

Whittier Wildcat News

WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



June 2020

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 9

From the Principal

Welcome to June and our final two weeks of school! I would first like to thank all Whittier families for the amazing support you have provided Whittier throughout this unique and challenging school year. We could not have done this work without the great teamwork and partnership with our families. Thank you for partnering with our teachers and staff to ensure that your children receive the best learning experiences and distance learning experiences during the 2019-20 school year!

Earlier this week Dr. Saltzman, our superintendent, shared an important message related to the tragic events occurring throughout our country, and the important role we all play to ensure equity and safety for everyone in our schools and community. I want to emphasize this message and share the commitment and dedication that Whittier has in teaching and supporting all children the importance of demonstrating kindness, compassion, empathy, love, understanding, and respect through our words and actions every day. This is the culture we strive to create every day and we are anchored to these important values. As a staff, we are always working towards improving our ability to understand, listen, learn, and continuously grow to support each child and family in the Whittier community so they feel heard, cared for, and understood. We embrace the diversity in our community, and we also do our best to empower our students to do the same as leaders in our school community who instill kindness, compassion and love, so that they can go into their bigger community to spread these same important values. The Whittier staff is always here to support you, so please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you and your family during these challenging times.

I would like to recognize two Whittier staff members who will be leaving us at the end of the school year. George Spencer, Whittier's music, and technology teacher will be retiring after 36 years of service at Whittier and 41 total years of teaching experience in the Everett Public Schools. We wish Mr. Spencer the best with the next steps and new adventures in his life. And Mrs. Vo, our assistant principal, will be moving to Woodside Elementary School as their full-time assistant principal. We wish her the best with this transition and next steps in her career. We will miss Mr. Spencer and Mrs. Vo!

The final two weeks in June will still be a busy time of the year at Whittier so here are some of the important school-wide events to put on your calendars as we finish the school year:

- i-Ready Diagnostic Assessment Window Closes – Monday, June 15 – Finish Strong!
- Talent Show Flipgrid Released to Families – Monday, June 15
- Year Books Mailed to Families – June 15-19
- 5th Grade Bridging Celebration SWAG Packets Mailed to Students – June 15-19
- 5th Grade Virtual Bridging Ceremony Released to Families – Wednesday, June 17
- 5th Grade Bridging Parade (The parade route will be released next week to families.) – Wednesday, June 17 at 5:00 p.m.
- i-Ready Dance Party Celebration – Thursday, June 18 at 10:00 a.m.
- Last Day of School – Friday, June 19

Thank you very much for your outstanding support throughout the 2019-20 school year, especially with the challenges of distance learning for final three months of the school year. Thank you! Have a great final two weeks to end to the school year and a wonderful summer!

-Tony Wentworth, Principal

Tony Wentworth

Principal

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

June 1-15

I Ready Diagnostic Testing Window

June 17-19

Chromebook Returns 12-3 pm
Student belongings returned 12-3 pm
Library book return 12-3 pm

June 15

Talent Show Flipgrid released

June 15-19

Yearbooks mailed home

June 17

5th Grade Bridging Virtual Ceremony
5th Grade Bridging Parade 5 pm

June 18

i-Ready Reward Dance Party 10 am

June 19

Last Day of School



June Library News



I never would have guessed in my 15th year of teaching our June schooling would look like this. I continue to miss seeing ALL students in the library and can't wait to see everyone back. A reminder that all students have access to their Library Google Classrooms for learning opportunities and communication. **Please reach out to me if your child needs help accessing his or her Library Google Classroom, or for any help related to reading.**

Highlights from our Whittier library website:

*Whittier ebooks! <https://www.everettsd.org/Page/35811> *More have been added!

*Online book options <https://www.everettsd.org/Page/7009>

*Ways to read at home if you don't have ability for online options: read newspaper, magazine, back of cereal box, signs during a walk, reread a book you have to a stuffed animal or family member, write your own story with illustrations...

Summer Reading Theme Weeks

*We are excited to announce that our EPS Summer Reading Program will be available to families this summer. Our program is designed to encourage exploration, family fun, and a love of reading. It features free-choice reading, optional weekly thematic activities with curated reading lists, as well as summer reading recommendations from your school librarians. We look forward to sharing the EPS Summer Reading Program with you soon!

Whittier Library Books

- Books can be dropped off at the library entrance on 10th street at the below times. Please go to the side entrance off 10th (up the big set of stairs) where a box will be for books. I will be working in the library, so I can collect them quickly and check books in. *June 9th & 16th 9:00-1:00* and *June 11th & 18th 12:00-3:00*
- You can also drop off teacher books at these times-please note what teacher.
- No overdue fines will be charged for books checked out during the district closure.
- Automated emails will go out for the last few weeks of school to help families keep track of the library books at home. If you cannot return books during the above times, then please hold onto books until further notice. Thank you!

Enjoy reading this month & stay healthy!

~Shannon Heining sheininger@everettsd.org

Summer Reading 2020
RIDE the WAVE

Read for the love of it!
Participate in family-friendly activities.
Explore curated resource lists.

Details coming soon!

EVERETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Whittier PTA

Dear Whittier Wildcats,

I hope this message finds you all well as we enter into the last month of the school year. We find ourselves ending this unprecedented year with numerous changes and challenges while simultaneously striving to do our best for our children and our community. And although we do not know what school will look like in September, I look forward to the day we will be at Whittier together.

I would foremost like to thank Whittier's teachers and staff for all their hard work in quickly adjusting to the new realities of online teaching and their continued efforts to keep our students learning and engaged.

I would also like to thank all our wonderful volunteers who helped in classrooms and with PTA events and activities, both in real life and virtually. The PTA runs on volunteers and we are eternally grateful for your time, energy and expertise.

Last, but not least, I would like to congratulate Mr. George Spencer on his retirement. Thank you for your many years of service to Whittier and our students! You have touched each of our lives deeply. We will miss you and wish you well!

Our last PTA meeting of the year will be held via Zoom, on Wednesday, June 10th at 7pm. We will be voting on new executive officers and a preliminary budget for the 2020-2021 school year. Please message us via facebook or email ptawhittierelementary@gmail.com for a meeting invite. We hope to see you there.

In good courage until we see each other again,

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

What Can Parents Do with No Last Day of School for Closure?

Erinne Magee

May 1, 2020

When I first met my daughter's three fifth-grade teachers at open house last fall, I was impressed by how passionate they were individually, yet genuinely connected as a team. I did not want to rave too much to Lexi because tweens sometimes do not want to like what their parents like. So, I kept it cool. Soon, though, I heard all about the terrific trio of teachers.

And now, the year has been cut short.

In Maine, like most of the country, the rest of the school year will be conducted remotely. I felt an immense sadness with this news, wondering how Lexi and her friends can just start middle school without a transition.

I know this sentiment is echoed among parents, regardless of grade.

So, I asked for help navigating this next phase of uncharted territory.

"Helping children and students gain some type of closure is paramount no matter what age or grade," said [Melanie Ross Mills](#), PhD, a relationship counselor in Dallas. "Completion of a school year signifies accomplishment, maturing and a personal sense of pride as each child has earned the ability to progress to the next grade."

Jamie M. Howard, PhD, a senior clinical psychologist at the [Child Mind Institute](#) in New York recommended approaching the topic in phases by taking cues from your child, noting they may feel fine now, but struggle with coping when June comes around.

[Dana Dorfman](#), PhD, a psychotherapist in New York, reminded parents not to minimize whatever feelings your child may have by trying to cheer them up. "In an effort to offset the negative feelings, adults may be tempted to highlight the upsides of the pandemic fallout and deny the inherent sense of loss associated with it." Saying something like, "You were getting tired of school anyway — now you don't have to go there every day" may seem helpful,



What Can Parents Do with No Last Day of School for Closure? (cont.)

Dr. Dorfman continued, but avoiding and denying the disappointment makes those feelings more intractable and harder to resolve. Validation of feelings is a fundamental strategy in helping with emotional regulation and several [studies in the past decade](#) have proven its efficacy.

Now is a good time to rethink your family's daily schedule — and a big part of this restructure should come from your child.

Ask her what she misses the most about being in school or a spring sport that was canceled. Find a way to incorporate what is missing into your routine. For example, for kids involved in a play who are forgoing an end-of-year production, find a way to [work theater into their day-to-day schedule](#).

While nothing can replace face-to-face interaction, staying virtually connected has never been easier. Typically, our family had strict rules about screen time, but since stay-at-home orders have been in place, we encourage Zoom and FaceTime as much as possible. In a study that looks at the [psychological impact of quarantine](#), increasing social interaction, even if behind a screen, helps in easing long term anxiety and distress. If your child's class is having an end-of-year virtual celebration, for instance, a pair of friends could help each other pick out their outfits via video calling.

We chose reflection to guide my daughter toward closure.

We talked about her favorite memories and have plans to create a photo collage of sorts. Taking this a step further, families can collaborate to put together a yearbook for the class, digital or otherwise.

"Communicate with your child or student to let them know that their progress and hard work has not gone unnoticed," said Dr. Mills. "Although they are in unprecedented times, their education and personal development matters." Dr. Mills suggests giving specific praise. For example: "Your ability to learn your spelling words, especially while quarantined has not gone unnoticed. This is not an easy task when you consider all of the distractions you have had at home."

As my quarantined mom brain was also brainstorming the transition, I wondered if elementary school kids could write letters or make a video for the students who will be moving into their grade next school year, explaining what to expect, for example, in fifth grade. I know my daughter and her classmates were already a little apprehensive about what middle school will be like. If teachers can coordinate this into their end-of-year curriculum, it would be helpful at all grade levels.

At the same time, teachers are struggling with letting go of students as well.

Younger kids can send cards or take turns reading this [picture book](#) to their teachers over Zoom.

If your family does something to mark the end of a school year, keep the tradition going in some way, whether that is an ice cream party, picnic, or taking that "last day of school" photo.

The high schools in our city are still planning to reschedule graduation for August. As details unfold over the next several weeks about how districts across the country will handle these types of celebrations.

"If schools have well-established rite-of-passage rituals, it is only fair and supportive to both children and the community to acknowledge the impact of missing them this year," said Meghan Fitzgerald, former elementary teacher and principal and cofounder of [Tinkergarten](#). Even if you change the ritual, the celebration will give closure while teaching the life lesson of accepting what cannot be controlled.

Fitzgerald said that when she was teaching, her heart would break each June as she said goodbye to her students only to find they barely recognized her in September because they were already tuning in to what was in front of them. Kids are resilient and the sting we feel for them is natural but let us remember how fast they recover and move on.

While this is not how children had hoped their year would end, said Stephanie Flores-Koulis, PhD, an associate professor of curriculum and instruction for social justice at Loyola University Maryland. Parents and educators should know that while everything seems to be weighing on kids, our care for them is their constant right now. It is their steadying force. "We want our kids to look back on this time when we wore pajamas until two in the afternoon and think, 'I felt safe,' 'I felt understood,' and 'I felt cared for.'"



COVID-19 Coronavirus webpage



Stay informed by visiting the COVID-19 Coronavirus webpage

www.everettsd.org/COVID-19. Here, you will find messaging to families, information on family tech support, learning engagement, Class of 2020 support, helpful resources, FAQ's and more related to school building closure.

What will the 2020-21 school year look like?

Thank you for understanding the complexity of decisions for the fall. Right now, we are focused on finishing the school year well, and are following the guidance of OSPI and the state for developing plans for the fall. Realistically, with the current unknowns, we won't be able to finalize a plan until early August.

Essential item pick-up

We understand your student may still have personal items at their school which are essential to continue their learning from home, such as calculators, books or medications. Schools will be conducting personal item pick-up days in late-May for families to collect your student's essential items, which will be pre-bagged and labeled by staff. You will receive more specific information on pick-up times from your school next week, but the dates are: elementary schools, May 26 and 27; middle and high schools, May 28 and 29.

There will be a second parent pick-up event at our schools on select dates between June 12-19 for families to collect any remaining student items and to return library books, textbooks, musical instruments, etc. More information about the June pick-up events will be shared with parents in the coming weeks.

When does school end this year?

June 5 is not an early release day but will follow the current modified structure.

Learning Improvement Fridays (LIF) are suspended through June 19 to follow the current modified structure.

June 19 is the new last day of school. June 12 is the last day for seniors.

Stuff the Bus is coming!

With the support of our generous community, the Everett Public Schools Foundation is hosting its 11th annual Stuff the Bus for Kids school supply drive. Last year the Foundation delivered over 1,900 backpacks to students and hope to deliver the same number this year. Look for collection bins at local businesses during the month of August and look for big yellow Durham school buses parked outside Fred Meyer in Mill Creek and QFC on Evergreen Way Aug. 14-16. For questions, please contact Kirsten Hansen at khansen@everettsd.org.





Kindergarten Registration (Class of 2033)



If your child will be five years old by August 31, 2020, it's time to register for kindergarten! Online registration is available at www.everettsd.org. Register now to access information about your school's kindergarten program and receive a parent resource and children's book "Kindergarten, Here I Come!" Registration also reserves your child's spot in *Everett Ready*, our transition-into-kindergarten program scheduled for August 17-21, at our elementary schools. Contact EarlyLearning@everettsd.org with any questions.

To find out which school your kindergartener will attend, click on Path Finder on the district's transportation webpage or call the transportation office at 425-385-4144.

Vaccinations for next year

Now is the time to plan for the vaccinations your child will need before he or she enrolls next fall. We encourage you to obtain these vaccinations this school year and report them to the school nurse or office staff at your child's school. We'll track that information in the school database, which will help you avoid getting calls and overdue letters in the fall. More information can be found on the district's [immunizations webpage](#).

Summer school

Everett Public Schools offers a variety of summer learning opportunities. Summer programs for high school students include opportunities to strengthen the skills and knowledge required for the district core expectations, repeat courses, extend their interests in academic areas, and take new courses. Tuition-based summer programs are offered for students through Online High School. Elementary and middle school summer programs are available for specific students who need academic support.

Summer Reading Program

Everett Public Schools looks forward to another successful year of its summer reading program. Please watch your school's website for details about this summer's reading program.



School supply lists

Looking to get a jump start on next year's school supplies this summer? You can find the school supply list on your school's website under *Our School* around the last week of school.

Summer meals

Did you know that all children ages 1-18 can participate in the summer meal program? Summer meals will start on June 22nd at select locations and times. Find more details on the [Food and Nutrition Department website](#).



The 2020 capital projects bond



Now, more than ever, schools are the heart of our community. Investing in our schools continues our focus on not only academics, but the well-being of every student in our district. Schools are a community resource and they need to be invested in.

Due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 24, 2020 the school board approved Resolution 1228 postponing the April 28 bond proposition until a future time to be determined by the board.

On May 5, the school board approved Resolution 1230 to place the unchanged \$317.4 million bond proposition on the August 4, 2020 special election ballot.

The 2020 bond focuses on STEM, Safety, Equity and Space.

To find out more details on all of the bond 2020 projects, visit www.everettsd.org/bond2020.

Please remember to vote on August 4, 2020



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

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

Designated to handle inquiries about nondiscrimination policies are:

- **Title IX/Civil Rights Compliance Officer** – Mary O'Brien, MO'brien@everettsd.org, 425-385-4106, PO Box 2098, Everett, WA 98213
- **504 Coordinator** – Becky Ballbach, RBallbach@everettsd.org, 425-385-4063, PO Box 2098, Everett, WA 98213
- **ADA Coordinator** – Randi Seaberg, RSeaberg@everettsd.org, 425-385-4104, PO Box 2098, Everett, WA 98213