



WHITNALL SCHOOL DISTRICT | ISSUE 2 | VOL 4 | WINTER 2015

# The Viewpoint

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1960

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## Focus on Facilities: PROJECTS GO TO VOTERS

On April 7, voters will have the opportunity to decide if the Whitnall School District should move forward with several major components of its long-range facilities plan, including rebuilding Hales Corners Elementary School and making significant upgrades and improvements to Whitnall High School.

After years of research, review, and community input, the School Board voted to present district residents with two separate referendum questions on the spring ballot:

- \$22.5 million to retire and replace Hales Corners Elementary School on the existing site;
- \$6.9 million to address facility needs at Whitnall High School, including energy-related projects and the pool/locker rooms.

The decision to go to referendum was not made lightly. The District hired an independent firm to survey the community in fall 2014, and found a majority of respondents likely would support addressing significant facility needs. Survey highlights include:

- 63 percent of non-staff resident respondents said they would likely support a referendum to address the needs at Hales Corners Elementary (HCE), while 18 percent were undecided;
- Building a new HCE was the preferred option among the three major ideas presented in the survey;
- 64 percent of non-staff resident respondents would probably or definitely support addressing maintenance needs and energy-efficiency projects;
- 51 percent of all residents and 62 percent of parent respondents would likely support addressing the aging swimming pool/locker room project.



Students at Hales Corners Elementary often use hallway spaces for testing or personalized instruction.



Continued on page 2

**SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE**  
**PLEASE VOTE ON APRIL 7**

The first half of the school year has flown by, and what an exciting half it has been.

We were inundated with good news during the fall. Shortly after learning Whitnall High School posted the best ACT scores in school history, the District earned the distinction of "exceeds expectations" by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for the second straight year. And if that wasn't enough, in November, WHS was named to the College Board's AP Honor Roll for its significant gains in student access to and success in Advanced Placement testing.

And our students are just as successful when they are outside of the classroom. I thoroughly enjoy going from school to school to see the holiday concerts, from our smallest students at the elementary levels to our most gifted musicians at the middle and high schools. And my wife and I cannot wait to see the upcoming performance of the high school's musical, *Once On This Island*, in March.

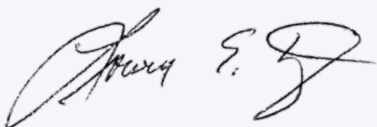
This spring, however, will bring a new level of excitement and conversation to the community. The School Board and administrators, taking guidance from community input provided through a district-wide survey and our strategic plan, spent the last several months narrowly defining our long-range facility needs, developing a responsible plan we believe will set up our students for future success.

Our immediate focus is providing a safer and more accessible Hales Corners Elementary school, one with modern, flexible learning environments, as well as addressing urgent energy-efficiency projects and the aging, non-competitive pool at the high school.

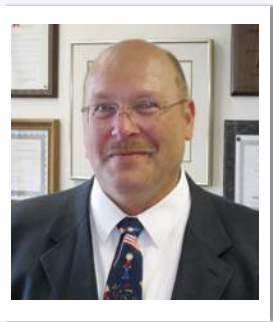
Over the next several weeks, we will take every opportunity to share with you our most pressing facility needs, the details of the referenda, and our goals for the future. We look forward to providing information on our website, through special mailings to all district residents, via social media and face-to-face during school tours and open house events. Every vote matters and we encourage everyone to learn more about the proposed referendum questions.

Please don't hesitate to contact me directly at (414) 525-8411 or email us your questions at referendum2015@whitnall.com.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lowell E. Holtz, Superintendent



**Dr. Lowell Holtz**

**PROJECTS, from Page 1**

"With interest rates near historic lows, our district nearly debt free, and most importantly, the community's willingness to support upgrades to our schools, the School Board believes now is the time to invest in our children's future and address our most urgent facility needs," School Board President LuAnn Bird says.

"We are definitely excited about what these proposed projects could mean for our students, staff and community, if approved," Whitnall Superintendent Dr. Lowell Holtz says. "Our focus now is to provide residents with the facts they need to make an informed decision Tuesday, April 7."

As the School Board and administration focused on developing the most fiscally responsible plan that addresses the district's most pressing needs, it was decided to hold off on additional energy-related projects throughout the district and expanding the weight room at Whitnall High School.

Please turn to pages 3 and 4 for additional information on the proposed Facility Needs Referendum, including preliminary site/floor plans, the estimated impact to taxpayers, and how you can learn more in the coming weeks.



The high school pool is too shallow and cannot be used for competitive meets.



Exterior walls along the the high school are rusting and deteriorating.

**WHAT ABOUT INFO NIGHTS?  
TOURS? TURN TO PAGE 8**



# REFERENDUM FACT SHEET

## WHAT IS ON THE BALLOT TUESDAY APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>?

After years of extensive research, review, and community input, the Whitnall School Board has created a **long-range facilities plan** to meet the needs of our students and reflect the priorities of our community. Based on this feedback, school district residents will have the opportunity to **vote on two separate referendum questions**:

### QUESTION 1

REBUILD HALES CORNERS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
NOT TO EXCEED \$22.5 MILLION



- **Rebuild elementary** school for approximately 675 students in early childhood and grades K-5 on the **existing site**
- Retire and remove the existing Hales Corners Elementary and convert that area into expanded parking and activity/green space

### QUESTION 2

WHITNALL HIGH SCHOOL  
POOL, SAFETY & ENERGY NEEDS  
NOT TO EXCEED \$6.9 MILLION



(\$4.6 MILLION)

- Renovate and expand the swimming pool by deepening and **widening it from 6 to 8 lanes**, allowing for diving and starting blocks and competitive use
- Create a dedicated pool entrance to provide **community and ADA accessibility**
- Extensively renovate the locker rooms for students and family use



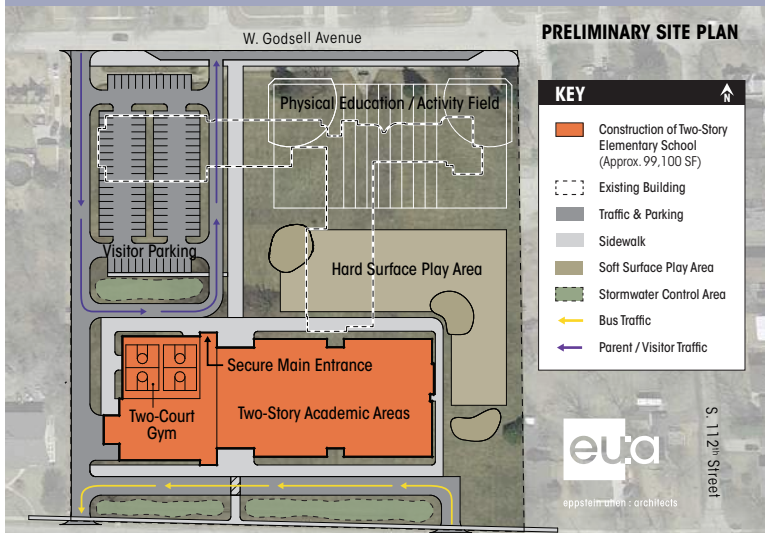
(\$2.3 MILLION)

- Address **high-priority safety, maintenance and energy efficiency** projects including:
  - Replacing original windows
  - Replacing deteriorating exterior wall panels
  - Installing air conditioning in main high school gym

Each question must be voted on individually.

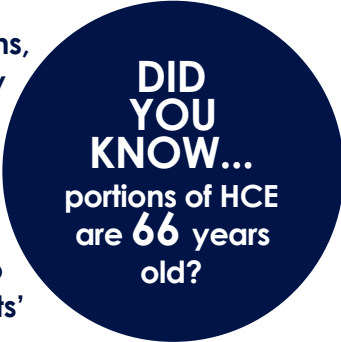
Q1

## WHY ARE WE PROPOSING REBUILDING HALES CORNERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?



Hales Corners Elementary is the oldest of the District's four schools, **originally built in 1948**, with three significant expansions.

A review of **safety concerns, ADA accessibility, and energy efficiency** reflects an **aging facility**. Many building systems are beyond their life expectancy requiring extensive replacement and academic **learning spaces no longer effectively support students' needs**.



## THE PROPOSED REBUILT SCHOOL WOULD PROVIDE:



Safe, visible and secure main entrance to control visitor access and improve site traffic flow



Flexible, accessible learning environments for all students consistent with today's learning strategies



Space for one-on-one teaching and small to large group collaboration areas



Appropriate areas for special education, and required services such as speech, and occupational/physical therapy



Highly energy-efficient building systems and design to maximize natural light

# Q2

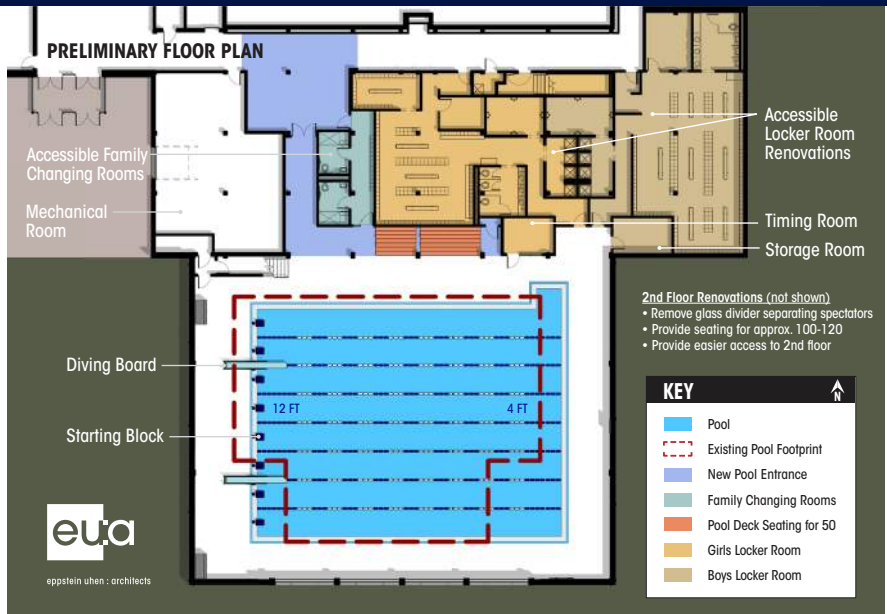
# WHY ARE WE PROPOSING WORK AT WHITNALL HIGH SCHOOL?

A facilities audit of Whitnall High School identified **nearly \$4.7 million of large capital maintenance and energy efficiency related needs.** The School Board has prioritized the

**most urgent projects for Question #2.**

**The 47-year-old pool is the most used facility in the district and cannot be used competitively**

The 47-year-old pool is the most used facility in the district with **more than 500 school and community events** occurring per year. The pool, however, **cannot be used for competitive events and diving is not permitted** at all because it is too shallow. At only six lanes, it limits competitive use even further.



## THE PROPOSED PROJECTS WOULD PROVIDE:

**New windows and exterior panels to improve energy efficiency and control interior room temperatures**

*Pictured : Current Conditions at WHS*

**Air conditioning in the high school gym to improve moisture control and balance temperatures during physical education, athletic practice and events, and special events**

**A separate, dedicated pool entrance for improved community and ADA accessibility**

**Reconfigured pool locker rooms with family changing areas, single shower stalls, and improved ADA accessibility**

**A renovated and expanded (both in depth and width) pool vessel, with the addition of diving and starting blocks, allowing swimmers and divers to use the pool competitively and for the district to host local meets and events**

## WHAT IS THE TAX IMPACT



### ESTIMATED MAXIMUM PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

PROPERTY VALUE	QUESTION 1   \$22.5 MIL (\$1.41 per \$1,000 of property value)		QUESTION 2   \$6.9 MIL (\$0.42 per \$1,000 of property value)	
	PER YEAR	PER MONTH	PER YEAR	PER MONTH
\$100,000	\$141	\$11.75	\$ 42	\$3.50
\$200,000	\$282	\$23.50	\$ 84	\$7.00
\$300,000	\$423	\$35.25	\$126	\$10.50

*If the referendum is approved, taxpayers will note the impact on the December 2015 tax bill. Preliminary tax impact estimates for a 20-year borrowing are based on an interest rate of 3.50% (in January 2015). Estimates provided by financial advisors at Robert W. Baird & Co.*



# Congratulations

- Edgerton Elementary's student council (top) led Operation Gratitude, a military donation drive, during December.
- The Whitnall Middle School boys (middle) collected \$534 for The Ronald McDonald House. WMS girls collected \$455.
- Junior Madeleine Cieszynski, sophomore Alyssa Doherty and freshmen Kelly McElvain and Brooke Miles (bottom) led the WHS swim and dive team to 14th place at the state meet in November.



**WHO:** Dan O'Donnell

**THEN:** O'Donnell graduated from Whitnall High School in 1999, before graduating from Marquette University and the

University of Wisconsin Law School.

**NOW:** O'Donnell works for News/Talk 1130 WISN, where he is a news anchor, commentator, talk show host, online columnist sports broadcast coordinator, FCC compliance officer, and more. "I do a little bit of everything and I love it." Before coming to WISN, O'Donnell was primarily a news anchor and the Milwaukee Brewers postgame show host for WTMJ.

**BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE:** In addition to his work in Milwaukee, O'Donnell has served as a correspondent for CBS News Radio, ABC News Radio, FOX News Radio, In Session TV and *The Nancy Grace Show* on HLN (formerly CNN Headline News).

**WHY BROADCAST JOURNALISM?:** "Growing up, I always kind of assumed I would be a lawyer, but it was in Mrs. Clark's Broadcast Journalism class that I developed a passion for broadcasting that has stayed with me to this day!"

**CAREER HIGHLIGHT?:** "Honestly, just being able to do what I love every day has been a highlight, but I was fortunate enough to twice win one of broadcast journalism's most prestigious awards, the national Edward R. Murrow Award, in 2008 for investigative reporting and again in 2012 for sports reporting."

**HANGING AROUND:** O'Donnell grew up in the area, went to college in state, lives in New Berlin and works at a radio station that rests inside Whitnall's

boundaries. "I've always loved this area, and it's where my family and most of my friends are. In fact, some of my very best friends are the same best friends I had at Whitnall, and that, to me, is something very special."

**FAVORITE WHITNALL MEMORY:** "I can't honestly pinpoint just one favorite memory from my time at WHS. I loved it so much that I could recall a hundred favorites without really thinking too hard!"



Alumni Corner 



# Baking for Barkers: Tail-Waggin' Treats a Hit at Whitnall High School

Whitnall High School special education students have become entrepreneurs in a unique and fun way this school year.

Special education teacher Scott Schubert's class of eight students began making, packaging and selling homemade dog treats. They first made sample batches for staff members' dogs, before making more treats made available to parents at Whitnall High School's parent-teacher conferences in November. They were also busy just before the holiday break, filling orders for teachers and staff members who were getting last-minute gifts for their four-legged friends.



Tail-Waggin' Treats are made from all-natural ingredients and come in three flavors: Minty Fresh Breath, Whole Wheat Chicken and Pumpkin. The treats are made at Whitnall High School by the special education students, with the assistance of Schubert and special education aides.

They are sold in packages of three for \$2.50. All proceeds are used for special education classroom materials or to fund special education experiences.

"It has been a great experience for all of us to get this started," Schubert says. "It's great to see the students' pride as they carefully make and package their treats. There is a real sense of ownership and accomplishment."

**DID YOU KNOW?** Tail-Waggin' Treats was featured by Milwaukee Journal Sentinel columnist Jim Stingl in December. To read the story, do an online search for keywords "Jim Stingl + Whitnall."



## Communications Efforts Applauded by State PR Organization

The Wisconsin School Public Relations Association (WSPRA) honored the Whitnall School District with Spectrum Awards of Excellence and Merit for its work in school communications.

Whitnall earned an Award of Excellence for the district-wide newsletter *The Viewpoint*, and an Award of Merit for *The Lab Report*, a K-12 science newsletter sent electronically to district parents.

Spectrum Awards recognize high-quality public relations efforts produced by or on behalf of Wisconsin school districts. This year, the statewide competition honored 23 school districts with awards. Whitnall was one of 10 districts to earn multiple awards.

"Spectrum Award winners exemplify the very best communications work

in school districts across the state," WSPRA President Kevin Hickman says. "The winners demonstrate the value of engaging stakeholders in order to build community support for Wisconsin's schools."

WSPRA's Spectrum Awards are judged by the Illinois School Public Relations Association on a four-point scale in four areas: goals and objectives, research and planning, execution and evaluation results.

WSPRA is a professional association representing schools, school districts, educational associations, consulting agencies and organizations.



Communications Coordinator David Cotey (left) and WHS science teacher Laura Cerletty display their WSPRA awards.

# 87%

According to a recent survey by School Perceptions, 87 percent of Whitnall parents and 64 percent of non-parents feel Whitnall's communication efforts over the last year have been somewhat or very effective.

The Whitnall High School Drama Department presents:

# ONCE ON THIS ISLAND

From the Tony Award-winning songwriting team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty comes the Olivier Award-winning *Once on This Island*.

Through non-stop song and dance, this full-hearted musical tells the story of Ti Moune (Reilly Johnson), a peasant girl who rescues and falls in love with Daniel (Jonathan Homontowski), a wealthy boy from the other side of her island. When Daniel is returned to

his people, the fantastical gods who rule the island guide Ti Moune on a quest that will test the strength of her love against the powerful forces of prejudice, hatred and even death.

The cast also includes Jessica Prom (as Mama Euralie), Grant Singer (TonTon Julian), Helen Baker (Andrea), Angela Jacoby (Asaka), Ben Pratt (Agwe), Sarah Walther (Erzulie) and Matt Peplinski (Papa Ge).

## Where

Whitnall High School, 5000 S. 116th Street, Greenfield

## When

March 19-21, 7:30 p.m.  
March 22, 2 p.m.

## Ticket Prices

\$12 adult  
\$8 seniors/students 18 and under  
\$5 senior group rate for purchase of 10 or more tickets (phone only)

Order by phone at (414) 525-8534 or online at [whs.whitnallschools.com](http://whs.whitnallschools.com). Limited tickets will be available at the door (cash/check only).

Story tellers are Max Anderer, Sophia Azmani, Abby Callahan, Jake LaFleur, Natalie Leonardelli, Caroline Mohr, McKenna Palus, Maggie Pelkofer, Eliana Reed, Alyssa Reyes, Sara Sison, Starz Wint, Aong Xiong and Mainya Xiong. The crew includes George Bacalzo, Sarah Bauer, Daniel Clarizio, Elizabeth Hennemann, Isabelle Holcomb, Amy Kaupla, Bradley Krimmer, Anna Krolkowski, Brette Martinez, Anthony Metz, Vince Piacentine, Samantha Reinhard, Rebecca Richter and Annabelle Zach.



## Senior Citizens Dinner, Show Set for March 18

The Whitnall School District's dinner and a show for seniors, a wonderful tradition enjoyed by hundreds of citizens each year, will be Wednesday, March 18.

Dinner will be served at 5:15 p.m., followed by a performance of *Once On This Island* at 6 p.m. District administrators and staff, School Board members and Whitnall High School National Honor Society students act as the servers for the special meal.

Tickets are only \$6, and available in-person at the District Office, 5000 S. 116th Street, beginning Feb. 23. Be sure to get your tickets as soon as possible — last year's senior dinner and a show SOLD OUT!

The cost includes the Falcon Fish Fry, a red-hook ale-battered fish, with cole slaw, seasoned French fries and rye bread, as well as coffee, milk, tea or water, and assorted cheesecakes for dessert.

For more information, contact Kathie Poss at (414) 525-8411 or [kposs@whitnall.com](mailto:kposs@whitnall.com).



A sold-out crowd of hundreds of senior citizens enjoyed their Falcon Fish Fry dinner before attending *Grease*, Whitnall High School's 2014 spring musical.

# The Viewpoint



Whitnall School District  
Community Newsletter

5000 S. 116th Street  
Greenfield, WI 53228  
Ph. 414-525-8400

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Newsletter feedback? Send to [dcotey@whitnall.com](mailto:dcotey@whitnall.com).

To reach a Board of Education member or the Superintendent call:

- LuAnn Bird..... 414-235-8310
- Quin Brunette..... 414-550-5633
- Jonathan Cagle..... 773-756-8580
- Jon D. Jones ..... 414-678-9788
- Stephanie Richter..... 262-844-2997
- Eileen Valaitis..... 414-510-5777
- Nancy Zaborowski..... 414-427-9604
- Dr. Lowell Holtz, Superintendent... 414-525-8411

The Whitnall School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap as required by WI Statute 118.12.

## TO LEARN MORE ...

### Want more referendum information?

- ◆ **Visit** the district website at [www.whitnall.com](http://www.whitnall.com) and click on the referendum graphic
- ◆ **Watch** for information to be mailed directly to all district residents in March
- ◆ **Tour** our schools (schedule coming soon on the district website)
- ◆ **Attend** a Referendum Information Night at Hales Corners Elementary on March 10, and at Whitnall High School on March 12 (times TBD)
- ◆ **Stop by** an Open Door session to talk one-on-one with administrators and School Board members, Wednesdays from 4-5 p.m. at HCE beginning Feb. 25, and Thursdays from 6:30-8 a.m. in the Community Board Room beginning Feb. 19
- ◆ **Email** your questions to [referendum2015@whitnall.com](mailto:referendum2015@whitnall.com)

## VOTING INFORMATION

Contact your local municipal clerk for information on voter registration, polling places or how to cast an absentee ballot in the spring election. Visit [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov) to learn more.

**City of Franklin**  
(414) 425-7500

**City of Greenfield**  
(414) 329-5219

**Village of Hales Corners**  
(414) 529-6161



## FEBRUARY

Feb. 12	High School parent-teacher conferences
Feb. 16	Staff Development Day (no school for students)
Feb. 23	School Board meeting, 6:30 p.m.

## MARCH

March 9	School Board meeting, 6:30 p.m.
March 16	Staff Development Day (no school for students)
March 18	<i>Once on This Island</i> : Senior Citizen Dinner/Show, 5:15 p.m.
March 19-22	WHS's <i>Once On This Island</i> (see pg. 7 for details)
March 23	School Board meeting, 6:30 p.m.
March 31	WHS/WMS Spring Orchestra Concert, 7 p.m.

## APRIL

April 3-10	Spring Break (no school)
April 7	Election Day - Don't Forget to Vote!
April 13	School Resumes; School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
April 18	ACT Testing
April 27	School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

## MAY

May 22	Staff Development Day (no school for students)
May 25	Memorial Day