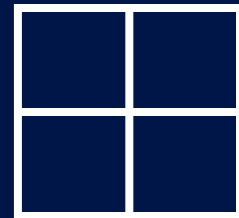


# THE WHITNALL WINDOW

SUMMER 2018



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## THE SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

And just like that, it's the end of the 2017-18 school year. And what a year it was! So many great achievements and advancements by our students and staff.

Anyone who visits my office will undoubtedly notice the message of "hope" scattered throughout. Several events this year have reaffirmed that message for me. As a country, we were faced with multiple horrendous school incidents. These incidents left us all unable to comprehend the sense of it all. We were left wondering how we should respond, where to even begin. And in the midst of it, our Whitnall students came together to offer the simple message of "Hands Out." More on this on page 9.

In April, the community supported our referendum, and we are extremely grateful. We will be able to update our facilities to provide enhanced learning spaces and to address maintenance and structural needs. There is much excitement around these updates. Projects such as roofing and boilers will begin this summer, with major construction projects beginning next spring.

In an end-of-the year video, we took a trip through some wonderful memories and asked students for their favorite part of the school year. One eloquent first grader answered, "learning." Simple but profound. I encourage you to watch the video on our YouTube channel.

Over the summer, we will be finalizing our district dashboard for student achievement data. We wish to share our annual goals and metrics with the community. This has been a work in progress and a priority. Our deep dive into our data has provided us with the much needed foundation for our work.

There is hope to be found throughout the Whitnall School District. Hope allows us to tackle the challenges that lie ahead. While I have a tendency to focus on areas of improvement, I need to remind myself to also tell the hopeful stories I see and hear on a daily basis. Our learners enlighten us through their acts of generosity and kindness. It is truly a privilege to serve the Whitnall community and witness the hope abounding.

*Lisa L. Olson*

Dr. Lisa L. Olson, Superintendent



HOW MIGHT WE ENGAGE LEARNERS IN A WAY THAT FOSTERS INNOVATION, RISK-TAKING,  
AND EXPLORATION TO ATTAIN PERSONAL LEARNING GOALS WITHOUT THE FEAR OF FAILURE?

## Retirees



*from left to right*

**LAURA CERLETTY** has been with the Whitnall School District for sixteen years. She has served as Science Department Chair, K-12 Science Curriculum Coordinator, National Honor Society Advisor, Student Senate Advisor, and School Forest Coordinator. She co-authored and managed grants for the development of our school forest, received the Wisconsin School Forest Award, and was a Herb Kohl Fellowship recipient. Just recently, she received the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers' Excellence in Science Teaching Award (more on this below).

**LINDA QUESNELL** was hired in 1991. She has been a teacher at the middle school since her hire. She has taught language arts, served as the K-12 Curriculum Coordinator for Social Studies and Language Arts, and acted as the advisor for the middle school's student council.

**SALLY STOLL** has been with the district for twenty-nine years. She has taught first grade at Hales Corners Elementary since her hire.

**TERRY LIESKE** was hired in 1987. She has served as a special education teacher at Whitnall Middle School since her hire.

**STEVEN PETRIE** has been with the district for twenty-four years. He has served as a social worker at all four of the district's schools.

**JAN HAHN** was hired in 1999. She started her career at the high school as a science teacher. In 2016, she moved to Whitnall Middle School to serve as a math interventionist.

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## WSST Excellence in Science Teaching Award

Each year, the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers gives an Excellence in Science Teaching Award. This year, one of our Whitnall educators, Laura Cerletty, was given the award. She has been given the award due to her "outstanding contributions to the improvement of science education in Wisconsin." Laura was nominated by Dr. Kevin Anderson, who serves as the science consultant for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The WSST received letters of support for Laura from Gretchen Marshall, Forestry and Outdoor Education Specialist at UW-Stevens Point, and from Whitnall's Director of Pupil Services, Jackie Winter. As a district, we echo a line from Jackie Winter's letter of support--"[We] cannot think of anyone more deserving of the WSST Excellence in Science Teaching Award." Thank you, Laura, for your dedication, enthusiasm, and vision. And congratulations! We are so proud of you!

## Makenna



This year, students from throughout the state entered the 20th annual fire safety poster contest through the Wisconsin Alliance for Fire Safety. And one of our 6th grade learners won 1st place! WAFFS visited Whitnall Middle School to surprise her with the good news and to present her with her poster, framed. Congratulations, Makenna!



## Aliya

When learners at Edgerton Elementary were tasked with writing their own fairy tale, one student went above and beyond. Aliya handed in her fairy tale, entitled *The Three Birds and the Cat*, and impressed her teachers. Her teachers found the story to be “so creative and well thought out.” They were excited to see that Aliya had employed so many of the writing components studied in class, including dialogue and figurative language. In addition to the writing, Aliya enhanced the story with detailed illustrations. There was such a demand from her classmates to read the story that copies were made and placed in the school’s library! We love to see our learners go above and beyond assignments, due to passion and enjoyment. Way to go, Aliya!



## Rotary Students of the Month

The Whitnall Park Rotary Club established a “Students of the Month” program starting in 2017-18, and Whitnall High School was selected for its inaugural year. Students attend the weekly club luncheons during their month, where they learn about the club’s current service projects, themes, and issues. At the end of their month, each student presents to the club a summary of their high school activities, career aspirations, and future plans. The following students were selected in the second half of the school year. This is an amazing opportunity for our students to learn more about the community and for the community to learn more about our students and district. From left to right: Sarah Aaron, MacKenzie Sutton, Ryan Thiele, Alissa Herrmann, Julian Dentice-Cagle, Reid Miller. Congratulations!



# The Class of 2018

## Valedictorian and Salutatorian



The Class of 2018's Valedictorian is Kelly McElvain (left). Kelly plans to attend St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. She will pursue a career as a medical physicist. While at Whitnall High School, Kelly was on the Swim and Dive team; she advanced to being the team's captain! Kelly is a Wisconsin Academic Excellence Scholar, is a member of the National Honor Society, and--of course--is at the top of her class. Congratulations, Kelly! We are so proud of you!

Whitnall's Salutatorian for 2018 is Savannah Holt (right). Savannah will be attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison for a degree in international business. While at WHS, Savannah served as the president of DECA, was a member of AFS, competed on the Cross Country and Track and Field teams, and was a member of the European Organization for Nuclear Research. She is a member of the National Honor Society and, clearly, excelled academically. Congratulations, Savannah. We are wishing you all the best.



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## Grad Walk

Before walking across the graduation stage, the Class of 2018 walked through the halls of where it all began, our elementary schools. They reminisced with their classmates, reconnected with their past teachers, and showed the elementary students what the future holds. The elementary students participated by crafting congratulatory signs and offering their support in the forms of high fives, cheers, and applause.

For the seniors, there were smiles, there were tears, and there was an overwhelming sense of things coming full circle. We did the grad walk for the first time last school year. Now, it's a tradition; it is too special not to be.



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## Senior Awards

This year, at the Senior Awards Program, **98** learners were honored. In addition to celebrating high GPAs and receiving various awards, the seniors in attendance were offered **\$3,273,666** in scholarships! Thank you to all of the incredible organizations throughout the community that support our students' futures. It was an evening full of **#WhitnallPride**.

## Graduation Ceremony



June 3 | 1,272 attendees  
212 graduates | AVG GPA 3.1  
congrats grads

## Athlete Awards

- OUTSTANDING FEMALE** Kelly McElvain
- OUTSTANDING MALE** Tyler Herro
- FEMALE COACHES CHOICE** Kathryn Bay
- MALE COACHES CHOICE** Danny Alexopoulos
- HOWARD KNUEPPEL AWARD** Katelyn Bloomer
- SCHOLAR ATHLETE AWARD** Kathryn Bay
- SCHOLAR ATHLETE AWARD** John Poulakos



Pictured: Tyler Herro

## Referendum Investment

On April 3, 2018, the Whitnall community graciously approved a referendum of \$16.16 million for facility improvements across all four buildings. While we would love to break ground as soon as possible, we are in the process of securing the financing. As we continue to look at our financing options, we are balancing minimizing our mill rate impact, saving on interest costs, and providing future flexibility. We believe all three are attainable as we focus on a financing strategy.

The district's mill rate for 2017 property taxes was \$10.09. While some community members may have seen a mill rate greater or less than that due to a number of factors, the average was \$10.09. This means that for every \$1,000 of property value you have, \$10.09 was applied to your property tax bill to go towards the operations of Whitnall School District. Here's where Whitnall's mill rate stands against area school districts:

<b>Muskego:</b>	<b>\$9.49</b>
<b>Elmbrook:</b>	<b>\$9.99</b>
<b>Whitnall:</b>	<b>\$10.09</b>
<b>New Berlin:</b>	<b>\$10.83</b>
<b>West Allis:</b>	<b>\$10.99</b>
<b>Greendale:</b>	<b>\$11.03</b>
<b>Greenfield:</b>	<b>\$11.35</b>
<b>Franklin:</b>	<b>\$11.57</b>



**THANK YOU AGAIN  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Throughout the referendum messaging prior to April 3, the mill rate projection of a passed referendum was a net impact of \$0.53 per \$1,000 of property value. This included \$0.30 dropping off the mill rate permanently due to energy efficiency projects that were done by the district and the addition of \$0.83 due to the referendum. Typically, with a passed referendum that included an increase of \$0.53, we may have expected a mill rate of \$10.62. However, the district touted that we are expecting a rather significant increase in state aid for the 2018-2019 school year. State aid is not additional revenue for a district but is solely provided by the state to offset the impact of property taxes. Because of this, the district felt it was possible to take on additional tax impact in 2018-2019 and still keep property taxes right around \$10.09 mill rate.

This is a fortunate position for the Whitnall School District to find itself in. Clearly, like any loan, the more that can be paid up front, the less interest that is realized over time and, thus, the lower property taxes can be in the future. Whitnall School District finds itself in a position of focusing more on keeping the mill rate flat at \$10.09 for the 2018-2019 rather than focusing on the \$0.53 mill rate impact that was published.

When a referendum is passed, the mill rate impact is published as a separate line item so community members can see that specific impact to taxes. If the District can take on additional tax impact and still keep the mill rate around \$10.09, even if that means exceeding \$0.53 referendum impact, it will keep overall interest costs down as well as provide a future "cliff" in our property tax schedule in which property taxes will decrease. We expect this "cliff" to occur around the tenth year of the twenty-year payback schedule.

## Advanced Placement (AP) Offerings at Whitnall High School

Throughout the course of the 2017-18 school year, Whitnall has been evaluating program and course offerings, and planning revisions and updates for 2018-19 and beyond. One of these considerations has been our Advanced Placement course and assessment program. Advanced Placement (AP) is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. For a high school course to have the designation, the course must be audited by the College Board to ascertain that it satisfies the AP curriculum. If the course is approved, the school may use the AP designation and the course will be publicly listed on the AP Course Ledger.

Students at Whitnall High School may register for AP Courses, and have the option to take the corresponding exam, which is developed by the College Board. AP tests are scored by the College Board on a 1 to 5 scale as follows:

- 5 – Extremely well qualified
- 4 – Well qualified
- 3 – Qualified
- 2 – Possibly qualified
- 1 – No recommendation

Some colleges use AP test scores to exempt students from introductory coursework, others use them to place students in higher designated courses, and some do both. Each college's policy is different, but most require a minimum score of 3 or 4 to receive college credit. In addition, completing AP courses help students qualify for various types of scholarships.

This year Whitnall School District has identified a need to increase the range of AP offerings at WHS, and will be adding courses based upon postsecondary education and job market trends. Names in green indicate courses which were newly added for the 2017-18 school year, while red denotes a new offering which will begin in 2018-19. Nationwide, student participation in AP courses and testing has been on the rise, and Whitnall School District will monitor needs and trends to ensure that we continue to meet the ongoing needs of our current and future students.

AP courses currently offered at Whitnall High School:

AP Calculus AB	AP Language & Composition
AP Calculus BC	AP Studio Art
AP Statistics	AP Psychology
AP Biology	AP US History
AP Chemistry	AP Human Geography
AP Physics 1	AP Microeconomics / AP Macroeconomics
AP French Language	AP Music Theory
AP Spanish Language	AP Computer Science Principles
AP English Literature and Composition	

New in 2017-18  
New in 2018-19

For more information on Advanced Placement courses and tests, please visit The College Board AP website.

## Hales Corners Elementary *may day*

For over 25 years, Hales Corners Elementary has been doing their May Day tradition, and this year was no exception. On the 1st of May, HCE learners delivered

baskets of flowers to houses in the neighborhood. The baskets are handmade out of paper by the students. In addition to being a tradition, the May Day celebration is a great way for our learners to connect with those in the community, exercise their artistic skills, and welcome spring!



## Edgerton Elementary *color run*

For the second year, Edgerton Elementary held a “color run” as a fundraiser for the school. The event was both fun and successful. Accompanied by a DJ, students, families, and staff members ran a course

with frequent blasts of color. Participants started the run in clean t-shirts but crossed the finish line covered from head to toe in every color of the rainbow! To participate, one just had to make a donation toward Edgerton. The event ended up raising over \$20,000, and the money raised is going toward inclusive additions to Edgerton’s playground. The additions will be sensory friendly (for students with autism) and handicap accessible.





Each year, the middle school student body chooses an organization / cause to donate the proceeds of their annual “walk-a-thon” fundraiser to. This year, they chose Kids Matter, a local organization that helps foster children in Milwaukee County. In the words of Kids Matter, the organization “restores opportunity to the abused and neglected youth in Milwaukee.” First, the middle school learners heard from a representative for Kids Matter at an all-school assembly. Then, they held various smaller fundraising events, such as a bake sale and a t-shirt sale. All of this culminated in the walk-a-thon on June 1.

## Whitnall Middle School *walk-a-thon*



On March 14, Whitnall High School students participated in the national walkout by honoring the lives lost in Parkland. The students had their hands painted and then contributed their hand prints to a banner that read “Hands Out for Parkland.” They did this in seventeen minutes of silence--one minute for each life lost. The banner was sent to Stoneman Douglas High School. This beautiful tribute was entirely student-led, and it was an incredible display of respect and unity. We are so proud.

## Whitnall High School *walkout*



# School Safety

At Whitnall, our focus is on learning. However, learning can only occur when our students and staff are safe, both physically and emotionally. The recent, horrendous school incidents remind us to remain steadfast and diligent in our safety efforts. Here is a summary of some of the steps we have taken just this past school year:

## **Mental Health/Social Emotional Learning**

In 2017-18, the Whitnall School District added two social worker positions to the district and restructured our pupil services department to provide each building with a team of a social worker/school psychologist and a school counselor. We have provided training to our pupil services staff and other key personnel in mental health first aid and suicide prevention. In January, we hosted a Parent Learning Academy focused around mental health triggers, symptoms, and resources. In January, we also trained our educators on trauma-informed care.

## **Safety Procedures**

In the fall, we had our safety and crisis manual reviewed by one of our local law enforcement agencies and made updates accordingly. At the end of April, we held a district-wide evacuation drill in which all students were evacuated to off-site locations and we simulated the parent reunification process. We have used feedback from the drill to learn and improve. Some of the updates to our safety procedures include safety vests, safety backpacks, and a technology-driven reporting system to ensure all students and staff are safely out of buildings or in designated locations.

In the buildings, we have improved our secure entrances, utilized security cameras, and have purchased updated software to verify and log visitor check-ins. Training was provided to all building and district office staff.

## **Community Partnerships**

In April, we held another Parent Learning Academy focused on school safety, which featured a panel of law enforcement, mental health professionals, and school pupil services personnel. (This presentation is available on our YouTube channel).

Throughout the school year, we continue to work with our local law enforcement and fire and safety departments. The Hales Corners and Greenfield Police Departments and emergency management systems were involved in our planning and implementation of our evacuation drill. They also assisted in writing the state safety grant for monies to improve security in our buildings. Acceptance of the grant will require continued collaboration with these partners.

The board continues to put school safety as an agenda topic on each of the two monthly meetings. As the distance from the national school incidents may increase, our goal is to continue to give safety and security the attention that is needed.

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## **Bonus Student Spotlight | Julian**



One of our high school learners, Julian, is responsible for an incredible addition to our elementary schools. As an Eagle Scout, Julian introduced “Falcon Friend Benches” to the playgrounds of both Hales Corners Elementary and Edgerton Elementary. These benches are meant for children who are looking for friends to play with. When other students see someone sitting on the bench, they know to invite that student to play with them. Julian went to the schools to teach the learners this concept. He told them “The Falcon Friend Benches were specially made for Whitnall, so they are one of a kind just like each and every one of you!”



innovating

taking risks

exploring



**PROUD**  
**HISTORY**  
**BRIGHT**  
**FUTURE**

# THE WHITNALL WINDOW

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Nancy Zaborowski | Member | Greenfield | Since 2008  
Jon Jones | Member | Franklin | Since 2014  
Steven Butz | Member | Greenfield | Since 2018

**WE ARE WISHING  
EVERYONE  
A SAFE AND  
HAPPY SUMMER!**

Congratulations to our softball team on winning the WIAA Division 2 State Championship! This was their first ever state championship appearance, and they claimed the title!



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