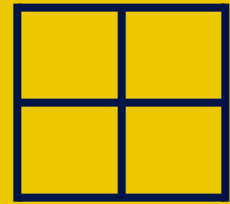


# THE WHITNALL WINDOW



WINTER  
2021



## CONTENTS

- 1 SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE
- 2 BOARD BULLETIN
- 3 SPOTLIGHTS
- 4 ACADEMICS
- 5 CO-CURRICULARS
- 6 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
- 7 PHOTOS
- 8 BACK COVER

## The Superintendent's Message

I recently transitioned to a new computer, and as I was moving documents over, I ran across the results of our 2017 *Hopes for a Whitnall Graduate* community survey, which over 600 parents, staff, and community members responded to. Looking back, I am proud that we have made significant progress on the priorities that emerged from that survey.

In the past five years: We have passed a facilities referendum, while maintaining a declining mill rate. We have added career pathways in manufacturing, computer science/IT, and health sciences. We have strengthened our pupil services team and mental health resources by nearly doubling staff serving in the areas of special education, social work, and counseling. We have expanded academic opportunities by offering more exploratory classes for middle and elementary students in areas such as coding, manufacturing, and world languages and by offering more Advanced Placement courses at the high school level. We have increased parent and community engagement through efforts like focus groups, our Parent Learning Academy (more on this on page 6), and enhanced communication, including but not limited to the introduction of this very newsletter.

All of this was made possible by the resilience of the Whitnall community. Resilience means not abandoning long-term goals for short term or easy wins. Resilience means staying the course, despite challenges and distractions. When I look back to 2017, I can confidently say that we have traveled far upon the path to where the community hoped to be. But there is never an *end* to progress, so we travel on. Please continue to follow our work by watching or attending our board meetings, visiting our website, or reaching out directly. Your engagement is energizing and essential.



*Lisa L. Olson*

Dr. Lisa L. Olson, Superintendent

#whitnALLIN

## Board Goal

In November of 2021, the Whitnall School Board revisited the board goal that they had developed and adopted in May of 2021. The goal read:

*“Over the next year (2021-2022), we as a board will work collaboratively with district administration to develop a dashboard, so that we can track district performance as measured by finances/budget, student achievement/success and employee engagement.”*

As the board worked on this, it became clear that the board goal was written in a way that focused more on the means (a district dashboard) than on the ends, which was always intended to be greater accountability to constituents through better understanding of district data. Therefore, the board goal was rewritten and now reads:

*“By the end of the 2021-22 school year, school board members will increase accountability to district constituents by tracking district performance on student achievement/success, employee engagement, and finances/budget as evidenced by each board member’s competence in relaying detailed district data as well as strategic plan benchmarks.”*

The updated goal was informed by the action area Accountability from The Key Work of School Boards. The Key Work of School Boards defines Accountability as the capacity to “maintain public confidence through a shared understanding of expectations, roles and responsibilities, and standards/desired results.” Research through the NSBA Center for Public Education found that indicators of school board effectiveness include engaging in goal setting, monitoring progress, being data savvy, and possessing detailed knowledge of the district.

To meet their goal, the board is receiving more data reports around students, employees, and operations. These reports are archived on the new Board Goal page of the district website. The community is encouraged to visit the page to see what data board members should be able to discuss competently. The reports are all linked, so community members may also explore the data themselves!

## Wisconsin State Education Convention

In January, four Whitnall School Board members attended the Wisconsin State Education Convention held by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards. Board members, superintendents, and school business officials from across the state came together to hear from exhibitors and speakers from across the country. The convention featured topics such as equity in education, school finances, and effective leadership.

Not only was Whitnall represented in the attendees, Whitnall was also represented among the presenters! Whitnall School Board Vice President Quin Brunette joined board members from the Shorewood School District and the Menomonee Falls School District to share effective strategies for leveraging community input!



From left to right: Jon Duhr (Director of Business Services), Karen Mikolainis (School Board Member), Quin Brunette (School Board Vice President), Dr. Steven Butz (School Board Treasurer), Dr. Lisa Olson (Superintendent).



School Board Vice President Quin Brunette presenting *Getting the Whole Picture*.



School Board Clerk Kevin Stachowiak representing Whitnall as a WASB Delegate.

## Staff Spotlight

In December of 2021, Anabel Weeks, Edgerton Elementary Art Teacher, became a National Board Certified Teacher! Below is Anabel’s description of her journey.



“In 2018, I decided that National Board certification was a challenge that I wanted to take on personally and professionally. I spent a school year arduously planning, video taping my lessons, writing, editing, and studying for the exam component. My weekends and school breaks were spent in the empty Edgerton art room collecting evidence, watching videos of myself teaching, and writing, writing, writing. I submitted all four components in April of 2019 and anxiously waited for the results, which wouldn’t be posted until December 2019, 8 months later. The results came back and I scored well on 3 of the 4 components, which meant I did not certify. My heart broke, but my resolve did not diminish; I had committed myself to success and I got busy working on the remaining component. I was almost at the finish line when COVID hit. The National Board offered a deferment, and I decided to take it. I began anew on the remaining component in the 2020-21 school year, with determination to get it completed, regardless of the challenges the pandemic presented with teaching. I submitted in June 2021 and found out in December 2021 that I passed and was now a National Board Certified Teacher in the area of Art, Early and Middle Childhood—making me 1 of 6 in the state of Wisconsin! The journey to National Board certification was tiring and extremely demanding, but it was transformative to

**“My heart broke, but my resolve did not diminish.”**

my teaching and my classroom. It forced me to face and improve areas of weakness in my teaching, recalibrate, crack open and deeply examine my teaching practice. The experience was more intense, heartbreaking, exhausting, gratifying, and important than I ever anticipated, but as promised by many before me, it has deeply and forever changed me for the better as a teacher.”

## Student Spotlight

In January, the Whitnall Park Rotary Club recognized Whitnall student Amirah Mirza as one of their Students of the Month. Below is Amirah’s story.



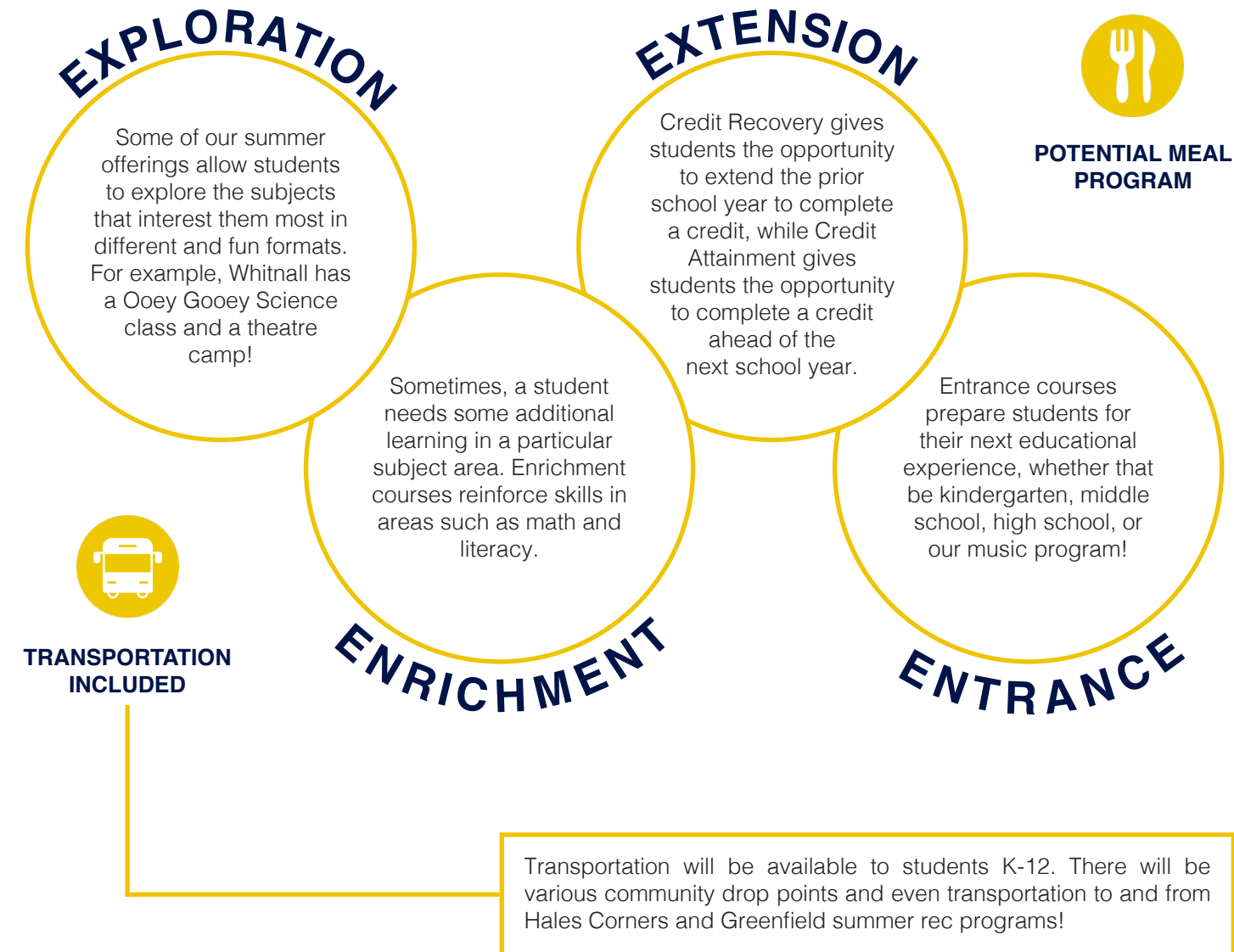
“My name is Amirah Mirza, and I’m currently a senior at Whitnall High School. I’ve been in the Whitnall School District since my freshman year. I was born in Connecticut, but have lived in many places—Arizona, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, and now the Milwaukee area! My family moved to the Milwaukee area mainly because of the greater Islamic community here. I joined a program called VIP at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. I became treasurer and have completed over 150 hours of community work within that one program alone. Outside the program, I’ve done even more work for the Islam community such as helping pack and deliver food for Ramadan and assisting with Ramadan festivals. At school, I participate in multiple school activities. I’m in National Honor Society, Student Council, DECA, Red Cross Club, RedGen, Peer Mentors, and Leadership Academy. I’ve been in Student Council since my freshman year, and I’ve gone from sophomore VP, to treasurer, to now Student Body Vice President! I’ve been in DECA for two years now and my partner and I have placed fourth at districts and medaled at state! And this year, I am serving as DECA’s Officer of Communication. The other activities—such as NHS, Red Gen, and Red Cross Club—are further opportunities for me to volunteer, with each having a unique focus. NHS allows me to volunteer with the Whitnall community, RedGen allows me to help spread awareness around student health (both mental and physical), and Red Cross Club allows me to help

**“I pride myself on my academics, because I truly enjoy learning.”**

causes such as homelessness. Academically, I have set high standards for myself. I have taken a total of nine Advanced Placement courses and four college classes throughout high school. I pride myself on my academics, because I truly enjoy learning. Looking to the future, I hope to graduate in 4 years with a masters and bachelors in molecular and cellular biology. In my free time, I really enjoy music. I’ve been playing piano since I was five years old, singing since I was seven, and I taught myself guitar when I was thirteen. I started a singing page on Instagram, and this past January, I released my first, self produced EP!”

## Summer 2022 Offerings

During summer, Whitnall offers opportunities for students to explore their interests, enrich their learning, extend their school year, or enter their next experience.



## What's Up Whitnall

The Whitnall Athletics & Activities Department has been sharing weekly video updates to families, students, and staff. The series of videos is called What's Up Whitnall and began in the 2020-21 school year. Athletics & Activities Director Dave Pentek and 2021 graduate Morgan Ebert were the two original co-hosts. This school year, student interest has increased and the What's Up Whitnall crew has grown from two to six and is now completely student-driven! Amirah Mirza does production and general announcements. Ava Sterbin and Janita Waqar do general announcements. Jenna Zuber covers activities, and Rachel Tubic-Desarden covers sports. Mr. Pentek provides guidance on topics and helps with announcement details. What's Up Whitnall is shared through Whitnall's family newsletter, The Connect, which is archived on our district website under Families. What's Up Whitnall videos are also placed on the athletics and activities webpage, shared in Whitnall High School's online daily announcements, and tweeted out from the athletics and activities Twitter account (@WhitnallAD). At the time of this publication, there have been nearly fifty episodes of What's Up Whitnall and there will be new episodes each week for the remainder of the school year! We are extremely proud of not only what's going on in our school community, but also of our students' dedication to sharing what's going on *with* our school community. We hope that What's Up Whitnall continues and continues to grow!



## Athletics

Recently, our boys basketball team won the Eastern Division of the Woodland Conference! The team has an overall record of 21-1, ranking us 4th in all of Division 2!

In January, the Whitnall wrestlers on the right competed in the FIRST EVER Girls Wrestling State Tournament! Congrats on making history!



## Trades Day

Trades Day is back! On December 9, WHS hosted high school students from Greenfield, Franklin, Greendale, Muskego, and more. Whitnall Middle School students attended as well! Students not only learned about a multitude of trades, but got to try them out! This was a great opportunity for our students; they got to connect with individuals with real-world experience, and they got to connect with students from other districts!



## The Spring Musical

Whitnall High School's spring musical is Legally Blonde! Don't miss this incredibly fun yet surprisingly heartfelt show. There are performances on April 29 and April 30 at 7 PM, and there is a performance on May 1 at 2 PM. Tickets are on sale now at whitnalltheatre.com!



## ESSER III Funding Stakeholder Input

The American Rescue Plan provides one-time funds for our district through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III grant program. As part of the grant application process, we needed to gather input from our stakeholders on which programs and services may benefit from these funds. Therefore, in early February, we asked our students, staff, families, and community members to view a presentation on ESSER III and then complete a survey. The responses will guide our application and our use of the funds. The survey will have closed by the time of this publication, but we encourage you to view the presentation (available on the "Navigating 21-22" page of our website) and we encourage you to follow our board meetings for updates on the use of ESSER III funds.

## Parent Learning Academy

Whitnall's Parent Learning Academy is back! Throughout second semester, we are offering a series of informative and instructive sessions for Whitnall parents. At the sessions, parents learn more about our work and how to support that work at home. Transparency and teamwork! Community members are welcome to attend as well! We have already held our first session (Supporting Literacy 1.0), but there are still four more sessions before the end of the school year. Advance registration is required to ensure sufficient space and materials, and low enrollment will result in a cancellation, so be sure to register! You can register for a session by visiting our website or our social media. All sessions are 6-8 PM.

### SUPPORTING LITERACY 1.0

- **Thursday, January 27**
- Brief presentation and grade level breakout sessions
- Overview of literacy curriculum and instruction
- Tips on how to support literacy at home

### SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

- **Tuesday, February 22**
- Brief presentation and sessions by topic
- Overview of Pupil Services--roles and school-based resources
- Tips on supporting mental health at home

### SUPPORTING MATH COMPETENCY 1.0

- **Thursday, March 31**
- Brief presentation and grade level breakout sessions
- Overview of math curriculum and instruction
- Tips on how to support math competency at home

### SUPPORTING COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

- **Tuesday, April 19**
- Brief presentation and focus groups
- Exploration of post-secondary options
- Tips on how to optimize post-secondary success for your child

### SUPPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

- **Thursday, May 19**
- Supporting Literacy 2.0 and Supporting Math Competency 2.0
- Brief presentation and grade level breakout sessions
- Overview of assessments
- Tips on how to support students throughout the summer and how to prepare them for the next school year



ADVANCEMENT BELONGING COURAGE ADVANCEMENT BELONGING COURAGE



PROUD  
HISTORY  
BRIGHT  
FUTURE

# THE WHITNALL WINDOW

Non-Profit  
Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Milwaukee,  
WI  
Permit No.1



Whitnall School District  
5000 S. 116th Street  
Greenfield, WI 53228  
414.525.8400  
www.whitnall.com

## WSD Board of Education

**Jonathan Cagle** President, Hales Corners, Since 2014  
**Quin Brunette** Vice-President, Greenfield, Since 2012  
**Kevin Stachowiak** Clerk, Hales Corners, Since 2015  
**Steven Butz** Treasurer, Greenfield, Since 2018  
**Karen Mikolainis** Member, Hales Corners, Since 2019  
**Jesse Stachowiak** Member, Greenfield, Since 2020  
**Nancy Zaborowski** Member, Greenfield, Since 2008



## School Board Candidate Forum

On Tuesday, March 8, there will be a school board candidate forum moderated by Whitnall High School Student Council. The candidates will answer school board related questions in front of an audience. The forum will be live streamed and uploaded to the district's YouTube channel, so any Whitnall community member can reference it at any time. The forum will begin at 6:30 PM and will be held in our Community Board Room. Please consider attending and don't forget to vote on April 5!

Newsletter feedback?  
Send to  
lvasquez@whitnall.com

**Follow us on social media!**



**@whitnallschools for all three!**