



WHITTIER GREENLEAF

OCTOBER 2009

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK ~

Fall is here! Our school year is rolling along and it's great to see children happily learning in their new classes. Our construction preparation is happening almost daily and we're really excited about the prospect of wonderful new facilities for our kids. You can check out progress on our bond project on the district's website:

<http://bvdsd.org/bondproject/schools/Pages/whittier.aspx>

Please let us know if you have any questions.

IB: Whittier's IB Program is entering its ninth year, three years preauthorization and six years as a fully authorized school! Our IB program offers an international perspective to everything we do and helps students to become part of a world community. When you come into classrooms, you will see an inquiry approach, where students are engaged in learning through questioning and research. This is taught by a Spanish teacher that you paid for through your contributions to the annual PTA pledge drive. In addition students receive daily exposure to Spanish as a world language through their calendar routine, songs, games, greetings, and much more. Come in and experience many other aspects of this international program. Talk with your child about what it means to them to be an IB kid.

Don't forget that **Parent-Teacher Conferences are coming up on October 20th, 22nd, 26th and 28th.** At Whittier International, we hold more traditional teacher-led conferences in the fall for grades K-1. In grades 2-5th, you will enjoy participating in student-led conferences. Your child will share his/her work portfolio and goals for this trimester. It is always exciting for me to see the pride and responsibility students take in their own learning. **This means children 2nd -5th are expected to attend conferences but all children should stay with parents even at another sibling's conference.**

Whittier's School Improvement goals for this year are:

- ☑ *Achievement:* We will be working on the reading progress of all students.
- ☑ *Equity:* Our achievement gap goal this year is to improve the math performance of Hispanic students.
- ☑ *Climate:* We are working to improve student feelings of physical and emotional safety.

All school improvement goal statements relate to CSAP data but we take many other sources into account when measuring the success of these goals. Reading, math for Hispanic students, and creating a caring community will be areas you will hear more about during the year. Our students are doing great but we want to support them to become all they can be and achieve to their fullest potential.

Opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities are available to volunteers at Whittier. Did you know that parents who volunteer either by coming into school or by providing support from home actually increase their child's likelihood for academic success?

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I encourage you to find ways you can be part of your child's education. **Ask your child's teacher for a time to come in and volunteer.** You'll be glad you did! Thanks to all of you who have already been in to support learning in the classroom and to help our children with the upgraded Harvest Bar in the cafeteria. You are appreciated!

We, the Whittier staff, look forward to working together to serve the needs of your children. Please don't hesitate to call upon us at any time to help make your child's educational experience the best it can possibly be.

Becky Escamilla, Principal

FRS After School Classes have started!

We are lucky at Whittier to offer after school classes for our students to relax, recreate, and learn even more! Thanks to the Whittier Coordinator Alexis Batko and the new Whittier Program Coordinator Mary Cal Hollis.

Please note that there is a late bus coming at 3:40 for these students.

Although most buses at Whittier come to the Spruce Street side, the late bus pulls up in front of the school on Pine Street.

** Please remember to not park there for the students' safety.*

Hello from the Whittier Office!

Here in the Whittier office, we have been very busy beginning the new school year. Thankfully, we have had the excellent skills of Christina Monsolino, helping out temporarily until Wendy Stokes returned. Wendy can be found in the office all day on Mondays, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Emily Rose is here in the afternoons, and all day on Fridays. Karen Wolny is our principal assistant and is here all the time.

We are always happy to help you and your children navigate the halls of Whittier, so please ask us if you need anything. Please come by and sign in at the office whenever you are visiting and volunteering at school.

The Whittier office is open from 7:50 am until 4:00 pm every school day. You can reach us at: **720 561-5431**.

When your child is absent, please call the attendance line: **720 561-2465**, and leave a message letting us know the reason for the absence.

We look forward to a great year at Whittier!

Karen Wolny, Wendy Stokes and Emily Rose

What Can You Do When Things Feel Hard? By Jennifer Weise

Sometimes we are so busy taking care of the daily responsibilities in our lives, as well as extra challenges that have suddenly landed on our plates, that we don't always notice we are stressed out.

Being stressed out can look like:

- Being irritable or angry with family members (including the family dog!)
- Feeling tired
- Eating more or losing your appetite
- Finding yourself wanting to cry or actually crying
- Memory loss or losing your ability to concentrate

You might be stressed out because, for example:

- Someone in your family has lost their job or you're worried they might
- A friend or family member is seriously ill
- Your parents are aging
- You have one or more children to raise!
- There are events that have happened in this country or internationally that worry you
- You are worried over events that might happen, to people or to the planet

What you can do:

One of the simplest and most helpful things to do when you find yourself especially stressed is to talk to someone who's a good listener. If you feel you have family or friends who do this for you, that is wonderful! Sometimes it is also very helpful to talk to some kind of counselor just so you can speak all your worries and problems out loud. It's amazing how a good venting can reduce our stress levels. If needed, problem-solving can follow. You can go back to your family or to the situation with renewed energy and a fresher perspective. You may only need to talk once, or you might find it's helpful to talk weekly until a major crisis has passed.

Who you can talk to at no cost to you:

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Therapists** – Many businesses offer EAP as a way to see a therapist without having to pay for it yourself. The EAP program pays for your sessions.
- **Whittier's Family Resource School (FRS) Therapist or School Counselors/School Social Worker** – Whittier has a team of counselors who work in many different ways to support students *and* parents with a whole range of issues and concerns. They also can help you find private or low-cost counseling in the community, or help you access counseling that your insurance might pay for.

If you have any questions about talking to someone or getting help, please feel free to contact:

- Jennifer Weise, Whittier 's FRS Therapist, 720-561-2423 or 303-413-6330
- Naomi Moddel, Whittier 's Counselor and Social Worker, 720-561-2437 or 303-447-5001 X 8764
- Carol Azzolina, Whittier 's Counselor, 720-561-8531

Also, if you have specific concerns and need concrete financial help from Whittier 's FRS program, please contact:

- Alexis Batko, Whittier 's FRS Outreach Coordinator, at 303-442-9189

She can explain more to you about what the FRS program can offer to help.

Coming to you live from the Counseling Office of Whittier International School!

Here is what we have been working on with your student this month:

- Who are the counselors and what do counselors do?
- Friends
- Playground Rules and Safety
- What IB attitudes we use on the playground.

Please ask your student to share what they have been learning with you.

Our FRS Counselor Jennifer Weise will be offering 1-2-3 Magic classes for Spanish Speaking parents on Tuesday, October 6th and October 13th. The classes are free and there is also free child care available. The classes will be from 6 to 8 pm. Please return your permission slip by Monday, October 5th.

Please feel free to contact Carol on Thursday afternoon and Friday, Naomi on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and Jennifer on Monday afternoon, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning. You can leave any of the counselors a voice message and we will contact you as soon as possible. Thank you.

Wishing the best for you and your child,
Carol Azzolina, Counselor 720 - 5601- 8531
Naomi Moddel, Counselor/Social Worker 303-447-5001 x 8764
Jennifer Weise, FRS Counselor 720-561-2423

September ESL News

Thank you to all the volunteers who so generously participated in helping make Heritage Night one of the best yet!

Some families have expressed interest in instruments played by the performers. For information on marimba lessons, contact Kutandara at 303.443.2969. For bagpipe lessons, contact Molly at mollyrob80501@msn.com.

Several bowls and miscellaneous items were left behind that night. Please claim them either in the staff lounge or on the bench in the front hall.

Please send any suggestions for next year to Judy, Holly, or Briney, this year's ESL team.

Promoting Literacy Worldwide Through the Whittier Spring Book Swap

The 2009 spring book swap benefited not only Whittier students, but also helped to promote literacy in other parts of the world. Several boxes of leftover books were dispersed to three different places. One group of boxes was shipped to the Magic Yeti Children's Library, a small library situated in Nepal's Khumbu region http://www.alexlowe.org/magic_yeti.shtml Another group of boxes was taken by a Boulder family via airplane to a township in South Africa where they were gifted to South African children. A third group of boxes was donated to local Colorado families.



International Baccalaureate News

Grade-Level Updates on Whittier's IB Program

Kindergarten

Our current IB Unit of Inquiry is "Bienvenidos a la Escuela" and kindergarten students are learning so much about school! The central idea of this unit is: We have responsibilities as members of our school community. We have been learning about what it means to be responsible at school and how to do our best in the classroom. Students in each classroom have constructed classroom "Rights and Responsibilities" and created the expectations for our school year together. We have also introduced the "Question Board" where students ask questions at the beginning of each IB unit. Swing by the kindergarten hallway to check out all of the amazing questions all about school!

First Grade

First grade has finished up our Earth Rocks unit. The students made great connections about how earth materials may be turned into many useful products all over the world. The students also learned that rocks can be sorted by sizes, colors, shapes and other properties. We are now investigating families: similarities and differences. We are also learning about how families have rules and participate in making rules in their communities. This is our IB unit for Who We Are.

Second Grade

2nd Grade is completing their Communities Unit, "Won't You Be My Neighbor." Children investigated how individuals are similar and different from others, how the classroom and school communities are organized and who makes decisions. The trip down the Pearl Street Mall; to the Library, kids' ponds, Chautauqua, and the Boulder History Museum, have given children a look at our surrounding community. This will be a great springboard for studying communities around the world in our next unit, "Tales, Towns and Timelines." The focus will be on diversity and how communities change over time in India and China. We're excited to learn about spices, noodles, chopsticks, folktales and different beliefs around the world. (We'll also be visiting these countries in our play; The Magic School Bus visits Asia.

Third Grade

Third graders are wrapping up their fossils unit with an independent research project, a field trip to the CU Henderson Museum, and a fossil celebration with a dinosaur film and fossil type snacks! The next unit of inquiry will be *Hear Our Voices*, a study of Colorado government and Colorado's State symbols. During this unit, students will learn about the voting process and participate in a simulation vote. Furthermore, we will be taking a field trip to the State's Capitol at the end of October.

Fourth Grade

4th grade is WILD about water! This month we are studying water sheds. Do you know where your water comes from? We are also looking at water pollution, conservation, and how water is distributed around the world. We are bringing in guest speakers to teach us about important global water issues, as well as taking field trips to our own backyard. Are you water wise? Keep your eyes out for any articles or current events about this "wet" topic!

Fifth Grade

The fifth graders at Whittier are well immersed in their Surf and Turf inquiry unit. The central idea for this unit is: *Aquatic and terrestrial environments have dynamic systems that interact and change over time.* Students have explored landforms, and the formation of the Grand Canyon using stream table models. They also investigated the concept of sustainability by participating in a fishing simulation. Currently each student is researching a world biome, and creating a brochure to present the fascinating details of their unique ecosystem. A field trip to Mt. Sanitas capped of a recent week, during which students looked at our local land through a geological lens.

In addition to inquiry units, both classes have set up their class governments: the US of Fifth Grade Geese, and The Qwacks Society. Our students have admirable leadership talents, and our democratic communities are flourishing! There is no doubt that this flock rocks!

Art News!!

We are gearing up for another productive year for making art! Students are working hard and new art should be coming rapidly to the walls of Whittier!

Don't forget to check in with the Art Web Site to see shots of students working on their art and the finished pieces!

Web Site address:

<http://schools.bvsd.org/whittier/artsite/index.html>

Any parents looking to get rid of their old egg cartons, we would gladly use them in art! I would prefer the paper kind instead of the Styrofoam kind.

Much thanks!!!!

Jenn Shepherd

Parent Engagement Network presents:
Thriving During the Elementary Years
Importance of Early Intervention
By Dr. Jan Hittelman

We all know that long-term habits are hard to break. That's why addressing our children's learning, language, emotional, and behavioral challenges early on is so important. If your child is struggling at home, in school and/or with peers, it is important to first understand where these challenges are emanating from. And that's not always so easy to do. A child who "is not listening" in class may have a language-processing problem. Someone who bullies others may be struggling with self-image issues. Temper tantrums may be a desperate cry for attention. While it's every parent's hope that our children are simply going through a phase (and sometimes they are), if these challenges continue consider the following steps:

1. **Get Other's Feedback:** Check in with other adults in your child's life (teachers, other parents, relatives, etc.) and get their feedback as well. If these issues are occurring in other settings then it may be an issue unique to your child. If it's only happening in one setting then the dynamics of that setting may play a role.
2. **Talk to Your Child:** On a good day at a positive moment discuss your concerns with your child in an open, supportive, non-threatening way. Try to elicit your child's viewpoints and feelings about your concerns. Ask what you can do to help.
3. **Consider an Assessment:** There are excellent learning, language and behavioral experts who are trained to assess children and provide valuable feedback regarding their challenges. Ask your child's teacher and/or principal for recommendations.
4. **Develop an Action Plan:** Once you're clear about the type of issues that your child is struggling with, develop a plan of action to ensure that your child's difficulties are being addressed.

The longer we wait to address these issues the more challenging they are to remediate and the more damage they are likely to cause.

UPCOMING PEN EVENTS:

Harvesting Healthy Families
Nourishing the Mind, Body, Soul and Community
Bryce Browne
Bryce@growefoundation.org
www.growefoundation.org

Monday, October 19, 6:30-8:30pm, BVSD Education Center (6500 Arapahoe, Boulder)

Learn more about PEN by visiting their website: www.parentengagementnetwork.org or by contacting Paula Nelson, PEN chair (pjn6225@yahoo.com 303-880-6030) or Eugenia Brady, PEN Co-Chair (eugenia.brady@bvsd.org 720-561-5150).

Dr. Jan Hittelman, a licensed psychologist, is Director of Boulder Psychological Services and the Founder of the Boulder Counseling Cooperative. Questions or comments for this monthly column can be sent via email to: jan.hittelman@gmail.com, or by phone: 720-217-3270.

Whittier's October Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 Oct. Count Day	2
5 World Teacher's Day	6	7 PTA meeting 6-7:30 pm	8	9 * Picture Day SMILE! 😊
12 Columbus Day	13 6-7:30 pm - 1,2,3 Magic (Sp. parenting class)	14 IB Kid's Assembly 10 am	15	16
19	20 4 th gr. (Alysia) -field trip Parent/Teacher conferences	21 3 rd grade Field Trip	22 Parent/Teacher Conferences	23
26 Vision & Hearing Screening Parent/Teacher Conferences	27 4 th gr. (Caitlin) -field trip	28 Parent/Teacher Conferences	29	30

AFTERSCHOOL CLASSES FALL 2009 WHITTIER SCHOOL

Class Name	Grade	Location	Dates	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
Homework Club	3,4,5	Library	9/21 -		x	x	
Math Club	3 4	Judy's Room Holly's rm	9/21 -	x		x	
Reading Club	5	Hallway	9/21-	x		x	
Art Club - FRS							
Art Club - FRS	1st-5th	Art Room	9/21-11/12			2:45-3:45	
Chess Club	3rd-5th	Hallway basement	9/21-11/12			2:45-3:45	
Chess Club	1st-2nd	Hallway basement	9/21-11/12				2:45-3:45
Hip-Hop	2nd-5th	Art Room	9/21-11/12	2:45-3:45			
Lego Robotic	3rd-5th	Basement/ 5th gr.	9/21-11/12	2:45-4:30			
Public Achievement	2nd-5th	Library/ Breida or John's Classroom	9/21- 11/12	2:45-3:45			
Yoga Class	K-2	Briney's classroom	9/21-11/12			2:45-3:45	
Yoga Class	3rd-5th	Briney's classroom	9/21-11/12	2:45-3:45			
Historians							
Historians	4th	Caitlin Kline's	10/13-12/15 1/12-4/27				
NaNoWriMo Writing Seminar							
NaNoWriMo Writing Seminar		Mary McDaniel's	9/24 - 12/3			2:45-3:45	
Wildcat Choir							
Wildcat Choir	4th-5th	Stage	9/30 -12/9 2/3 - 4/14			2:45-3:45	
Origami	5th	Lise's Room	9/15 -10/27		3:00- 4:00		
Basketball	5th	GYM	9/21-12/11	7:00-7:45 am			7:00-7:45 am