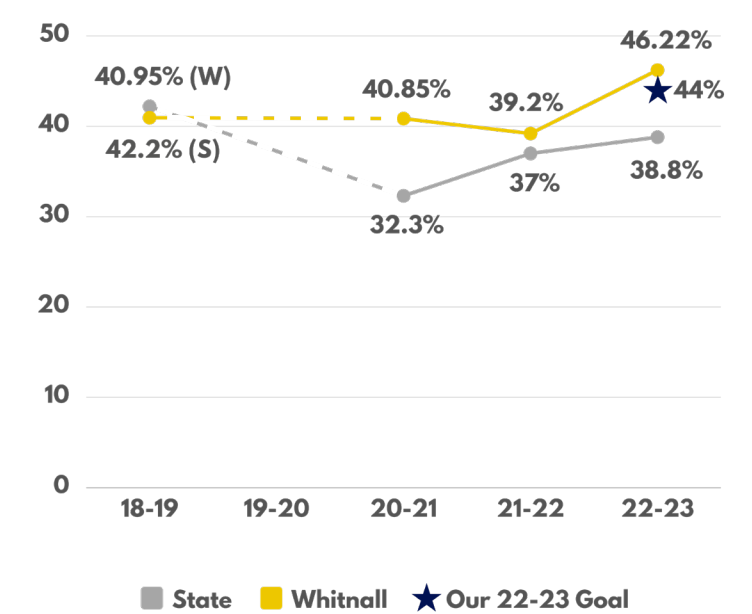
Middle School Literacy

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



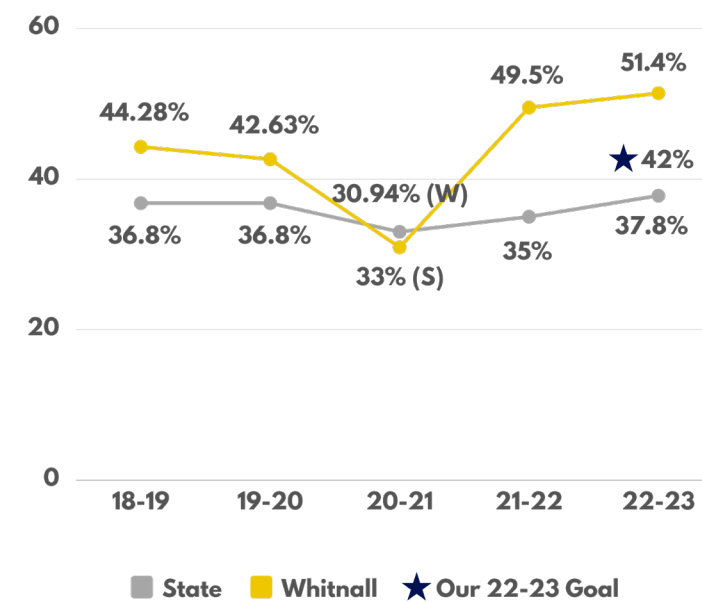
Middle School Math

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



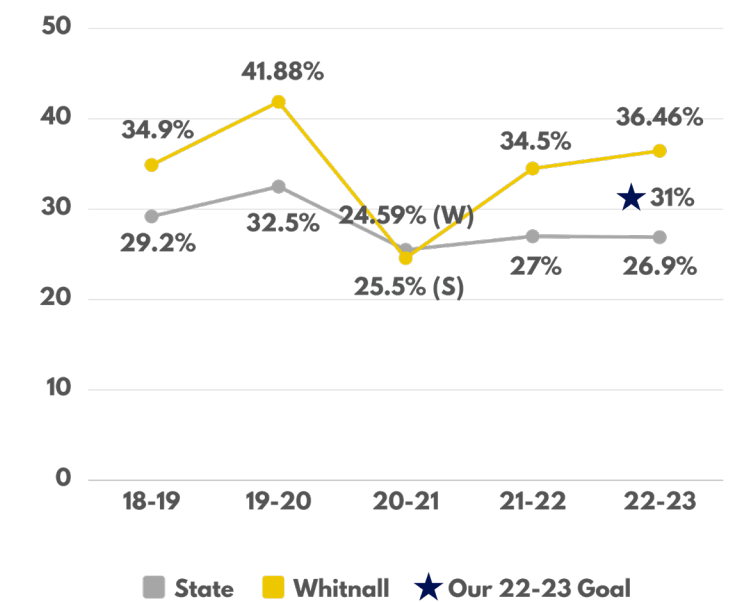
High School Literacy

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced (ACT)



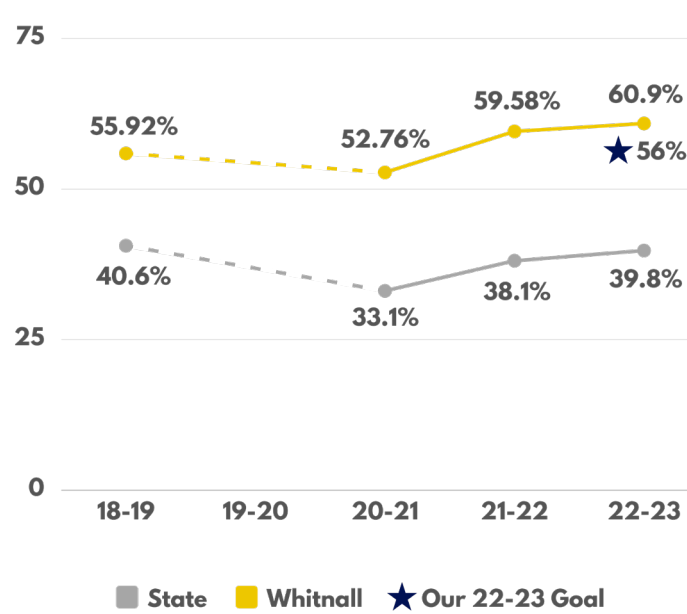
High School Math

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced (ACT)



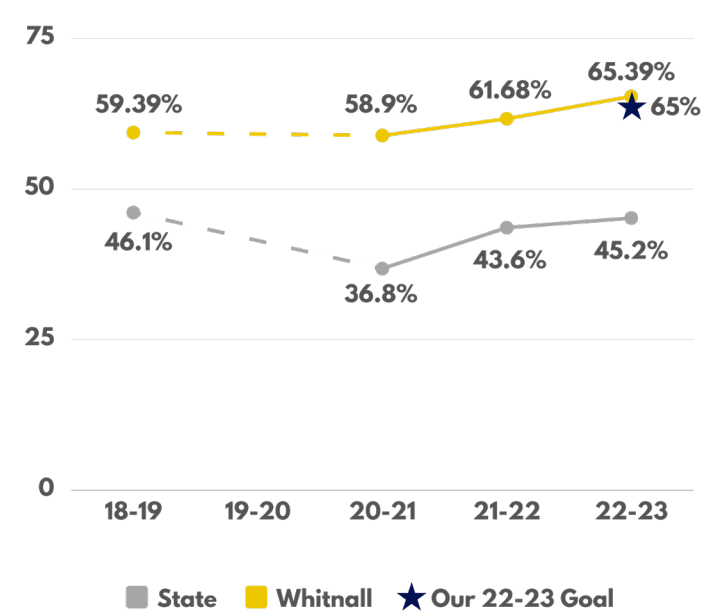
Elementary Literacy

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



Elementary Math

Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced



We will continue to use these assessment results to measure progress toward our district strategic plan goals (which can be found on our website) 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 view the presentation from the October 23 board meeting. Just scan the QR code to the right!



The Need

In 2017, an outside firm conducted a thorough assessment of our buildings and grounds. In 2018, Whitnall voters approved a referendum to pay for the first phase of our facility master plan. At the same time, we ensured some of our budget was allocated to maintaining our facilities. Now, we are beginning to study phase two of the master plan, as scheduled. The costs to address these needs are too expensive to be covered in our annual budget.

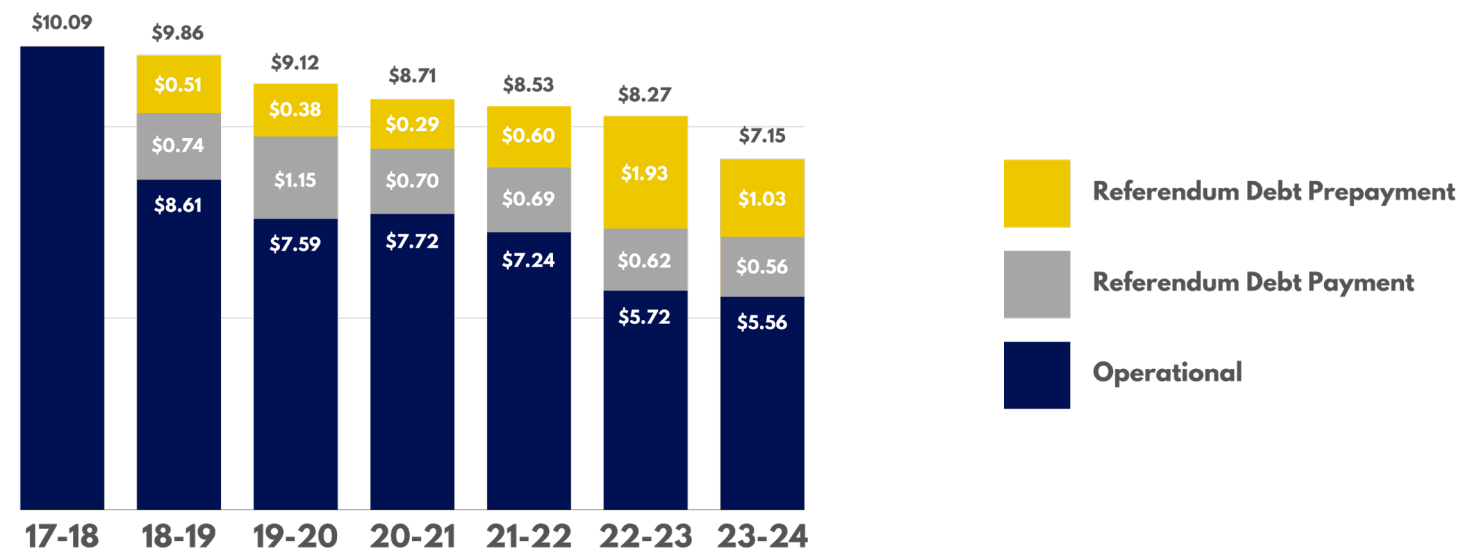
- Some school restrooms do not comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) codes.
- Single-pane windows need to be replaced with ones that are more energy-efficient.
- Exterior walls need to be repaired and have better insulation.
- Concrete and asphalt are cracked/crumbling in parking lots and sidewalks.
- Generators in each building are too small and need to be replaced.
- High school science classrooms, labs, storage areas, and office spaces are from 1963 and create safety concerns due to asbestos, chemical storage, aging exhaust equipment, and insufficient work areas.
- The high school gym bleachers are aging, not ADA compliant, expensive to maintain, and create safety concerns.
- High school kitchen equipment is from the 1950s and is failing.
- The high school auditorium has torn curtains, aging sound and lighting, and lacks ADA access to the stage within the auditorium. HVAC equipment in the auditorium is from 1966.
- High school locker rooms date to the 1960s, have poor ventilation, and have a configuration that makes it difficult to supervise students.
- Edgerton Elementary lacks sufficient classroom and library spaces.
- Edgerton Elementary's gym and cafeteria share a space, which creates scheduling conflicts, requires daily setup and takedown of tables, and does not allow the entire school to assemble.
- Sections of Hales Corners Elementary that date to the 1950s do not have air conditioning.

For more detail on completed projects and projects coming due, access our full Capital Improvement Plan through the QR code to the right.



The Finances

When Whitnall residents passed a \$16.1 million dollar referendum in April of 2018, the plan was to pay off that debt by 2038 (in 20 years). However, due to strategic planning, we will be paying off that full debt by the end of the 23-24 school year. That will be 14 years earlier than planned, saving taxpayers over \$2.5 million dollars, while reducing the overall mill rate!



Setting the Stage

Citizens Advisory Committee

In December of 2022, the Finance & Facilities Committee recommended that the school board establish a Citizens Advisory Committee made up of Whitnall community members. Since April of 2023, the committee has been meeting multiple times a month to review our facilities needs, learn our Capital Improvement Plan, and tour our buildings. The committee is tasked with making a recommendation to the school board by March 1, 2024.

Community Survey

In September, we mailed a survey to every household in the district. We worked with School Perceptions, an independent education research firm. The goal of the survey was to gather feedback on how the district is doing and input to inform our planning for the future, including facilities planning. The results of that survey were presented at the November 13 school board meeting. We encourage you to watch the video of that meeting on our YouTube channel!

Architect Selection

At the October 23 school board meeting, the board approved a partnership with Bray Architects.

What's Next?

Jan - March 2024

Building Tours

Throughout January and March of 2024, there will be tours of our buildings that will be open to the public.

April 2024

Community Survey

In April of 2024, the district will send a referendum survey.

August 2024

Determination of Resolution

The board must approve a determination of resolution by August 2024.

Stay Connected

If you want to stay up to date on this journey, be sure to check the Referendum 2024 page of our website, which will be continuously updated. Simply type in whitnall.com/referendum2024. 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.

Implementing New Materials

Last year, Whitnall’s Board of Education made a big decision: adopting new reading and writing materials for our students. For kids in kindergarten through fifth grade, we chose Wonders, and for middle schoolers in grades six through eight, we picked Into Literature. These new materials are here to make reading and writing more challenging and enjoyable for our students.



Now, adopting these materials was just the first step. The real challenge is making sure they work well in our classrooms. We want all our students to have interesting and challenging learning experiences. To make this happen, we’ve come up with a three-year plan. Creating this plan involved thinking about a lot of things. We had to figure out what topics to teach, the best ways to teach them, and how to know if our students are learning and doing well.

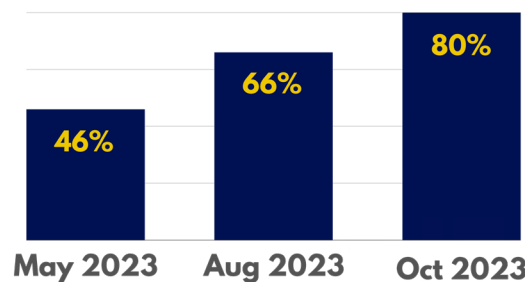
The good news is that we’re well on our way to using these new materials with our students. At the start of the school year, we had several days when our teachers learned about these new materials. We even had experts from the companies that created Wonders and Into Literature join us. They gave our teachers helpful ideas and tips.

But that’s not all. We also have our own instructional coaches who work with our teachers during the school day. These coaches give immediate feedback and help our teachers use the new materials in the best way possible with our students. One of the exciting things happening is that our teachers are learning from each other. They’ve enjoyed watching their fellow teachers demonstrate reading and writing lessons. This helps them learn new and better ways to teach.

As we move through this school year, we want to make sure that we are receiving feedback from our teachers in a timely fashion as it relates to our three year plan. Our teachers are the ones who are with our students and can see how the new materials are working on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, teachers take a short survey every other month to let us know how implementation is going. Since beginning our plan last May, teachers reported an increase in confidence using the new reading and writing materials:

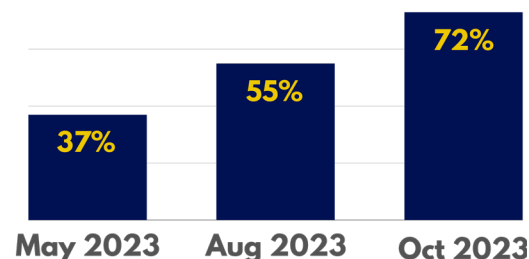
Confidence in Accessing and Using the New Materials

May 2023 = 46% Somewhat or Extremely Confident
 August 2023 = 66% Somewhat or Extremely Confident
 October 2023 = 80% Somewhat or Extremely Confident



Confidence in Ability to Teach Using the Instructional Strategies That Have Been Introduced Alongside The New Materials

May 2023 = 37% Somewhat or Extremely Confident
 August 2023 = 55% Somewhat or Extremely Confident
 October 2023 = 72% Somewhat or Extremely Confident



As we move forward with these new materials, our main goal is to make sure our students have a fantastic learning experience at Whitnall, while supporting our teachers. We want everyone to be challenged and excited about reading and writing!

Athletic Hall of Fame

So many impactful athletes, coaches, and supporters have come through Whitnall, and our Hall of Fame is our way of honoring them. This year, we inducted five new members—four athletes and one coach.

- Julie Stefan Kleist | Athlete | Volleyball, Gymnastics, Track & Field | Class of 1999
- Kent Kroupa | Coach | Varsity Boys Basketball & Varsity Girls Softball
- Michael Lohr | Athlete | Wrestling | Class of 1992
- Liz Thon | Athlete | Softball | Class of 2015
- John Zelinski | Athlete | Wrestling, Football, Cross Country | Class of 1995

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. Following speeches, the updated 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 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, 2024.



National Honor Society

National Honor Society (NHS) is a national organization centered around the four pillars of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. To be considered, students must maintain at least a 3.5 GPA after four semesters of high school and complete an application. Part of the application is writing an essay, in which students must detail their commitment to the organization’s pillars. A staff team reviews the applications and selects which students will be inducted.

This year’s induction ceremony was held on October 19 in Whitnall High School’s auditorium, and fifty new members were inducted! Whitnall High School’s current chapter membership sits at 74 students, which is the second largest NHS membership in Whitnall’s history!



Congratulations to the newly inducted NHS students! We look forward to seeing how you benefit the Whitnall community through scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

ABC Academy

In September, the district introduced ABC Academy. Whitnall's ABC Academy is a program designed to provide community members the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the district's operations and strategic priorities. The program also serves to strengthen the connection between the district and the community. Participants had to apply and were asked to commit to the full nine-month series. The list of topics is below, and we've already held our first couple of sessions! Upon completion, ABC Academy graduates will receive a certificate of completion.



- October: District Overview: Past, Present, & Future
- November: District Governance & Legislation
- December: School Finance & Budgeting
- January: Curriculum & Instruction
- February: Pupil Services & Special Education
- March: Facilities, Safety, & Security
- April: Human Resources
- May: College & Career Readiness
- June: Community Engagement & Communication

The photo above shows the inaugural class of ABC Academy (with Flash!) at the very first session in October,

community community community

Food Drive

This fall, DECA students at Whitnall High School held their annual "Trick or Can" food drive.

Each year, the students place donation bags at houses throughout the community. This year, they delivered somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000 bags. The students went back into the community at the conclusion of the drive and collected over 500 bags with donations inside. In those bags were over 7,000 food items totaling more than \$30,000 in donations. WHS DECA is so proud to report that this is a new school record! The food will be donated to the Hunger Task Force and will make a huge difference for those struggling to put food on the table this holiday season.



We would like to recognize our DECA students at Whitnall High School for working so hard to organize and run this drive, and we would like to thank the Whitnall community for stepping up and being so generous. This is a wonderful example of being all in!

The photo to the right shows just a *portion* of the bags collected.



ADVANCEMENT BELONGING COURAGE ADVANCEMENT BELONGING COURAGE



PROUD HISTORY BRIGHT FUTURE PROUD HISTORY BRIGHT FUTURE PROUD HISTORY



THE WHITNALL WINDOW

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www.whitnall.com

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Jesse Stachowiak	Member, Greenfield
Kevin Stachowiak	Member, Franklin



Middle School Musical

Whitnall Middle School is putting on The Little Mermaid Jr! The performances are December 9 at 7 PM and December 10 at 2 PM. Tickets must be bought in advance; you can buy them by visiting whitnall.com!

Newsletter feedback?
Send to
lvasquez@whitnall.com

Follow us on social media!



@whitnallschools for all three!