

**RSU #16 School Board
Administrative Report
Shawn Vincent
Principal, Bruce M. Whittier Middle School
April 5, 2021**

Staff

Educational technicians Andrea Forbush and Nancy Walker have taken on the challenges of the student and parent parking lot with Officer Jim Jacques and high school staffer Rikki Lukeski, all year. With many more families opting for parent transportation this year, the afternoons can be very busy in the lot. Andrea and Nancy volunteered in August and have done an excellent job managing the flow of traffic and safety of all involved each day. I am grateful for their willingness and effort.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

- Managing student attendance continues to be a challenge. We are grateful for the families who are keeping students home when they are exhibiting symptoms or may be close contacts. Overall, daily attendance (in-person and remote) is at 90%, which is low compared to our average annual attendance (always over 95%). Grade 7 students have a daily attendance of 91% and grade 8 is 89%. Ninety-eight students (35% of students) would be considered chronically absent with attendance averages below 90%. Eighty-seven students (31%) are considered truant, having been marked absent unexcused ten or more times. One of the major stumbling blocks continues to be getting students to sign in on their remote days. This is an easy way to be marked present for the day and would improve data significantly. We continue to comb through the data to identify students who are most in need of intervention to help them improve their attendance. In most years, we would be using a number of different attendance incentives, but we want to continue to make sure that students stay home when they are not well enough to be in school.
- We held the Whittier History Day Awards in a virtual format this year. Fifty-one students received recognition and the opportunity to compete at the state level. This was the 10th annual event for Whittier, and the staff and students did an excellent job managing the challenges of cohorts and remote learning. Special recognition should be noted for Logan Landry, Erica Swenson, Jamie Karaffa, Sean Galipeau-Eldridge, Shannon Shanning, and Kelly Adams for facilitating this extremely valuable full-school learning experience.

Events

- Spring sports start Monday, April 5th. Students may participate in baseball, softball, track and field, or lacrosse (in partnership with Gray-New Gloucester). Early registrations indicate that we have about sixty students registered. We had a very successful and healthy abbreviated basketball season. Each team played five to six games against Auburn Middle School, Lewiston Middle School, and Sacopee Valley Middle School. About 45 students participated and no one was cut from the teams.
- Congratulations to *Whittier Writer Arianna Gammon!* Her original short horror story was selected for publication in the digital magazine, *Teen Ink*. Over 100,000 students submit work for publication each year. If approved by a team of editors, the submission is published on the online magazine. From there, editors chose the best of the best to include in the monthly print magazine. Arianna is one of a

group of Whittier Writers who have been meeting weekly, developing and discussing their original work. The writing club is facilitated by Ell Fanus and Tami Wight.