

WHITTIER MIDDLE SCHOOL

SHAWN VINCENT - PRINCIPAL



SAMUEL CHATTO - DEAN OF STUDENTS

January 6, 2022

Greetings from Bruce M. Whittier Middle School!

Whittier Middle School currently serves 288 seventh and eighth graders from Mechanic Falls, Minot and Poland.

It has been very exciting to return to full in-person schooling this year. We have enjoyed the daily interaction with the students. They show great energy and are exhibiting tremendous academic, physical, and social development.

Music is back at Whittier this year! In December, chorus and band students participated in their first middle school concert. Additionally, many of the students' favorite co-curricular and extra curricular opportunities have returned this year. Student Council, Drama Club, Tech Team, Yearbook Committee, Green Team, Writing Club, Dungeons & Dragons, and Civil Rights Club are all meeting in person on a regular basis. Over 70 students participated in field hockey, soccer, and cross-country running in the fall, and 50 students are currently playing basketball. The chance to be active, participate, and compete has been very positive for physical and mental health.

Whittier Middle School has a full-time physical education teacher for the first time in about 12 years. Every student participates in physical education class every other day for two trimesters. This is a significant increase in activity for our adolescents and exactly what they need as they continue to grow.

Students are currently engaged in the National History Day project, a project emphasizing the development of research skills. Students selected their own topics based on this year's theme, *Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences*. Through the project, students learn the essentials for navigating the Information Age by locating appropriate sources, determining the sources' reliability, forming thesis statements, finding evidence to support their ideas and then structuring their evidence and ideas in a compelling, clear way. Students learn to write with purpose, cite sources, edit writing and formally present their original work.

Whittier History Day will be virtual this year, and students' work will be displayed online for our judges. The top projects in each category will be submitted to the state competition, where students may earn the opportunity to compete at the national level. In the past ten years, over forty Whittier Middle School students have participated in the National History Day competition in Washington, D.C.

One of the keys and challenges to a successful middle school is facilitating positive relationships amongst staff and students. Wearing masks and keeping social distance don't make this easy, but we are making good progress. All students are part of advisory groups, called Roundtables, which meet every morning with their advisors. Roundtable ensures that every student has an opportunity for connection to peers and a helpful adult in the building. Students are more successful academically when they feel safe and included.

We are extremely proud of the teaching, learning, and positive culture of our school, and we thank you for your support and investment in our students and school.

Shawn J. Vincent
Principal