

Whittier Wildcat News

WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



November 2019

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

From the Principal

Welcome to November Whittier families! I want to first start off by thanking our amazing Whittier PTA for their hard work in organizing our annual PTA Harvest Festival that took place last Thursday night. It was a huge success and one of our biggest turn-outs in recent year, so thank you Whittier families for your tremendous support in participating in this festive event with us. It was a great way to finish the month of October!

Parent/Teacher Conference Week will take place next week, November 4 – 8, so you will have the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher to find out about their progress and learn about the great things happening in your child's classroom. I want to share that our teachers work hard every day to plan lessons with clear learning intentions, clear success criteria for student achievement, and building visible learning communities that empower students to be problem solvers and leaders. These are important aspects to Whittier's school improvement process.

Students are improving their ability to work together in teams, to listen to each other, hear each other's ideas, and then to collaboratively come together to complete team-based learning activities. These are essential skills that every child needs to learn to be successful in life. Every teacher has been working on creating classroom cultures that allow students to feel safe to take risks and view their classmates as important team members to support each other with their learning. The trust in the class culture and in learning with their peers will strengthen each child's confidence to take risks with the belief that they can share their ideas and thinking as part of their daily learning.

I would like to welcome all families to attend our Veterans Day assemblies that are scheduled for Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. for third through fifth grade students and 9:45 a.m. for kindergarten through second grade students. Whittier would also like to honor and recognize family members of students who have served or who are currently serving in the military by having students complete a "Wall of Honor" Star to honor their family member(s). Stars were distributed to all students in mid-October, but you can also pick up additional stars in the office. Please drop off returned stars to the office so they can be placed on the "Wall of Honor" near our main office.

As the season of giving thanks and the beginning of our winter weather arrives, I hope you can all find the time to stop and reflect on the many wonderful things in our lives. Here at Whittier I am very thankful to be able to work with our dedicated, kind, caring, and passionate staff to help every child succeed. I am also thankful that you have chosen to bring your children to Whittier. It is our goal and responsibility to teach, inspire, and prepare your children to do great things with their lives.

I want to thank all our parents and guardians for the love and support you give your children at home. I appreciate the work you do with your children to support them academically and in supporting them to become kind and caring individuals. Your support makes a significant difference in their success at Whittier. Thank you for everything you do!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving Season and stay happy and healthy. Make it a great November!

Tony Wentworth

Principal
Whittier Elementary School
916 Oakes Avenue,
Everett, WA 98201
www.everettsd.org/whittier

November 4-8

Parent Conference Week
12:20 dismissal all week

November 11

Veteran's Day Observed - No School

November 13

Veterans Day Assembly
Picture Retake Day

November 15

LIF 1:35 pm dismissal

November 20

PTA Meeting in Library 7pm

November 22

LIF 1:35 pm dismissal

November 27

Early Dismissal at 12:20 pm

November 28-29

Thanksgiving Break

December 9-13

PTA Book Fair Week

December 17

Holiday Concert @ Civic Auditorium
6:30-7:30 pm

- Tony Wentworth, Principal



From the Library

November



Last month grade levels continued to work on showing the Whittier Way in the library while searching for books and helping keep books organized. Grade levels also worked on the below...

***Kinder**-spent time pulling in science Balls & Ramps curriculum vocabulary through hands on experiments and discussions.

***1st**-were exposed to several great characters in good fit 1st grade books, shared about favorite parts of stories and retell.

***2nd**-spent time researching types of extreme weather using Pebble Go to align with weather unit and have begun to type informative writing in Google Docs.

***3rd**-learned about the history of women voting as we near the 100 year celebration & improved on alphabetic ordering call number skills to find books.

***4th**-spent time using Britannica Schools online resource to extend learning of the states of matter from their science curriculum.

***5th**-spent time enhancing library catalog search skills by accessing call numbers, alphabetizing with Kahoot, and book hunt activities.

<p>Grades 3-5 met author Patrick Carman, and learned about Towervale!</p>	 <p>December 9th-13th</p>	<p>Reminder...1st-5th graders check out books. Please help them remember to return books to our library.</p>
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Enjoy reading this month!

~Shannon Heining

sheininger@everettsd.org (425) 385-4308



Reading is INCREDIBLE

Whittier PTA

Hello Whittier Wildcats and families,



It's been a busy few weeks building up to Halloween and now the holidays are coming up fast.

We hope you were able to attend the annual PTA Whittier Harvest Fest on October 24th. It was a fun filled evening with creative costumes, games, prizes and food. Our sincere appreciation to Alexa Sheraton for chairing the event and to our amazing parents, teachers and staff volunteers. A special shout out to EHS's DECA and Leadership students for their contributions in both volunteering and creating the festive posters and photo backdrop for Harvest Fest! These events could not take place without our wonderful volunteer community!

If you ordered items from the fall fundraiser, delivery is scheduled for November 12th. Please make sure and mark this date on your calendar for picking up your items. Proceeds from these sales fund many vital programs and events throughout the school year. Thank you for your support!

If you are a Silvertips fan, Whittier PTA is hosting a group night on December 14th. The Tips play the Vancouver Giants. This will be a game that sells out quickly. Discount tickets are available at www.everettsilvertips.com/schoolnight, or through the event post on Whittier Elementary PTA fb page. Whittier's seats will be in Section 203, Row 4 and above for \$12.00 each (regularly \$22). Order 4 or more tickets at \$10.00 each. Show Whittier School pride and cheer on the Tips for this fun event. Everyone is invited!

The next PTA meeting is Wednesday, November 20th at 7pm in the Whittier Library. Please join us. This is a great way to learn about what's happening at our school. Be engaged. Stay involved.

Feel free to email the PTA anytime at ptawhittierelementary@gmail.com or message us on our PTA facebook page.

Warm Regards,

Amy Smith, President
Erica Youngman, Vice President
Heather Reid, Treasurer
Karen Zulinke, Secretary



Attendance Reporting in the Morning

If you would like to report your student absent in the morning, please use one of the following methods:

- Whittier Attendance Email – WHEAttendance@everettsd.org (1st choice)
- Whittier Attendance Phone Line – 425-385-4305 (2nd choice)

If you are emailing your student's teacher, please include the Whittier Attendance Email @ WHEAttendance@everettsd.org. This keeps the office informed of your child's absence and this will help us avoid sending out a call to you when you have already reported the absence to the teacher.

Lost and Found

While you are visiting Whittier for your child's Parent/Teacher Conference next week please stop by the lost & found outside of the Library. The collection is growing and we would like to get belongings back to their rightful owners. Also, please remember to label your student's clothing. We do our best to reunite clothing when names are clearly labeled inside.

Save the Date!! Holiday Concert is December 17th!

This is an event you will want to share with the entire family! The holiday season will be brightened by the sound of our Whittier



students singing some of their favorite Holiday tunes. Whittier students will participate in our annual holiday concert at Civic Auditorium on Tuesday, December 17 at 6:30 pm. There is no charge for this fantastic event and no tickets are needed! The auditorium holds 1800 people so invite your family, friends, and neighbors. Everyone is welcome!

Whittier Fall Fundraiser

Fundraiser Pick-up Day is November 12th

in the Cafeteria from 3:30-5 PM

We do not have the ability to store orders, so please arrange for your products to be picked up.

Whittier Food Drive



Whittier Families-

Please join us in a ***"Feeding Our Community"*** Food Drive. We will be partnering with Northwest Harvest November 18- December 6. There will have a classroom collection competition, with prizes for the top classroom! All food donations (bags or boxes) need to be labeled with student's name and teacher's name. Every student with a labeled donation will be entered into a drawing for a ***"Family Night Out"*** prize. Stay tuned...more information to come!



Chronic Absenteeism

Missing 10% or more of the school year or 2 absences a month

When Do Absences Become a Problem?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

- Chronically absent students have difficulty reading at grade level
- Score lower on standardized tests
- Develop poor habits for work and career
- By 6th grade, a chronically absent student is shown to have a significantly higher chance of dropping out of high school
- A student with a 90% attendance average from Kindergarten through 12th grade will miss over a year of accumulated time in the classroom

EVERY MINUTE MATTERS AT WHITTIER!!!

Strategies For Attendance Success



Attendance is a critical component to your child's success at Whittier Elementary School. We expect all students to attend every day, on time.

- Keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine
- No screen time for two hours before bedtime
- Growing kids need at least 10 hours of sleep
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session
- Go to school every day unless you are truly sick
- Talk to your teacher, counselor, Assistant Principal, or Principal for advice if you feel anxious about going to school



Accepting Highly Capable nominations until Dec. 18

Find forms, information and evening events on the [Highly Capable website](#). Referrals are for students currently in grades one through four for winter testing, which will take place on February 1, 2020.

Remember to vote Nov. 5

Remember to deliver your ballot to a ballot drop box near you or put it in the mail by Nov. 5 – postage is not required for ballots.

Everett Public Schools is hiring!

Are you interested in working for the school district? Full-time, part-time and substitute positions are available. The schedule for many classified positions is the same as the student day. Training is provided, and benefits are available for many positions. We have a strong need for substitute teachers, classified staff including regular and substitute paraeducators, office staff, custodial and food service positions. Join us! <http://www.everettsd.org/jobs>



Did you miss a call from us?

If you missed a call from your school, please first check your voice mail or your email for the message rather than calling the school. Schools are often inundated with phone calls from parents after they send an automated call and cannot answer all of the calls. If you want to change your contact information, please let the school office know.

School performance report

Our school's performance report is available online on each school's website. More information is available on the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website](#). Click on "State Report Card" and select Everett from the list of districts.

Test scores show ... our students rock!

Did you know that our student assessment scores last year outperformed the state's average assessment scores **in every subject!** Students are working hard in their learning, and staff are providing students with the targeted, coordinated supports they need to excel. We have more work to do and are going to accomplish it by focusing on reading at early levels and strong monitoring and collaboration.

FAFSA season has begun!

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an office of the U.S. Department of Education. FAFSA coordinates with postsecondary schools and financial institutions to help students and families pay for college. Watch for FAFSA completion events happening around the district. Find more information at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Family health safety tip

Vaping has been in the news a lot this summer and fall due to many youth and young adults across the nation being hospitalized for respiratory issues, including respiratory failure. A few cases have been reported in our state. Teens may believe vaping is less harmful than smoking. Vaping devices are increasingly popular among middle and high school students and a new generation is getting addicted to nicotine. According to the Snohomish Health District's Washington Healthy Youth Survey:

11% of 8th graders, 23% of 10th graders and 31% of 12th graders currently use vapes.

Learn about the dangers of vaping as well as resources for teens to quit by visiting Snohomish Health District's webpage. The sooner one quits, the faster their body, and lungs, can rebound and repair themselves. www.snohd.org/273/Vaping-Vapor-Products

Is your family prepared?

Does your family have a plan in case of bad weather, school closure or delay? Who will pick up your student, if needed? How will you communicate if phone lines are jammed? Do you have needed emergency supplies in your car and at home?

[Snohomish County Emergency Management](#) has helpful online resources to help you create, and practice emergency response plans with your family and neighborhood.





Online safety tips

- Keep the computer in a busy area of your home.
- Use an app to keep an eye on your child’s online activity on their device.
- Talking about cyberbullying; ask if someone they know has been a victim. Ask if they have been victimized.
- Set up email and social media accounts with your children. Know their screen names and passwords and explain the reasons for not including any personal information in profiles.

Know who is in the “buddy lists.” Get to know the cyberfriends as well as you do those who visit your home. Parents and guardians may find the following resources helpful to begin a conversation about the dangers of engaging in cyberbullying and how to stay safe online:

- [Stop Bullying Now](#)
- [Ms. Parry’s Guide to Correct Online Etiquette](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)



Find out what Everett Public Schools students learn about digital citizenship on the district [Learning Management Services website](#).

Food and nutrition

This month, the Food and Nutrition Department brings you mushrooms grown in the PNW! Be sure to give them a try this month in our vegetable medley and on the salad bar.

Did you know that mushrooms are composed of 90% water and contain over a dozen vitamin and minerals? Find out more by checking out the Harvest of the Month flyer on our website at <https://www.everettsd.org>. Don’t leave me, I’m a fungi!



Safety tip line

Do you or your student have a concern about someone experiencing bullying or harassment? Or have you perhaps heard a rumor about someone bringing a weapon or school? **Report it!** You can talk directly with your school’s office or you can call, text or concern.

If there is reason for concern about safety on a designated walkway to school, call 9-1-1 immediately for authorized, quick help. We have strong partnerships with local law enforcement who share our interest in safe schools and neighborhoods.

Student safety is a priority for all of us. Working together, we can help make our neighborhoods and schools nurturing places for students to safely learn and grow.

Report it!

drugs to
email your

3 easy ways

Text or call
855-637-2095

1350@alert1.us

<https://everett-wa.safeschoolsalert.com>



3900 Broadway
Everett, WA 98201
425-385-4000
www.everettsd.org

Everett Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Designated to handle inquiries about nondiscrimination policies are:

- Affirmative Action Officer – Randi Seaberg, rseaberg@everettsd.org, 425-385-4104
- Title IX Officer – Mary O’Brien, MO’Brien@everettsd.org, 425-385-4106
- 504 Coordinator – Becky Ballbach, rballbach@everettsd.org, 425-385-4063
- ADA Coordinator – Becky Clifford, rclifford@everettsd.org, 425-385-5250



From the School Counselor

This is Your Child's Brain on Video Games

Video games leave kids revved up, stressed out, and primed for a meltdown.

The following is a behind-the-scenes glimpse of how gaming impacts a child's nervous system.

On the eve of his big sister Liz's high school graduation, nine-year-old Aiden sits with his parents and relatives at a celebration dinner, bored by their "adult" conversation and irritated at all the attention showered upon Liz. He can't wait to get back to his video game! Before dinner, Mom had (annoyingly) called him away to join the family, and then she got mad when he spent a few minutes getting to the next level and saving his game. So many people in the house make him restless; he squirms uncomfortably and drums his fingers on the table, waiting to be excused. Finally, he is allowed to escape the dinner table, and he settles into a corner of the living room couch to play his Nintendo DS. For the next hour or so, he is completely oblivious to the company in the house. Although he's already played much longer than his mother likes, she lets him continue, knowing these family situations are a little overwhelming for him. And besides, the game keeps him occupied. *What's the harm?* she thinks. *It's just for today.* However, in the meantime, a perfect storm is brewing. As the play continues, Aiden's brain and psyche become overstimulated and excited — *on fire!* His nervous system shifts into high gear and settles there while he attempts to master different situations, strategizing, surviving, accumulating weapons, and defending his turf. His heart rate increases from 80 to over 100 beats per minute, and his blood pressure rises from a normal 90/60 to 140/90 — he's ready to do battle, except that he's just sitting on the couch, not moving much more than his eyes and thumbs. The DS screen virtually locks his eyes into position and sends signal after signal: "It's bright daylight out, nowhere near time for bed!" Levels of the feel-good chemical dopamine rise in his brain, sustaining his interest, keeping him focused on the task at hand, and elevating his mood. The intense visual stimulation and activity flood his brain, which adapts to the heightened level of stimulation by shutting off other parts it considers nonessential.

The visual-motor areas of his brain light up. Blood flows away from his gut, kidneys, liver, and bladder and toward his limbs and heart — he's ready to fight or escape! The reward pathways in his brain also light up and are reinforced by the flood of dopamine. He is so absorbed in the game, he doesn't notice when his little sister, Arianna, comes over until she puts her chubby hand on the screen, trying to get his attention.

"DooOOON'T!!" he shouts and roughly shoves her out of the way. Arianna falls backward, bursts into tears, and runs to their mother, who silently curses herself for letting Aiden play this long.

"All right, that's it. Time to start getting ready for bed. Get your pajamas on and you can have a snack before you go to bed," she says, pulling the DS out of Aiden's hands and turning it off in one fell swoop. Aiden looks at his mother with rage. *How dare she ruin his game because of his stupid sister!*

"Fine!" he shouts, runs up the stairs, and slams his bedroom door. His primitive brain is fully engaged now, turning him into an enraged animal ready to fight off all challengers. He rips all the sheets off his bed and then throws his lamp on the floor, providing a satisfactory crash and shatter. Thinking about how wronged he's been and filled with visions of revenge, he kicks the wall a few times and then pounds on his bedroom door, putting a big hole in it. Downstairs, his relatives sit in quiet shock and murmur to each other how they've never seen him act like this. Dad runs up the stairs to contain his son. Calmly, his dad holds him in a bear hug from behind, waiting for the rage to subside.

As the dopamine in his brain and the adrenaline in his body begin to ebb, his rage loses its focus. Now, the pent-up energy takes on a disorganized, amorphous form. Aiden feels like he can't think straight or get himself together. While he spaces out, his dad helps him put his pajamas on and they go back downstairs. Stress hormones remain high, however, making it difficult for him to relax or think clearly. He seems a little confused, actually. His relatives look at him with a mixture of concern and love, but they also wonder why his parents let him "get away with" this kind of behavior. His mother intuitively knows that direct eye contact will overstimulate him again, so she approaches him slowly from the side, and rubs his back gently.

When his favorite aunt looks him in the face sympathetically, he immediately distrusts her intentions. Eye-to-eye interaction is interpreted by his primitive-mode brain as a challenge, and he starts getting revved up again. His mother intervenes and takes him up to his room. She lowers the light, settles him into bed, and starts to read him a soothing story. His nervous system attempts to regulate itself back to normal, but it seems to still be held hostage by his hyped-up emotions. That night, after he does finally fall to sleep, Aiden awakens repeatedly with panic attacks — his heart races and blood pounds in his ears. He's scared of the dark, and worried that his angry outburst has upset and alienated his parents. His mother, meanwhile, confiscates the DS and decides to take it with her to work on Monday. (She really wants to throw it in the trash, but it was expensive!)

The following morning, the fight in Aiden has subsided, but the aftermath leaves him in a fog, listless, weepy, and exhausted. He experiences an increased craving for sweets while cortisol, the stress hormone, drives his blood sugar up and down erratically. It will take weeks before his body, brain, and mind return to some sense of balance.

Meanwhile, his mother reaffirms her commitment "to get rid of those damn video games."

Perceived Threat and the Fight-or-Flight Response

Does Aiden's story sound familiar? Why would a seemingly normal, loving child become so enraged and difficult after playing video games? Though his response may seem extreme, there's actually a completely natural explanation for Aiden's behavior.

Playing video games mimics the kinds of sensory assaults humans are programmed to associate with danger. When the brain senses danger, primitive survival mechanisms swiftly kick in to provide protection from harm. This response is instantaneous; it is hardwired in our genes and necessary for survival. Keep in mind that the threat does not have to be real — it only needs to be a perceived danger for the brain and body to react.

When this instinct gets triggered, our nervous system and hormones influence our state of arousal, jumping instantly to a state of hyperarousal — the fight-or-flight response. These feelings can be hard to shake off even after the provoking incident is over and the threat -- real or perceived -- is gone. In medical school, our instructors referred to this state as "running from the tiger," since during ancient times humans protected themselves from predators by literally fighting or fleeing. Today, we still need this rapid stress response for emergency situations, and on a day-to-day basis mild stress reactions help us get things done. But for the most part, repeatedly enduring fight-or-flight responses when survival is not an issue does more harm than good.

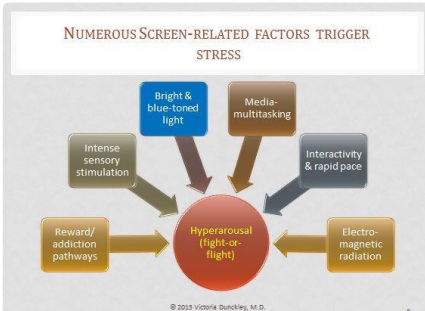
When the fight-or-flight state occurs too often, or too intensely, the brain and body have trouble regulating themselves back to a calm state, leading to a state of chronic stress. Chronic stress is also produced when there is a "mismatch" between fight-or-flight reactions and energy expenditure, as occurs with screen-time. Indeed, the build-up of energy is meant to be physically discharged to allow the nervous system to re-regulate. However, research suggests screen-time induces stress reactions even in children who exercise regularly.

Once chronic stress sets in, blood flow is directed *away* from the higher thinking part of the brain (the frontal lobe) and *toward* the more primitive, deeper areas necessary for survival, causing impairment in functioning. With children, whose nervous systems are still developing, this sequence of events occurs much faster than it does for adults, and the chronically stressed child soon starts to struggle.

It's easy to imagine how an exciting video game can cause hyperarousal. But in fact, *numerous* mechanisms act synergistically to raise arousal levels with all types of interactive screen-time. And contrary to popular belief, many of them occur *irrespective of content*. The figure below outlines some of these factors:



This is Your Child's Brain on Video Games (Cont.)



child will have trouble paying attention, managing emotions, suppressing impulses, following directions, tolerating frustration, accessing creativity and compassion, and executing tasks. All of these effects are compounded by screen-time disrupting the body clock and hindering deep sleep. In fact, the effects on sleep alone can explain many of the mood, cognitive and behavior issues associated with screens, and also explain how screen effects can build over time, making them easy to miss.

When people say my strict screen-time recommendations—which are based not just on clinical experience and research but also on *how the brain works*—are “not realistic,” and that children “must learn to manage technology,” my response is this:

It's not realistic to expect the brain to adapt to intense and artificial stimulation it was never meant to handle. It's also not realistic to expect a child with still-developing frontal lobe to control their screen-time, whether that means managing how long they play a game, how they use or misuse social media,

or how they behave afterward.

Parents need to learn the science behind how screen-time overstimulates the nervous system, how this manifests as an array of symptoms and dysfunction, and what that *looks like in their own child*. Learning this information can literally change the course of child's life; it helps parents to make informed and mindful screen management decisions, and steadies them from being swayed by cultural trends and misleading headlines. It puts parents in the driver's seat.

While the world may have changed, how the brain responds to stress and what it needs to thrive has not.

Adapted from [Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen Time](#)

November 2019

Whittier Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 12:20 dismissal	2
3	4	5 Soccer Club	6 Parent/Teacher Conference Week 12:20 dismissal	7 Soccer Club	8	9
10	11 NO SCHOOL Veteran's Day Observed	12 Spanish Club French Club Robotics Soccer Club	13 StemTree Coding	14 Robotics Soccer Club	15 LIF 1:35 dismissal Bricks 4 Kidz	16
17	18 Boeing Science Smart w/ Art	19 Spanish Club French Club Robotics Soccer Club	20 StemTree Coding	21 Robotics Soccer Club	22 LIF 1:35 dismissal Bricks 4 Kidz	23
24	25 Boeing Science Smart w/Art	26 Spanish Club French Club Robotics Soccer Club	27 12:20 Dismissal	28 NO SCHOOL	29 THANKSGIVING BREAK	30