

# Whittier Wildcat News

WHITTIER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



December 2021

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4

## From the Principal

Welcome to December! The holiday season is a time of gratitude, and it's also a time for all of us to purposefully appreciate the great things we have in our lives, such as our children and how inspiring they can be. As we head into the month of December and the holiday season, I see many things at Whittier that makes me thankful to be here working with your children. I want to thank your children for being the great people they are who make Whittier a great school community. They consistently demonstrate the "Whittier Way" every day to be safe, to be respectful and to be their best, and they are leaders who take care of each other so we can all be the best we can be.

- ❖ I appreciate how your children demonstrate respect and kindness to each other every day.
- ❖ I appreciate how your children care for and support each other every day as a community.
- ❖ I appreciate the passion and excitement for learning your children bring to class every day.
- ❖ I appreciate how your children give their best effort to be their best every day at Whittier!

Parents and guardians, I would like to thank you for your incredible partnership with Whittier to ensure that your children are coming to school every day, ready to learn, and engaging in learning so that they have successful experiences at Whittier. During parent conference week in early November, we had 98% parent participation for parent conferences with teachers. This is amazing and it's a significant indicator of the importance of our partnerships with families. Thank you!

As we head into the final month of the calendar year, I do want to remind families that we will not have a holiday concert this year due to safety social distancing restrictions for indoor events. We are not able to safely have this traditional event this year. However, we do have some fun holiday festivities planned. We will have two Whittier Holiday Spirit days - **Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> will be Whittier's "Favorite Holiday Sweater Spirit Day"** (and contest with more details to come) and **Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup> will be the "Dress Your Holiday Best Spirit Day."** And as a reminder, Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup> will be a half-day so we will have 12:20 p.m. early dismissal as we head into the winter break (EPS Winter Break December 20 – December 31).

Whittier is always here to support all families, and we know the long-term impact of COVID may have affected many Whittier families who might be struggling to secure basic needs like food and shelter. Please reach out to us if you need any help or access to urgent basic needs during the holiday season. If you are currently experiencing a hardship and need assistance, please contact Marci Cooper, Whittier's office manager, at [mcooper@everettsd.org](mailto:mcooper@everettsd.org) or Linda McKinnon, Whittier's counselor, at [lmckinnon@everettsd.org](mailto:lmckinnon@everettsd.org). We are always willing to discuss all options and possible resources to help and support you.

Please take the time to enjoy the winter holiday season with your loved ones. I want to express my appreciation for your support of Whittier and say again what a joy and pleasure it is to have your children attend Whittier. I wish you all the best in the holiday season.

- Tony Wentworth, Principal

## Tony Wentworth

Principal  
Whittier Elementary School  
916 Oakes Avenue,  
Everett, WA 98201  
[www.everettsd.org/whittier](http://www.everettsd.org/whittier)

### December 3

LIF – 1:35 pm dismissal

### December 6

Approved volunteers welcomed back

### December 10

LIF – 1:35 pm dismissal

### December 17

12:20 PM dismissal

### December 20-31

Winter Break

### January 3

Back to School

### January 7

LIF – 1:35 pm dismissal



# The A.P. Corner

## Safety Reminders for Arrival and Dismissal:

1. Please drop off and pick up students only in the **designated loading zones** on 10<sup>th</sup> street on the school side of the street.
2. Please observe all traffic safety laws and speed limits to keep our kids and staff safe!
3. When in our small parking lot, please do not attempt to pass our busses if they are not all the way parked to the right. If you would like, you are welcome to park on the street and walk to the front doors or drop off and pick up at our gate on 10<sup>th</sup> Street.
4. Please ensure that any students riding their bikes to school are wearing helmets. If your student rides to school with no helmet, a helmet will need to be brought to school **before** they can ride home at the end of the day.



Thank you so much for making our school community a safe and positive place to learn!

Allison MacGregor Fornes, Assistant Principal

## Tips from the Math Coach



Math Vision: Our students will lead and shape the future by experiencing joy and confidence while making sense of rigorous, relevant and real mathematics in ways that are creative, interactive, collaborative, inclusive and culturally sustaining.

There are family support materials for every grade level and unit linked within the IM website!

<https://im.kendallhunt.com/k5/curriculum.html>

Live link  
[Illustrative Math For Families](https://im.kendallhunt.com/k5/curriculum.html)

### ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

#### Spark discussion, perseverance, and enjoyment of mathematics.

IM K-5 Math is a problem-based core curriculum rooted in content and practice standards to foster learning and achievement for all. Students learn by doing math through solving problems, developing conceptual understanding, and discussing and defending their reasoning. Teachers build confidence with lessons and curriculum guides that help them facilitate learning and help students make connections between concepts and procedures.

#### Intentional lesson design that promotes mathematical growth.

Every activity and lesson in IM K-5 Math tells a coherent mathematical story across units and grade levels based on both the standards and research-based learning trajectories. This allows students the opportunity to view mathematics as a connected set of ideas and offers them access to mathematics when developed into the overarching design structure of the curriculum.

#### Focus on developing learning communities.

The first unit in each grade level provides lesson structures which establish a mathematical community and invite students into the mathematics with accessible content. Each lesson offers opportunities for the teacher and students to learn more about one another, develop mathematical language, and become increasingly familiar with the curriculum routines. The use of authentic contexts and adaptations provides students opportunities to bring their own experiences to the lesson activities and see themselves in the materials and mathematics.

### Norms for Doing Math

<p><b>Use multiple strategies and multiple representations.</b></p> 	<p><b>Ask questions until ideas make sense.</b></p> 	<p><b>Errors are gifts that promote discussion.</b></p> 	<p><b>Answers are important, but they are not the math.</b></p> 	<p><b>Talk about each other's thinking.</b></p> 
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## From the Library

# December 2021 Library News

Hello Whittier Families,

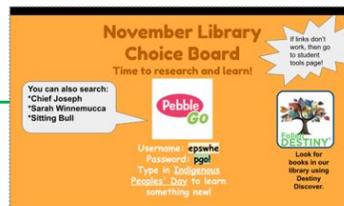
During November, grade levels were introduced to National Native American Heritage month through books. Students were encouraged to check out books I had on display to expand their understanding and respect to indigenous peoples and their cultures. Grades 2-5 also used our online databases for research opportunities.

All grades have been introduced to one or more of our district databases for nonfiction information. Grades K-1 will have teacher led research opportunities and upper grades will begin more advanced skills so they can apply to future classroom learning projects.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Heininger  
Whittier Librarian  
[sheininger@everettsd.org](mailto:sheininger@everettsd.org)  
(425) 385-4308

Students can access choice boards from their library Canvas course at home. The choice board slides change throughout the year. You can try out the databases offered to your child's grade level too!



**How often can books be checked out? Every 3 days!**  
**Students can renew books too.**

K-1st grade can take 1 book home.  
2nd grade may bring up to 2 books.  
3-5th grades may bring up to 3 books.



**Please help your child take care of the books at home and return them to school. Thank you.**

## Whittier PTA



With the Winter break fast approaching, just a couple things this month to share with you:

The first meeting for this year's 5th grade class committee will be in the cafeteria Tuesday, November 30th at 7pm. If you have a current 5th grade student and would like to learn more about our big plans for them, please join us!

There will be no PTA meeting in December, we look forward to seeing you again on January 19th, 2022! We will be meeting in the cafeteria at 7pm. We will also be available online, and will send a link out closer to the meeting date.

Your PTA would like to thank the staff, families, and friends of Whittier for all the help and support so many of you give to our students every day. We are thankful for all of you! Enjoy this time with your loved ones and we will see you in 2022!



Heather Reid, PTA President  
Sareh Hunt, PTA Vice-President  
Tiffany Leigh, PTA Treasurer  
Alexa Sheraton, PTA Secretary



# From the Counselor

## *How to Handle Tantrums and meltdowns*

*Caroline Miller/Editorial Director of the Child Mind Institute.*

The first thing we must do to manage tantrums is to understand them. That is not always as easy as it sounds, since tantrums and meltdowns are generated by a lot of different things: fear, frustration, anger, sensory overload, to name a few. And since a tantrum isn't a very clear way to communicate (even though it may be a powerful way to get attention), parents are often in the dark about what's driving the behavior.

It's useful to think of a tantrum as a reaction to a situation a child can't handle in a more grown-up way—say, by talking about how he feels, or making a case for what he wants, or just doing what he's been asked to do. Instead, he is overwhelmed by emotion. And if unleashing his feelings in a dramatic way — crying, yelling, kicking the floor, punching the wall, or hitting a parent — serves to get him what he wants (or out of whatever he was trying to avoid), it's a behavior that he may come to rely on.

That doesn't mean that tantrums are consciously willful, or even voluntary. But it does mean that they're a learned response. So, the goal with a child prone to tantrums is to help him unlearn this response, and instead learn other, more mature ways to handle a problem situation, like compromising, or complying with parental expectations in exchange for some positive reward.

### **Make an assessment**

The first step is to get a picture of what triggers your child's tantrums. Mental health professionals call this a "functional assessment," which means looking at what real-life situations seem to generate tantrums — specifically, at what happens immediately before, during, and after the outbursts that might contribute to their happening again.

Sometimes a close look at the pattern of a child's tantrums reveals a problem that needs attention: a traumatic experience, abuse or neglect, social anxiety, ADHD, or a learning disorder. When children are prone to meltdowns beyond the age in which they are typical, it's often a symptom of distress that they are struggling to manage. That effort breaks down at moments that require self-discipline they don't yet have, like transitioning from something they enjoy to something that's difficult for them.

"A majority of kids who have frequent meltdowns do it in very predictable, circumscribed situations: when it's homework time, bedtime, time to stop playing," explains Vasco Lopes, PsyD, a clinical psychologist. "The trigger is usually being asked to do something that's aversive to them or to stop doing something that is fun for them. Especially for children who have ADHD, something that's not stimulating and requires them to control their physical activity, like a long car ride or a religious service or visiting an elderly relative, is a common trigger for meltdowns."

### **Learned behavior**

Since parents often find tantrums impossible to tolerate—especially in public—the child may learn implicitly that throwing a tantrum can help him get his way. It becomes a conditioned response. "Even if it only works five out of 10 times that they tantrum, that intermittent reinforcement makes it a very solid learned behavior," Dr. Lopes adds. "So, they're going to continue that behavior in order to get what they want."

One of the goals of the functional assessment is to see if some tantrum triggers might be eliminated or changed so they're not as problematic for the child. "If putting on the child's shoes or leaving for school is the trigger, obviously we can't make it go away," explains Steven Dickstein, MD, who is both a pediatrician and child and adolescent psychiatrist. But sometimes we can change the way parents and other caregivers handle a situation — to defuse it. This could translate into giving kids more warning that a task is required of them or structuring problematic activities in ways that reduce the likelihood of a tantrum.

"Anticipating those triggers and modifying them so that it's easier for the child to engage in that activity is really important," says Dr. Lopes. "For example, if homework is really difficult for a child, because she has underlying attention, organization or learning issues, she might have outbursts right before she's supposed to start her homework. So, we say to parents, 'How can we make doing homework more palatable for her?' We can give her frequent breaks, support her in areas she has particular difficulty with, organize her work, and break intimidating tasks into smaller chunks."

Another goal is to consider whether the expectations for the child's behavior are developmentally appropriate, Dr. Dickstein notes, for his age and his particular level of maturity. "Can we modify the environment to make it match the child's abilities better, and foster development towards maturing?"

It's important for parents to understand two things: first of all, avoiding a tantrum before it begins does not mean "giving in" to a child's demands. It means separating the unwanted tantrum response from other issues, such as compliance with parental requests. And second, by reducing the likelihood of a tantrum response, you are also taking away the opportunity for reinforcement of that response. When kids don't tantrum, they learn to deal with needs, desires, and setbacks in a more mature way, and that learning itself reinforces appropriate responses. Fewer tantrums now mean...fewer tantrums later.



## ***From the Counselor (cont.)***

### **Responding to tantrums**

When tantrums occur, the parent or caregiver's response affects the likelihood of the behavior happening again. There are lots of very specific protocols to help parents respond consistently, in ways that will minimize tantrum behavior later. They range from Ross Greene's seminal approach, Collaborative & Proactive Solutions, to step-by-step parent-training programs like Parent-Child Interaction Therapy and Parent Management Training. They have in common the starting point that parents resist the temptation to end the tantrum by giving the child what he wants when he tantrums. For outbursts that aren't dangerous, the goal is to ignore the behavior, to withdraw all parental attention, since even negative attention like reprimanding or trying to persuade the child to stop has been found positively reinforce the behavior.

Attention is withheld from behavior you want to discourage and lavished instead on behaviors you want to encourage: when a child makes an effort to calm down or, instead of tantruming, complies or proposes a compromise. "By positively reinforcing compliance and appropriate responses to frustration," says Dr. Lopes, "you're teaching skills and—since you can't comply with a command and tantrum at the same time—simultaneously decreasing that aggressive noncompliant tantrum behavior."

One thing you don't want to do is try to reason with a child who is upset. As Dr. Dickstein puts it, "Don't talk to the kid when he's not available." You want to encourage a child to practice at negotiation when he's not blowing up, and you're not either. You may need to teach techniques for working through problems, break them down step by step for kids who are immature or have deficits in this kind of thinking and communication.

### **Modeling calm behavior**

And you need to model the kind of negotiation you want your child to learn. "Parents should take time outs, too," notes Dr. Dickstein. "When you get really angry you need to just take yourself out of the situation. You can't problem solve when you're upset—your IQ drops about 30 percent when you are angry."

Being calm and clear about behavioral expectations is important because it helps you communicate more effectively with a child. "So, it's not, 'You need to behave today,'" Dr. Lopes says. "It's, 'You need to be seated during mealtime, with your hands to yourself, and saying only positive words.' Those are very observable, concrete things that the child knows what's expected and that the parent can reinforce with praise and rewards."

Both you and your child need to build what Dr. Dickstein calls a toolkit for self-soothing, things you can do to calm down, like slow breathing, to relax, because you can't be calm and angry at the same time. There are lots of techniques, he adds, but "The nice thing about breathing is it's always available to you."

## ***Reporting Student Attendance***

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](mailto:WHEAttendance@everettsd.org) (1<sup>st</sup> choice)
- Whittier Attendance Phone Line – 425-385-4305 (2<sup>nd</sup> choice)

Please state your student's name, student number (if possible), date, and reason for absence. This will help us streamline excusing your student's absence.

If you are emailing your student's teacher, please include the Whittier Attendance Email @ [WHEAttendance@everettsd.org](mailto:WHEAttendance@everettsd.org). This keeps the office informed of your child's absence and will help us avoid sending out a call to you when you have already reported the absence to the teacher. Using one of these methods is best as the office is not always able to take your call first thing in the morning.

Thank you kindly for your assistance!



## Replacement levies



Everett Public Schools board of directors voted to put two replacement levies on the February 2022 ballot. The 4-year replacement Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) levy and the 6-year Capital levy would replace two levies expiring in 2022 and would start collecting in 2023.

Replacing both expiring levies within a stable tax rate, that also addressed the educational needs of all our students, was a primary goal in planning the renewal levies for the February 8, 2022 election.

Having good schools and facilities has a positive effect on our neighborhoods. Better schools help build a stronger community, which will improve our quality of life, keep crime down, and help increase the values of our homes. All students should be given the same opportunities regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or family income. This funding will ensure all students in Everett

Public Schools have the same opportunities to learn, grow and succeed.

Local EP&O levy funding allows Everett Public Schools to provide the quality education our community expects for our children, which goes beyond the minimum funded by the state. The proposed renewal levy rate is \$2.20 per \$1,000 of assessed property value (AV). This is an increase of 27 cents per \$1,000 AV. This covers basic operating expenses and includes:

- Special education services
- Additional program offerings such as summer school, early learning, elementary dual language, choice programs, orchestra, family partnerships, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)
- Additional guidance and mental health counseling services, nurses, health room assistants, staff mentors, and positive behavior coaches
- Student transportation
- Safety and security
- Extra-curricular clubs, sports, and activities
- Costs over state funding for full time, part-time and substitute staff

The \$325.5 million replacement Capital levy provides funding to acquire, improve, or maintain school facilities in the following categories:

- **Technology:** Our students benefit from ongoing integration of technology into their learning. \$96 million
- **Increased safety and security:** Our students will learn in buildings that are made to be safer and more secure. \$2 million.
- **Equal access, same experience:** Every student will have the same opportunity to learn in well-functioning, safe and modern spaces. \$172 million.
- **Maintenance and mandatory upgrades:** Our facilities are valuable community assets and must be maintained to increase their life expectancy and comply with state-mandated upgrades. \$54 million.

The passing of both the replacement EP&O and Capital levies will increase your Everett Public Schools-related property tax rates by an estimated \$0.84 per \$1,000 AV when compared to 2022 and an estimated \$0.33 when compared to 2021. However, the new tax rates will still be substantially lower than rates paid by district property owners prior to 2021.

For more information about the upcoming replacement levies, visit [www.everettsd.org/2022Levies](http://www.everettsd.org/2022Levies).



## Parent University “Suggest a Topic” Form

We want to hear from our families! Everett Public Schools empowers parents and guardians to be engaged in their child's education. Parent University is a series of short informative on-demand videos and "how-to" guides, based upon parents' top concerns and areas of interest. We are seeking input from families as we develop videos this school year. Please visit the “Suggest a Topic” form and tell us about additional topics that will help meet the needs of you and your student(s).

[Link to Parent University webpage](#)

[Link to Form](#)



## Volunteers in schools

The district will begin allowing school-based volunteers who are approved and meet the Washington State COVID-19 vaccination requirement beginning December 6. Please visit the [volunteer webpage](#) under the Parents tab for information on the application update and vaccination verification process.

## The gift of attendance

Absences spike in the weeks before and after the winter holiday as families squeeze in a few more vacation days. Just a few missed days here and there, even excused absences, can add up and lost learning time can put your child behind in school.

This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school. Put simply, too many absences at any age can affect a student's chances for academic success and eventually for graduation. This holiday season give your children the gift of an education and the habit of attendance.



## Family resources

Could you or a family you know use some help? Find information and links to helpful resources on the district's [Parent Tools webpage](#):

- Washington State Library – local and regional information about services and agencies offering help to families in a variety of ways including food, shelter, clothing, childcare, legal services, employment opportunities, and counseling
- Everett Public Schools [Kids In Transition \(KIT\) program](#) – supports homeless children and youth to continue their education
- Snohomish Health District for Snohomish County community dental resources for children and adults
- United Way of Snohomish County – 2-1-1 is a free telephone number that is your best "first call" to quickly find the right source of help. The information line is staffed by trained operators from Volunteers of America Western Washington who can connect you to a wide range of community services





## Space still available in ECEAP preschool

Everett Public Schools Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a FREE preschool program for three- and four-year-old children from families with limited income. ECEAP prepares children for kindergarten and provides family support and health and nutrition services. It is funded by the Washington State Department of Early Learning.

The six ECEAP sites within our school district are Cedar Wood, Hawthorne, Jackson, Lowell, Madison, and Silver Lake elementary schools. Space is limited – apply early! For an application or more information, please visit the [district ECEAP website](#) or call 425-385-4628.



## Transitional Kindergarten Program

Everett Public Schools is offering **Transitional Kindergarten** for children who are not currently in an early learning program and are scheduled to begin kindergarten in the fall of 2022. This program will focus on foundational academic, social, and self-help skills to jumpstart qualifying students toward success in school. Students will be screened in December and January and may qualify based on need.

The Transitional Kindergarten classrooms will be located at several of the elementary schools in our district. Sites will be determined based on enrollment. **Transitional Kindergarten** will start on Tuesday, February 1 and will run through the last day of school, which is currently June 22, 2022.

To be eligible for Transitional Kindergarten, children must:

- be 5 years old by August 31, 2022
- live within the boundaries of Everett Public Schools
- not be currently enrolled in an early learning program
- demonstrate academic and/or social-emotional needs through a screening process



The screening is an assessment used to determine your child's developmental strengths and needs. During this time, your child will draw, count, name colors, jump and have fun! Following the screening, you will have an opportunity to talk about the results and ask questions about your child's development. At this time, families will also learn whether their child qualifies for Transitional Kindergarten.

If you are interested in Transitional Kindergarten, please complete the interest form linked here:

[Transitional Kindergarten Interest Form](#)

For questions or assistance, please contact:

Helen Cooley, P-5 Instruction & Early Learning Programs Administrative Assistant: 425-385-4088 (or 425-385-4024)

Please visit our [ECEAP page](#) to learn about preschool opportunities that your child may also qualify for.



## Accepting Highly Capable nominations until Dec. 17

The Highly Capable program in Everett Public Schools is designed to meet learning needs and challenge students who have advanced thinking and academic abilities. “HC” classes, as they are often referred to, are open to students in second, third, fourth and fifth grade.

HC students learn and study in self-contained classrooms with a fast-paced curriculum that encourages and inspires them to develop higher level thinking skills. HC classrooms are held in specific schools in the district, based upon qualified enrollment. The district provides transportation to students in HC classes.

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 in February with more information to come.

## Delayed start or closed schools

If we must cancel school or delay the start of school, we will use our parent communication system to call in the morning, typically around 5:30 a.m., with a brief message about the reason for closure or delay. We will also use local media and post the message on our website. **If there is no announcement about Everett Public Schools, school is on the regular schedule.** More information and resources for school closures or delays is on the district website under the *Parents* tab.

In cases of inclement weather or other emergencies, please:

- check your email or phone for district messages
- listen for media announcements
- view the district’s website at [www.everettsd.org](http://www.everettsd.org)
- watch district [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) accounts

## Snow routes are online

School drop off and pick up locations may change in an emergency situation. If your child rides a bus to school, please become familiar with the snow route information on the district [transportation department’s webpage](#).

## Board of Distinction

Everett Public Schools board of directors earned high honors with the designation as a *Board of Distinction 2021*. Applications are reviewed by a panel of judges that includes former and current educational service district superintendents, State Board of Education board members, former school directors and other education leaders in Washington state. Scoring is based on how well applicants show alignment with the Washington School Board Standards, support their statements with data and demonstrate a link between outcomes and decisions made by the board.



Everett Public Schools board of directors front: April Berg, Caroline Mason, Andrew Nicholls. Back: Pam LeSesne, Traci Mitchell



**EVERETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS®**

3900 Broadway  
Everett, WA 98201  
425-385-4000  
[www.everettsd.org](http://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. The following employees have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:
- **Title IX/Civil Rights Compliance Officer:**  
Kevin Allen  
425-385-4100  
KAllen@everettsd.org  
PO Box 2098  
Everett, WA 98213
- **Section 504 Coordinator:**  
Dave Peters  
425-385-4063  
DPeters@everettsd.org  
PO Box 2098  
Everett, WA 98213
- **ADA Coordinator:**  
Randi Seaberg  
425-385-4104  
RSeaberg@everettsd.org  
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