



SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER

January 2026 Edition

ALL MEANS ALL



WHITEWATER
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Good Afternoon Whippets Nation and Welcome Back!

Happy New Year to everyone! We hope you had a restful winter break as we look forward to the second half of the school year.

January Highlights: A Day of Service

On January 12th our high school held its annual Day of Service — a meaningful way for students and staff to give back to the community that supports their educational journey. Projects took place at every school in the district, at Fairhaven, the Community Space, and even at the LaGrange Fire Station. More than 200 WHS students participated — it was a

GREAT day to be a Whippet! A memorable moment worth sharing: I joined students at Fairhaven to make dog treats and watched them interact with residents. The joy on both the students and the resident's faces was unforgettable. Please check out the recap video of the day below. We have several events coming up in February. Registration will open on February 1. On February 11, I will be

at
up

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STUDENTS ON FEBRUARY 20, MORE INFORMATION WILL BE SHARED SOON FOR THESE EVENTS.

Winter Weather Reminder

Colder weather is back as we are in the midst of extreme cold weather advisories and warnings with below-zero temperatures. Please review our winter weather protocols for possible school closures or delays by clicking the links below or watching the short video about our protocols. Please know these decisions do not come lightly – we love connecting with students daily, providing breakfast and lunch, however we must prioritize safety.

Strategic Planning – We Need Your Voice

Our current strategic plan is in its third year, and we've begun planning stages for the next three year strategic plan for the district. Look for information to come out soon about community engagement sessions and focus groups happening in February – we hope you'll join us for one of those opportunities. In the meantime, please complete the Strategic Planning Survey (opened January 9, closes January 30). You can find the survey by clicking the link titled "Strategic Planning Survey" below to participate.

Stay Connected

If you're not already following us, please consider connecting on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn to stay current with all the great things happening across the district. Our newly updated website also hosts many recent updates.

Thank you for your continued support – we're excited for a strong second half of the year!

All Means All,

Samuel

**PARTNERSHIPS
POWER
POSSIBILITY**

IN THE WHITEWATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, we believe All Means All — it takes a community to provide students with opportunities that are purposeful, engaging, and applicable. By partnering with us, you can help provide students with the resources, experiences, and mentorship they need to succeed. Together, we can create opportunities, build skills, and inspire the next generation of leaders, making a lasting impact on both students and our community.

LEARN MORE and fill out our survey by scanning the QR code or visiting: www.bit.ly/wusdpartnersurvey



WHITEWATER
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**LAS ALIANZAS
IMPULSAN
LAS POSIBILIDADES**

EN EL DISTRITO ESCOLAR UNIFICADO DE WHITEWATER, creemos que "Todos significa todos" — y se necesita de toda una comunidad para brindar a los estudiantes oportunidades que sean significativas, motivadoras y aplicables. Al asociarse con nosotros, puede ayudar a ofrecer a los estudiantes los recursos, experiencias y mentoría que necesitan para alcanzar el éxito. Juntos podemos crear oportunidades, desarrollar habilidades e inspirar a la próxima generación de líderes, generando un impacto duradero tanto en los estudiantes como en nuestra comunidad.

OBTENGA MÁS INFORMACIÓN y complete nuestra encuesta escaneando el código QR o visitando: www.bit.ly/wusdpartnersurvey

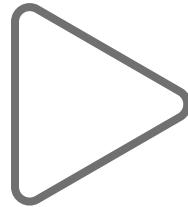


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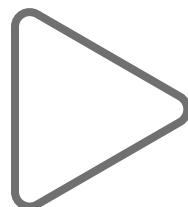


2025-2026 Winter Weather Guidelines

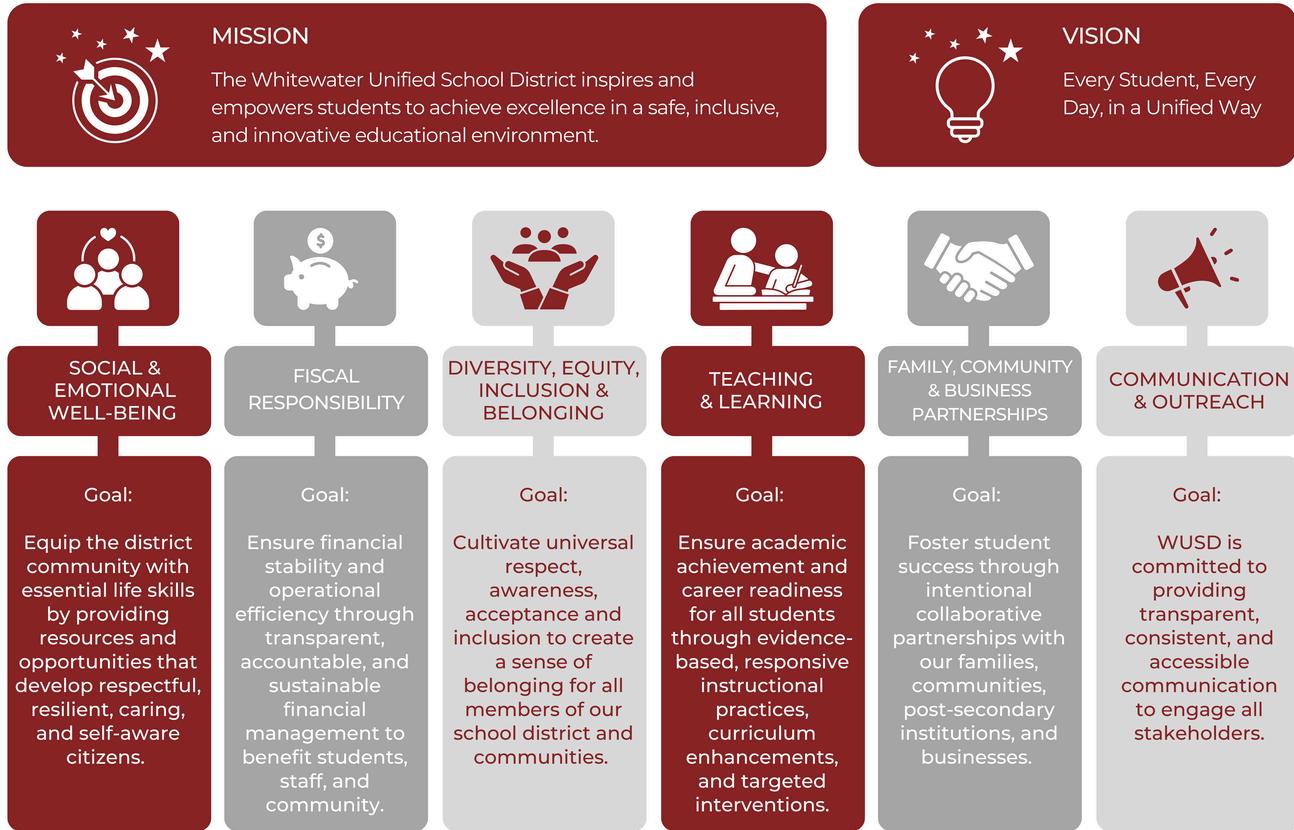
Community Partnership Interest Form

Strategic Planning Survey

Afternoon of Service 2026



WHITEWATER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Teaching and Learning

Happy New Year! I hope your holiday season was restful and filled with meaningful time together. As we begin the second half of the school year, we want to share some helpful resources as our students re-engage with learning at school and prepare for important upcoming assessments.

Re-Engaging After Winter Break

Coming back from winter break is a great opportunity for students to reset routines and re-build academic momentum. In our classrooms, teachers are helping students re-establish focus by revisiting classroom expectations and key skills, reflecting on student learning goals, and connecting prior knowledge to new content. At home, you can support this work by:





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- Talking about school positively and specifically, asking about what they learned and what they are curious about.
- Celebrating effort and growth in addition to outcomes, building confidence and resilience.

Preparing and Supporting Learners for State Testing

Looking ahead, many of our students will participate in statewide assessments this Spring:

- The Wisconsin Forward Exam (for students in grades 3–8 and 10) will be administered between mid-March and late April. This assessment measures progress in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. To learn more, please access the family information flyer below by clicking the button for English or Spanish.
- Many high school students will take the pre-ACT and ACT in March as a college and career readiness evaluation. For family information on the ACT, please access the ACT high school assessment flyer below by clicking the button for English or Spanish.

These assessments provide valuable information about student learning and help our schools and staff reflect on progress and inform instruction to support all learners. At home, you can support your child's confidence and readiness for upcoming assessments by:

- Ensuring they get adequate rest and a healthy breakfast on test days.
- Encouraging them to do their best.
- Providing reassurance that assessments are one of many tools educators use to know how to help them grow.

We deeply value the partnership between home and school. Your interest, encouragement, and support make a difference in your child's daily learning and long-term success. Thank you for your partnership!

With appreciation,

Terilyn Robles

Director of Teaching and Learning

Forward Exam Flyer English

Forward Exam Flyer Spanish

ACT High School Assessment Flier Spanish

Pupil Services



Supporting Student Mental Health at Home

Families play an important role in helping students feel safe, confident, and ready to learn. While schools provide support during the day, routines and relationships at home make a powerful difference. Here are a few simple, practical ways families can support student well-being—no special training required.

Create predictable routines

Regular schedules help children and teens feel secure. Consistent bedtimes, mealtimes, and homework routines can reduce stress and improve focus. Routines don't have to be rigid—just reliable enough that students know what to expect.

Keep communication open (and low-pressure)

You don't need the "perfect" words. Simple check-ins like "How was your day?" or "Anything on your mind?" let students know you're available. Listening without immediately trying to fix things can be one of the most supportive responses.

Be mindful of screen time

Technology connects us, but too much screen time—especially before bed—can affect sleep and mood. Setting screen-free times (for example, during meals or before bedtime) helps students recharge and stay present.

Teach everyday stress skills

Stress is part of life, even for kids. Help students name their feelings and try simple coping strategies: take a few deep breaths, go for a walk, listen to music, or break big tasks into smaller steps. Modeling how you manage stress sends a strong message.

Notice effort, not just outcomes

Celebrate persistence, kindness, and growth—not just grades or achievements. Feeling valued for who they are helps students build confidence and resilience.

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please reach out for help. When seeking mental health support for your child, start with their pediatrician or school counselor, provide detailed observations, and consider immediate crisis resources (such as 988) for severe symptoms; early intervention with a specialist offers the best outcomes for managing issues and building coping skills.

Finally, remember that you're not alone. Schools and families are partners, and reaching out for support is a sign of strength. Together, we can help every student feel supported—at school and at home.

Kindly,
Lanora Heim, Ph.D.
Director of Pupil Services

[Child Find \(click here\)](#)

Business Services

Property tax owners in the Whitewater Unified School District recently got their 2026 property tax bills. Many were overwhelmed and astounded to see significant increases to their tax bills, and they had a right to be astounded. Many community members are asking the District, "Why?" The most simplified answer is that your property taxes took a dramatic increase because the amount of money provided to the school district by the State of Wisconsin significantly decreased this year, by \$1,406,879.00 or 11%, which means that the difference is made up through property taxes. This drastic reduction was not certified by the State until October 15, 2025, nearly four months into the school year. Details are included in the District's Annual Budget Hearing Booklet (page 13), which can be found by clicking the 2025-2026 budget hearing button below.



The Whitewater Unified School District has historically been a positively aided district, meaning more of the cost to run the school district is funded by the State than local taxpayers. In 2025, the State of Wisconsin provided the district \$44 for every \$100 spent and the property tax payers paid \$56 for every \$100 spent. This year, the State allocated only \$38 for every \$100 spent, and the property taxpayers paid \$62 for every \$100 spent. This difference in state aid is primarily the reason that your property tax bills saw such a tremendous increase. I have been asked if the school district received a lot more money because of this large property tax increase, and the answer is

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"revenue limits. Revenue limits are calculated by taking the number of students in the district times the amount of revenue allowed per student by the State. Once the revenue limit is calculated, it is funded primarily through two sources of revenue: state aid and property taxes.

We would like to give a brief historical perspective to your current tax bill (page 14 of the Annual Budget Hearing Booklet). In reviewing the tax or "mill" rates for the Whitewater Unified School District, your current property tax bill reflects a school district mill rate of \$7.77 which is nearly the same as 23-24 (\$7.73) and far less than 22-23 (\$8.76) and 21-22 (\$11.00). The property tax rate dropped in 24-25 (\$7.23) as the District paid down non-referendum debt to accommodate a possible approved referendum in April 2025. The District has created some communications to help explain this year's increase. In addition to this summary, a more detailed 2025.26 School Tax Information document provides a breakdown of the District's funding by municipality, including increases due to equalized assessment values. These values, determined by assessments within the municipalities and not the school district, have the greatest impact on your local tax increases and decreases year to year.

A multimedia presentation, which supports the School Tax Information document, is also available on the District's website. Both the Tax information document and multimedia presentation can be found by clicking the button links below or the video.

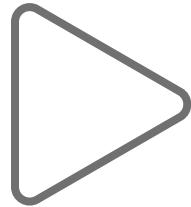
2025-2026 Budget Hearing

[2025 - 2026 Tax Levy Information \(click me\)](#)

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Human Resources



The Whitewater Unified School District is always looking for great people to join our team! If you are excited to work in a positive, collaborative, and student-focused environment, we are interested in meeting with you to discuss the many opportunities to serve in many different ways. Apply online by following the links or reach out to the person of contact on the posting. We look forward to hearing from you!

CHECK OUT CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES HERE

Multilingual Learners

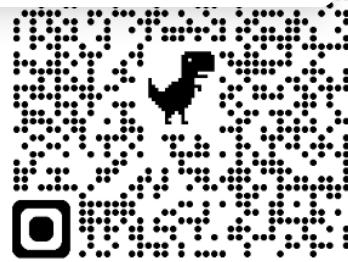
The Whitewater Unified School District is excited to share that, through the Community ESL Program of Whitewater, Spanish classes for community members are being offered. These classes are designed to support Spanish language development in a welcoming and supportive environment.



 Sign up. Complete [registration link](#) or QR code

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Classes are open to community members interested in learning or strengthening their Spanish skills.



Technology



We are currently pursuing two grant opportunities to enhance safety for our students and staff:

- **Physical Safety:** In collaboration with the Buildings and Grounds department, we are seeking funds to install vape detection systems in bathrooms and locker rooms. This technology integrates seamlessly with our existing security setup.
- **Cybersecurity:** We are applying for funding to strengthen our digital defense. This includes implementing 2-Factor Authentication and conducting rigorous network stress tests to ensure our data remains secure.

Website Redesign

The main district website had been changed as part of our soft launch. The redesigned website includes streamlined navigation, shortcut menus for commonly accessed pages, and enhanced search functionality to help users locate information efficiently. If you have feedback and suggestions please feel free to email us at wusdallmeansallcomm@wwusd.org .

Updated District Website

Buildings and Grounds

The design phase of the referendum has been completed, and bids are due back from contractors by 1/22/25. If you have driven by the high school recently, you may have noticed that the walk-in freezer has been relocated from the kitchen receiving area to the south end of the athletic wing. This is in preparation for the addition of the new kitchen, which will begin soon.

On



Was very stressed for several minutes, I want to thank everyone involved for how well they responded—especially the Whitewater Police Department and all the students and staff at Lincoln Elementary. This false alarm showed that the safety training we have been conducting is paying off. Thank you.

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Goal:
Ensure financial stability and operational efficiency through transparent, accountable, and sustainable financial management to benefit students, staff, and

2025 Referendum Financial Snapshot

Capital Referendum Updates

Career and Technical Education (CTE)



Career, Community, and Workforce Readiness – Updates

Walworth County Career Exploration Trip

On December 12, a group of students interested in learning more about careers with Walworth County participated in a career exploration and networking experience. Students connected with professionals from Walworth County Nursing, Finance, Health & Human Services, and the Sheriff's Department. The group toured the Health and Human Services building in Elkhorn and engaged in small-group conversations with department representatives,

allowing students to build social capital and gain firsthand insight into a variety of public-service career pathways. Students shared that they had a great time networking and learning more about these opportunities. A special thank-you to Chris Palmer and all participating Walworth County departments for investing their time to support and guide our students' futures.

WCEDA Culinary Showdown – Student Preparation Underway

Over the past few weeks, our two culinary competition teams have been preparing for the upcoming WCEDA Culinary Showdown by working directly with their assigned professional chefs. Team #1 is collaborating with Chef Nic from Lake Lawn Resort on a German-inspired dish, while Team #2 is working with Chef Stephen from the Delavan Yacht Club on an Italian-inspired dish. A huge thank-you to both chefs for taking time out of their busy schedules to mentor our students and share valuable culinary tips and techniques. This real-world learning experience has been

Business and Community Partnerships – Upcoming Events

Planning is underway for several key partnership events during the second half of the school year.

- **Whippet Works: Connecting Community, Careers, and Classrooms** will take place on February 25, 2026, from 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Whitewater High School. This business-partnership event is designed to strengthen connections between education, industry, and our community. Attendees will learn about partnership opportunities with Whitewater schools, explore career pathways, hear about the Youth Apprenticeship Program, preview upcoming CTE renovation plans, and learn how to participate in Career Day. Our goal is simple: to bridge the gap between community, business, and education so our students are better prepared for life beyond high school, whether that path leads to college, training, apprenticeships, or the workforce. Invitations will be sent in the coming weeks.
- **Whippet Pathways Day: Careers • College • Training • Apprenticeships** will be held on April 17, 2026, at Whitewater High School. During this interactive school day, students will meet in small groups with self-selected employers, industry professionals, and postsecondary partners, followed by a career fair where students can explore additional opportunities, gather information, and apply for future employment. Invitations to businesses, institutions, organizations, and community partners will begin following the Whippet Works event on February 25. Planning is also underway for a smaller-scale version of this experience for middle school students; more details will follow.

If you know any business, industry, or community partners who may be interested in participating in these events, please share their contact information with Mike Rick (ricmi01@wwusd.org) as soon as possible.

- [Pictures](#)

[**Community Partnership Interest Form \(click here\)**](#)

Athletics and Student Activities

Boys Wrestling - Won the Clinton Invite on 1/10 and our RVC - Valley Division Co-champions ([picture](#))

Girls Wrestling - Won the Craig Invite on 1/17 ([picture](#))

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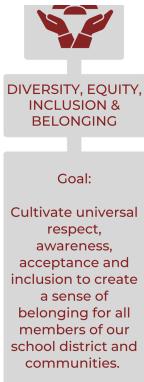


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**BELONGING****Goal:**

Cultivate universal respect, awareness, acceptance and inclusion to create a sense of belonging for all members of our school district and communities.

Library Media Resources



Reading Incentives and Book Fairs

Our next book fairs will take place at all elementary buildings and the Middle School.

They will run on Wednesday, February 18, from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m., and Thursday, February 19, from 1:00 to 7:30 p.m.

In the spring, profits are given back to students through reading incentives they may choose to participate in. Last year, we had more than 300 students participate in our reading incentive. If a

student reads 400 minutes, they earn \$7.00 for the book fair; if they read 800 minutes, they earn \$14.00. Last February, we gave back nearly \$4,000 in books to our students.

Book fair profits also help fund our classroom libraries, reading incentives, Battle of the Books program, our elementary book giveaway program, raffle baskets at events, and improvements to all of our libraries. Thank you to all the families who support us with their purchases!

Battle of the Books (BOB)

Battle of the Books (BOB) is a statewide program organized by the Wisconsin Educational Media & Technology Association. More than 450 teams across elementary, middle, and high school levels in

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Students are placed on teams of up to four people. Their job is to read 20 books and be prepared to answer questions about them. They learn to take notes, pay attention to details, problem-solve, and work together as a team. Teams are created around Thanksgiving, with team meetings taking place in December, January, and early February. Each building then hosts a Battle in which the teams compete against each other to be the top dogs in their building in a game-show format. This year we have teacher teams also competing against the students — which the students love!

This year our building-wide competition dates are:

- Whitewater Middle School — Friday, February 6, at 8:00 a.m.
- Whitewater High School — Monday, February 9, at 3:30 p.m.
- Lakeview Elementary — Wednesday, February 11, at 2:00 p.m.
- Lincoln Elementary — Thursday, February 12, at 2:00 p.m.
- Washington Elementary — Friday, February 13, at 2:00 p.m.

From there, the winning student team in each building moves on to the state competition to see where they will rank against the other 450+ teams in the state. Last year our high school team placed 3rd out of 65 teams, our middle school team placed 19th out of 162 teams, and Lakeview Elementary placed 23rd out of 259 teams. Watch for the results in our next newsletter!

WUSD Library Link

Health Services

Respiratory Season is ramping up!

This is a good time to remember the district illness protocols. Please see "When to keep your student home".

When to keep your student home | Whitewater Unified School District

BACKPACK NEWS

Please check out Fort Health Cares February edition of the Backpack News.

 School Nurse Expertise Janine Shanesky, RN, BSN, APRN, CPHQ School District:	<p>Many are now pre-made and vegetables are packed with fiber, potassium and antioxidants that help protect your heart and blood vessels.</p> <p>Radish Seeds</p> <p>Strawberries, raspberries, cherries, apples and watermelon are great fruits that are packed with good vitamins and nutrients. You can add them to smoothies or yogurt for a fun Valentine's-themed treat.</p> <p>The American Heart Association recommends kids eat 5-6 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. That could mean adding a fruit to your favorite song, riding a bike to school or eating classes. Or, have a quick snack of fruit.</p> <p>Even small bites of movement add up. The longer you move, the more calories you burn. It's not just taste — they help keep your body healthy, your skin glowing and your immune system strong.</p> <p>The best part? You'll feel more energized, sleep better, feel better about yourself and be more confident — and all in the name of love! Eat well and together to take care of our hearts and the ones we love. Stay kind and healthy!</p>	<p>Leave a note in your child's lunch, share a hug before school, listise, smile and say "I'm proud of you." Little moments of love can make a difference and lifelong kindness not only in February, but all times of the year!</p>
<p>Health Awareness</p> <p>Your heart is a muscle and when you exercise, it gets stronger when you use it!</p> <p>Movement helps pump oxygen-rich blood through your body, making you strong, and even leads to your heart getting stronger.</p> <p>The American Heart Association recommends kids eat 5-6 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. That could mean adding a fruit to your favorite song, riding a bike to school or eating classes. Or, have a quick snack of fruit.</p> <p>Even small bites of movement add up. The longer you move, the more calories you burn. It's not just taste — they help keep your body healthy, your skin glowing and your immune system strong.</p> <p>The best part? You'll feel more energized, sleep better, feel better about yourself and be more confident — and all in the name of love! Eat well and together to take care of our hearts and the ones we love. Stay kind and healthy!</p>	<p>Healthcare for Families</p> <p>One day más con el alimento de su hijo, un día más abajo de la escuela, es decir, una mejor salud y digere "me encargó". Los pequeños gestos de cariño, amor, comprensión, seguridad y bondad perdurable no solo en febrero, sino todo el año.</p> <p>El corazón es un músculo y, como todos los músculos, se fortalece con el ejercicio.</p> <p>El movimiento ayuda a bombear sangre oxigenada por todo el organismo, fortaleciendo el corazón e incluso mejorando el humor.</p> <p>La American Heart Association recomienda que los niños y adolescentes realicen actividad física moderada durante todos los días. Esto puede incluir caminar, correr, nadar, jugar a un deporte, incluso los pequeños movimientos que realizan entre las escuelas, entrar en el coche o jugar a la pelota.</p> <p>La mejor parte? Tener que dormir más, energizada, dormir más y sentirse mejor. Y el mejor contenido de vida. Por eso, es importante que los padres y los profesionales de la salud promovamos y reforcemos nuestra salud. (Continúa en la página 10)</p>	

Medication Consent Form

Consentimiento de Medicación

Inhaler Administration Form

Formulario de administración del inhalador

School Nutrition Services

School breakfast is FREE to all students again this year.

Click this button for the lunch menu

Community Hub of Opportunities



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January/February At A Glance

January

Monday, January 26, 2026 - School Board Meeting at HS LMC at 6:00 p.m.



February



FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 14, 2026 - Robotics Open House at WHS 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 14, 2026 - Winter Ball at WHS 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - Middle School/Elementary P/T Conferences 4:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 19, 2026 - Middle School/Elementary 1/2 day

Thursday, February 19, 2026 - Middle School/Elementary P/T Conferences 1:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 20, 2026 - NO SCHOOL (Teacher In-service)

Sunday, February 22, 2026 - FFA Alumni Toy Show at WHS 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Monday, February 23, 2026 - School Board Meeting at HS LMC at 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 26, 2026 - High School Spring Play at HS Auditorium 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Friday, February 27, 2026 - High School Spring Play at HS Auditorium 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 28, 2026 - High School Spring Play at HS Auditorium 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Social Media Channels

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Communication WUSD

All Means All

Created with smore

Communicate quickly and effectively with interactive newsletters.



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Create a newsletter