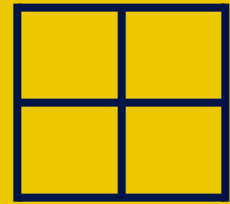


THE WHITNALL WINDOW



SUMMER
22-23



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The Superintendent's Message

The strength of a school district is predicated on the support it receives from the community. Whitnall is incredibly fortunate to have engaged citizens, and we always prioritize offering opportunities for even further engagement.



Community members are currently engaged in efforts such as our citizens' advisory committee. Per Board Policy 9140, the Whitnall Board of Education has organized a committee to review our facilities needs. The committee has been meeting since April of 2023, reviewing the district's ten-year capital improvement plan, consulting with Whitnall staff, and touring the buildings. The citizens' advisory committee will bring forward a recommendation to the board regarding the possibility of a November 2024 referendum. Of course community members are also engaged in less formal and less time consuming ways such as our annual Whitnall Falcon Golf Outing. Check out page five for photos from the event!

One opportunity for further engagement would be attending our Budget Hearing & Annual Meeting on Monday, September 25 at 6:30 PM in the Community Board Room. But again, there are less formal ways to engage as well. We have our Homecoming game on October 6 and our Whitnall Hall of Fame Induction on October 7! Please join us for these events!

Thank you for being an engaged member of the Whitnall community. Simply reading this newsletter is an act of staying engaged. We hope you enjoy this issue!

Lisa L. Olson

Dr. Lisa L. Olson, Superintendent

#whitnALLIN

Grad Walk

On June 2, the Class of 2023 visited the elementary schools and the middle school for our annual Grad Walk and were greeted with cheers from former teachers and future Whitnall grads. The Grad Walk is always a special experience, because all four schools come together, and there is a powerful feeling of things having come full circle. As one of the signs held up by an elementary student read, "We will miss you."



Commencement Ceremony

On June 4, Whitnall High School held the commencement ceremony for the Class of 2023. Fifty-five students--over 1/4 of the Class of 2023--maintained high honors during their high school careers. High honors means a grade point average of 3.5 or higher and qualifies a student for laude recognition. Seventeen students earned cum laude, nine students earned magna cum laude, and seven students earned summa cum laude. Congratulations, Class of 2023!



On June 9, all staff came together for an end of year celebration, which included recognition for years of service and retirees. We wanted to also recognize those employees here!

10 YEARS

David Ammerman
Alissa Carriveau
Dawn Jones
Karen Rush
Sarah Sandahl
Milifer Sino
Bridget Sparks

15 YEARS

Steven Morzy
Allison Schnoor
Alexandra Schultz

20 YEARS

Michael Budny
Dawn Luther

25 YEARS

Rene Freyer
Kay Larson
Robin Latus
Margaret Temple

30 YEARS

Sara Brand
Kim Thomas



MARY MILLER | Edgerton Elementary | Fourth Grade Teacher | Joined Whitnall in 1992

"It has been an honor and a privilege to work with so many wonderful students and their families as well as so many incredibly talented colleagues in my 31 years of teaching in Whitnall. I have loved sharing my passion for reading, writing, and learning with my students. I look back with gratitude and fondness knowing I will carry so many memories with me in my heart, as I look forward with anticipation and excitement to the future and all that it holds as I start this next chapter in my life story!"



KELLY PLUTA | Edgerton Elementary | Speech Language Pathologist | Joined Whitnall in 2009

"It's not easy to say goodbye after 35 years as an elementary speech language pathologist. I am grateful to have spent the last 14 years in the Whitnall School District and to have had the opportunity to work with amazing staff and families along my journey."



MARGARET TEMPLE | Hales Corners Elementary | Fifth Grade Teacher | Joined Whitnall in 1998

"I've been gifted with 25 years worth of amazingly dedicated teaching teams, and wouldn't trade any of those people for the world. I will miss the students, families, and all the people I've worked with over the years. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to positively impact our Whitnall learners."



PAUL STEENO | Whitnall High School | Math Teacher | Joined Whitnall in 1994

"I would like to thank the Whitnall community for welcoming me in and allowing me to teach at Whitnall High School for 29 years out of my 33 year teaching career. Looking back at my 33 years, I can wholeheartedly say that teaching has been a great career choice, something that I am very thankful for. Every year, week, day and hour were different, sometimes challenging, and always rewarding in their own way. I will definitely miss my colleagues, especially those in the Math Department. And, the journey would have been nothing without all of the students I have worked with on a daily basis along the way...they are truly why we do what we do! Thoughts to leave you with: 'Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.' - Desmond Tutu 'What do you call a person who is happy on Monday? Retired!' - Unknown"

We would also like to celebrate the retirements of Lisa Yahnke and Judy Kraft. Lisa Yahnke was a second grade teacher at Hales Corners Elementary who joined Whitnall in 1992. Judy Kraft was an administrative assistant at Whitnall High School who joined Whitnall in 1985.

Phonics for Grades K-3

In recent years, reading scores have dropped across the nation, and Whitnall is no exception. Recognizing the need for change, we took steps to enhance our early reading materials and instruction.

In 2020, Wisconsin introduced new English Language Arts (ELA) standards that emphasized phonics. Phonics is a method that helps people learn to read by connecting sounds with letters or groups of letters. We understood the importance of implementing these standards to improve our students' reading abilities.



To choose the right phonics resource, a committee of educators and administrators was formed in 2021. They recommended Sadlier's From Phonics to Reading resource for students from kindergarten to third grade. In March 2022, the board unanimously approved the committee's recommendation. To acquire these resources, Whitnall utilized federal funds called Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, our educators received extensive support and training to implement the new phonics resource effectively. Students, parents, and educators have provided positive feedback on the impact of phonics instruction on early reading skills.

Enhancing English Language Arts for Grades K-8

In addition to implementing phonics instruction specifically, Whitnall is taking action to improve reading and writing skills generally for students in grades K-8. Test scores have been a concern, prompting the need for an update to not only early reading materials, but to all literacy materials.



A committee was formed during the 22-23 school year to review ELA materials. The goal was to select resources that would improve reading and writing education. The committee also focused on learning about effective teaching methods through The Science of Reading, a body of research that provides insights into how children learn to read and write, as well as effective instructional approaches. Based on their findings, the committee proposed new reading and writing materials aligned with the Wisconsin ELA standards, and the board approved the adoption of Wonders (2023) for grades K-5 and Into Literature for grades 6-8 in February. These materials were carefully chosen to cater to each grade level's specific needs. We again used ESSER funds to acquire these resources.

By aligning with updated standards and incorporating research-backed strategies, the district seeks to lay a solid foundation for students' reading and writing success.

Investing in Teachers for Student Success

Teachers are the ones who provide effective phonics instruction and implement new ELA resources. To support that work, we offer ongoing professional development opportunities that focus on giving teachers the knowledge and skills to teach phonics well and make the most of the new ELA resources. Once again, it is thanks to ESSER funds that we can provide these valuable opportunities. By supporting our teachers and making professional growth a priority, Whitnall School District creates an environment where continuous improvement is valued.



Our main goal is to make sure every student has a strong foundation. By refining our resources and investing in our teachers, we help empower our students to succeed.

Athletics & Activities Director

We are very excited to announce that Megan Harris has been selected as our new Athletics & Activities Director. After a highly competitive search drawing many qualified and talented candidates, a committee concluded that Ms. Harris's education and experience were the best fit to lead the Whitnall Athletics & Activities Department. Ms. Harris holds a Master's Degree in Education Policy & Leadership from Cardinal Stritch University. In addition to her years at Whitnall High School as the Dean of Students, she has worked as a Physical Education Teacher and as a Game & Events Manager. Personally, she was a collegiate athlete and is the parent to two Division 1 athletes.



Over her five years at Whitnall High School, she has developed strong relationships with students, parents, and staff. She brings energy and passion to our athletics and activities and a commitment to guiding our students. We look forward to the future of Whitnall's co-curriculars with Ms. Harris at the helm!

"I am excited to continue my journey here at Whitnall, just in a different role! I can't wait to help our students find their passion whether it is through activities or athletics. I look forward to watching our students flourish and spread their Falcon wings and fly!" -Megan Harris

Whitnall Falcon Golf Outing

Our annual Whitnall Falcon Golf Outing was as fun as ever this year! Thank you to the participants and the local sponsors. All of the proceeds go back to co-curriculars!



6 | SCHOOL FOREST

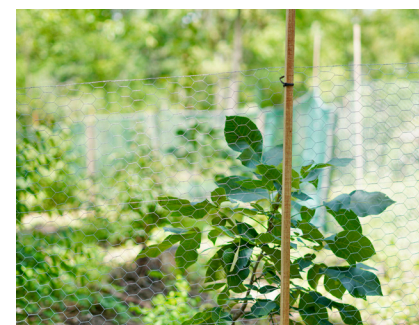
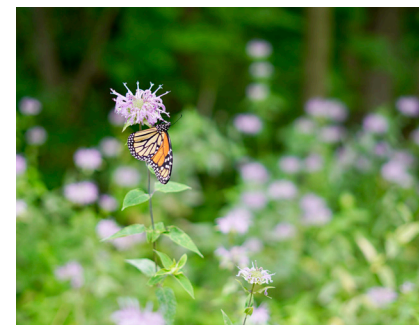
There are many fantastic things happening in the Whitnall School Forest this summer! New trees, new trail signs, wildflowers are in bloom, and there is lots of activity among the deer, birds, bees, and butterflies.

Since the forest was purchased by the Whitnall School District in 1991, it has gone through many changes. Teachers in the district have led teams to remove invasives, hold clean up days, plant trees and pollinator gardens, build trails and learning spaces, purchase educational materials, and write forest lesson plans. Currently, there are four teachers on the Whitnall School Forest Committee, one from each school building: Dee Schroeder (Edgerton Elementary), Jill Matusin (Hales Corners Elementary), Kelly Kempen (Whitnall Middle School), and Daniel Rathmann (Whitnall High School). With guidance from the City of Greenfield Forester, Dennis Fermenich, and the Department of Natural Resources Forester, Mike Seager (who is a Whitnall alumnus!), the school forest committee has focused on reforestation and enhancing the outdoor learning areas.

This year, the Whitnall School Forest Committee was awarded a \$41,000 grant from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), as part of a larger grant for the City of Greenfield, to help manage the flow of water in the forest. In recent years, the development of subdivisions nearby has changed the amount of water moving through the forest. The water runoff has impacted Cattail Creek, trails, and other low lying areas of the forest. To remedy this, gravel pathways and culverts have been added to divert the water. This summer, as a result of the grant, more invasive and hazardous trees were removed, and a variety of 250 native trees were planted. Some of the new tree species are linden, hawthorn, sugar maple, red and white oak, birch, hickory, aspen, tamarack, and dogwood. There are some fenced-in areas with smaller trees. These areas are called "tree nurseries." The fences deter deer from snacking on the leaves so the smaller trees have a chance to grow. Now that the trees have been planted, the Whitnall School Forest Committee has been working all summer to clear the areas around the trees and make sure they are watered. The combination of tree removals and tree planting has resulted in a beautiful and noticeable difference!

Another change you will notice if you visit the forest is that there are new trail signs! The Whitnall School Forest Committee collaborated with Whitnall Middle School's Technical Education Teacher James Ricchio and his students to construct the new signage. Many of the signs have been posted, and the remaining signage will be completed once the school year begins.

We encourage you to visit the Whitnall School Forest and see for yourself all of the phenomenal work that has been done this summer. As John Muir once said, "In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks."



ADVANCEMENT BELONGING COURAGE ADVANCEMENT BELONGING COURAGE



PROUD HISTORY BRIGHT FUTURE PROUD HISTORY BRIGHT FUTURE PROUD HISTORY



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5000 S. 116th Street
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414.525.8400
www.whitnall.com

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Fourth of July Parades

Board members participated in local Fourth of July parades! Cassie Rainer, Rachel Scherrer, and Karen Mikolainis rode in the Hales Corners parade while Kevin Stachowiak and Jesse Stachowiak rode in the Greenfield parade!



Follow us on social media!



@whitnallschools for all three!