



Whitefish Bay
SCHOOL DISTRICT



2026 ANNUAL DISTRICT BULLETIN

An Exceptional Place to Learn

www.wfbschools.com



FOCUS PLAN

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Whitefish Bay School District Board of Education



Back row left to right:

Dan Tyk, Nathan Christenson, W. Brett Christiansen, Lynn Raines

Front row left to right:

Sandy Saltzstein, Kristin Bencik-Boudreau, Pam Woodard



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VISION

An Exceptional Place to Learn

MISSION

The Whitefish Bay School District, in partnership with families and community, is student-centered with a tradition of educational excellence that:

- Supports the individual needs of the whole child in a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment;
- Empowers students with the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and character necessary to thrive in an ever-changing, global society so that students are life, career, and college ready;
- Honors the diversity of all students and the pursuit of educational equity*.

VALUES

Educational Equity and Excellence:

We maintain high expectations for personal growth and achievement.

Tradition and Innovation:

We acknowledge the past and commit to continuous improvement.

Safety and Well-being:

We strive for a safe and welcoming environment that fosters individual and collective welfare.

Individual and Community:

We develop the talents and skills of individual learners and collaborative teams.

Stewardship and Integrity:

We serve through principled and strategic decision-making and allocation of resources.

GOALS

An Exceptional Place to...

Learn:

Every student will continuously grow to meet or exceed academic learning targets and social emotional competencies.

Work:

Every staff member will experience an environment where they are valued, developed, and supported.

Engage:

The community will be provided with opportunities to be involved in activities that promote collective growth, learning, and well-being.

***Educational Equity** "means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2023).



Whitefish Bay School District

Dr. Jamie J. Foeckler
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Whitefish Bay Families and District Community,

As we welcome you to the 2026-2027 school year, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose under our theme: **“Know Your Impact.”** The theme serves as a vital reminder that every interaction, lesson, and decision within our schools leaves a lasting impression on our students and on the future of Whitefish Bay School District. The theme also challenges us all to recognize that our collaborative work today is the foundation for our students’ success tomorrow.



To “Know Your Impact” is to recognize that our collective efforts, as educators, parents, and neighbors, directly shape the “Exceptional Place to Learn” we strive to be. Over the past year, your impact was felt deeply through your participation in our Facilities Charter and community facilities sessions. Your voices provided the blueprint for a future that matches the high expectations we hold for our students’ educational experiences.

While the results of the April 7, 2026 referendum did not grant the authorization for the \$135.6 million facility improvement project, the School Board remains deeply committed to facilities long-range planning. The proposal, which centered on replacing the aging Middle School and addressing critical infrastructure, safety, and accessibility needs at our elementary schools, the High School, and Lydell, was built on the reality that our facilities no longer meet today’s standards. Urgent needs of our physical environments remain, and we are now focused on understanding the community’s feedback to refine our path forward.

Rather than beginning construction, our “next steps” have shifted toward a period of intentional listening and strategic reassessment. We recognize that stabilizing and updating the District’s footprint is a long-term necessity, and we are committed to finding a solution that the community can support. In the coming months, the Board will seek direct engagement from residents to determine how we can best mirror the excellence of our teaching and learning through a fiscally responsible, community-driven facility plan.

It is a privilege to serve as your Superintendent. I look forward to the milestones we will reach together this year as we honor the growth of all of our students and invest in our future.

In the following pages, you will find highlights from our departments and schools, detailing how each is working to maximize their impact on student success.

With gratitude and excitement for the year ahead,

Dr. Jamie J. Foeckler,
Superintendent of Schools



An Exceptional Place to Learn: By the Numbers



Best High School in Wisconsin - second consecutive year
- US News & World Report



Best School District in Milwaukee County
- Niche

#4

Best School District in Wisconsin
- Niche

100% of Schools & District are Significantly Exceeding Expectations in Statewide Accountability Measures

District Enrollment:

2902
Students

Attendance Rate
96.2%

204
Teachers

14.2:1
Student to Teacher Ratio

59.3%
Teachers with a master's degree or higher

10
National Board Certified Teachers

58% of teachers have been with the District more than 7 years

1077 active volunteers in the District's volunteer program

2024-25 School Year

ACT:

Composite ACT Score:
25.3
which exceeds the state average by 5.9

AP

Scores 3+:
92.8%
Exams Taken
1053
by **435** Students



Cumberland Elementary

Jayne Heffron
Principal

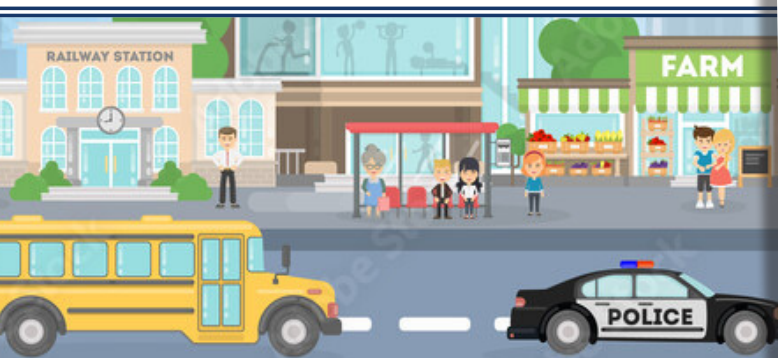
Chamari Moore
Associate Principal



A LASTING IMPACT

An educator's purpose is to impact students, and Cumberland staff are laser focused on the impact they have on students each day. This impact is visible from the outside when a reluctant student becomes an enthusiastic one, or a concept that was out of reach suddenly makes sense. At Cumberland, we organize instruction to maximize the impact it has on student learning. This includes brief whole class lessons, followed by guided practice and independent application time. Whether learning letters and sounds or how to dribble a ball, this structure allows educators in all departments and throughout the grades to present and model new content and strategies, and then to provide feedback and supports tailored to small groups and individuals.

There are multiple ways to monitor the impact of our work at Cumberland, and in the spirit of continuous improvement, we keep a close eye on several indicators. Student academic progress, behavioral trends, students' independent use of emotional regulation tools, and positive results on a Belongingness Survey all provide evidence of our impact on student growth and development. Beyond these indicators, former Cumberland students volunteering to return as Big Buddies shows a long lasting connection to the experiences that the students had at Cumberland. At Cumberland, we take the responsibility to impact student lives seriously and strive each day to make this impact positive and long lasting.



POINTS OF PRIDE

97% of 5K-5th grade students report
"I like being at Cumberland."

1985 boxes of cereal collected and donated to People's Table.

Morning greetings by students in **16 languages**, enhancing belongingness and diversity.

100% of 5th grade students contributed volunteer time to Cumberland through a Day of Service.

Cumberland earned a score of **95.2**, Significantly Exceeds Expectations, on the Wisconsin School Report Card.

Executive Functioning skill instruction embedded into lesson plans.

\$40,000+ raised during the PTO Fun Run.

78 new 5K-5th students enrolled.

“

Students are nice to me. I get to play more games here and my teachers help me when I am stuck. I like Cumberland and I am glad I came!

- New Cumberland Student

”





Richards Elementary

Chad Nelson
Principal

Katie Petersen
Associate Principal



IMPACT IN ACTION

Fact Fluency

This year at Richards, students and staff focused on how strong foundations create lasting impact in mathematics. Through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process, teachers used student evidence to identify specific fact fluency needs and provide targeted support during instruction. Students engaged in meaningful practice aligned to their current understanding, building automaticity, confidence, and flexible number sense. Students ready for additional challenges also participated in enrichment opportunities that extended their mathematical thinking. By using data to guide instruction, staff ensured that learners received what they needed to grow. This work reminds us that when we understand where students are, we can better impact where they are going.

Dialogic Conversations

Another focus this year was dialogic conversations, supporting students as thoughtful readers, speakers, and listeners. Through interactive read-alouds, whole class conversations and structured partner discussions, students practiced asking questions, making connections, building vocabulary, and responding to others' thinking. Teachers collaborated with our literacy coach to bring these strategies into classrooms in meaningful ways. As a result, students became more engaged during reading in whole-group and small-group, participated in deeper conversations, and grew in confidence when sharing ideas. These experiences strengthened literacy skills while reinforcing a culture where every voice matters. Through daily conversations with peers and teachers, students discovered the impact their words, ideas, and listening can have on a community.



POINTS OF PRIDE

98% of 5K-5th grade students report that **they have a friend at school.**

25 different Richards family cultures were represented at Richards International Night.

97% of students demonstrated typical or strengths competency with social emotional skills.

Richards 3rd Grade Hunger Task Force drive donated **2,223 pounds of food and \$11,343** to the Hunger Task Force.

Richards earned a score of **98.0**, Significantly Exceeds Expectations, on the Wisconsin School Report Card.

92% of students are at or above proficiency in Math mid-year, as measured by STAR testing.

“

Richards is fun and fun making friends, fun playing with friends, and playing with them at free choice time. This makes me happy—really happy. It's a nice place to learn with teachers.

— New Richards 5K student

”



JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT BIZTOWN

Junior Achievement BizTown gives our 5th graders an unforgettable hands-on experience in business, finance, and teamwork. After weeks of classroom preparation and job interviews, students step into real-world roles to run their own simulated town. From managing budgets to serving customers, they practice collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership in an exciting and engaging setting that connects classroom learning to future careers.



Whitefish Bay Middle School

Geoff Pontus
Principal

Laura Sproul
Associate Principal



DEEPENING IMPACT ACROSS ALL DEPARTMENTS

At Whitefish Bay Middle School, we value both Tradition and Innovation, acknowledging the past and committing to continuous improvement to achieve exceptional growth for all. Building on past successes, the Math Department embarked on a five year plan, focused on responsive, data-driven instruction to target the needs of all. The English Language Arts (ELA) Department continued to engage in the Curriculum Renewal process, focusing on implementing research-based reading strategies in their daily instruction. Science and Social Studies departments worked to identify and target executive functioning skills that would allow all learners to meaningfully engage in their many projects. Special Education case managers shifted their service delivery model, focusing on either supporting ELA or Math in each grade level. Specialists engaged in regular co-planning meetings with Special Education staff to implement scaffolded supports to promote high levels of engagement for all.

In looking to educate the whole child, the student services team continued their work developing Tier II Social Emotional Learning instruction to ensure continued social and emotional development. This year also saw a Best Buddies chapter founded at the middle school as well as a Pride Club. Through academics, activities, athletics, and targeted support, we continually seek to improve upon the tradition of excellence at Whitefish Bay Middle School.

“

I enjoy the challenging learning experience that is adjusted for everybody's skill level. My teachers really make the school acceptable and welcoming for anybody, no matter who they are.

- Middle School Student

”



POINTS OF PRIDE

Students engaged in **14 athletic opportunities**, participating in competitive team sports or intramurals, and in **12 clubs**, offering experiences tailored to a variety of interests.

74 family volunteers supported 7th Grade Camp this year.

7 points of data are used to guide the formation of **small SEL groups** to help ensure all students are able to meaningfully engage in learning every day.

28 students engaged in the School Buddies services project, supporting Lydell Preschool through WFBMS Student Council.

Whitefish Bay Middle School earned a score of **96.3**, Significantly Exceeds Expectations, on the Wisconsin School Report Card, a 4.3 point increase from the previous year.

On the Wisconsin School Report Card, WFBMS students scored **higher than 99.5%** of all students in the state in Achievement and **higher than 92.9%** of all students in Growth.

Every teacher engaged in an assessment of student work at least once per month to provide **additional support or extend learning**, working to ensure every learner demonstrated proficiency on identified essential content standards.



Spring Musical

A cast of our Middle School production of Newsies Jr. takes a bow following a successful performance. 140 total students put on the musical this year with 95 participating in one of two casts and 45 working as members of the stage crew.



Whitefish Bay High School

Amy Levek
Principal

Josh Skatrud
Associate Principal



HISTORIC AND LIFE LONG IMPACTS

Whitefish Bay High School has had a tremendous year, and we are grateful to celebrate significant accomplishments in academics, athletics, and activities. From our back-to-back #1 high school state ranking to an unprecedented streak of championships, this year has truly defined what it means to be a Blue Duke!

These achievements are deeply rooted in our Focus Plan Value of Individual and Community. We strive to develop the talents of individual students while fostering the power of collaborative teams. Within our classrooms, we prioritize skill development alongside content, favoring meaningful collaboration over individual scores and critical thinking over quick answers. By choosing integrity in learning, our students grow not only as scholars, but as young adults who realize their potential to positively impact the spaces in which they show up.

Ultimately, one of our most meaningful goals focuses on self-management, helping students realize their impact not only in big moments, but in seemingly ordinary ones as well. Embracing the learning process, living in the present, and leaning into the unknown while finding strength in kindness and generosity are the simple moments worth celebrating that undoubtedly fuel our incredible results.



POINTS OF PRIDE

Pack the Stands/Seats was a new tradition this year, focusing on support for one another in activities and athletics.

Parents and guardians filled over 70% of our Career Day slots, offering students insights into all **14 Career Clusters** with their professional experience.

Sources of Strength coordinated our **second annual Wellness Day** in the Bay, offering student choice activities in gardening, dancing, games, meditation and more!

Bay Gives Back, our largest student organization, expanded this year with a fall **Bike Rodeo** and a spring **Generosity Campaign** for unhoused youth.

WFBHS has added **Youth Apprenticeships** to its post-secondary opportunities, joining our dual credit, manufacturing, technical college, and university partnerships.

US News and World Report identified Whitefish Bay High School as the **#1 school in WI for the second year in a row!**

“

Thanks for the opportunity for them to experience these speakers. We had students that were interested in careers that worked alongside our guest speaker, exposing them to career paths that they didn't even know about.

- Teacher, about Guest Speaker Day

”

Modeling Positive Behaviors

High School students strive to positively impact our community by organizing a bike to school day for both Cumberland and Richards.



Athletics & Activities

Randee Drew
Activities Director



BOYS SOCCER



BOYS TENNIS



BOYS SWIM & DIVE



BOYS BASKETBALL



GIRLS SWIM & DIVE

ATHLETICS

CHASING HISTORY

The Activities & Athletics Department encourages every student to be involved with our school community beyond the walls of the classroom. In alignment with the District Focus Plan, Whitefish Bay High School remains an Exceptional Place to Engage, providing a powerful platform for student-athletes to compete and perform at the highest levels. Through competition and involvement, students learn invaluable skills that positively impact their futures.

The Duke Pride felt across the District is contagious! Whitefish Bay High School has earned a staggering 91 team state athletic championships, the second highest total in Wisconsin, including six championships during the 2025-26 school year! With our sights set on earning a record 93 titles, there is a renewed sense of excitement, unity, and pride in our hallways and in the greater community.

WIAA TEAM STATE CHAMPIONS

- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Boys Soccer
- Boys Swim & Dive
- Girls Swim & Dive
- Boys Tennis

6

State Titles

“

I'm so grateful to be part of a community as supportive and uplifting as Whitefish Bay has been this year. Getting to compete at state and also go to other events to cheer on my classmates made the experience incredibly special.

- WFBHS Student Athlete

”

FEATURED TEAM



WFBHS Girls Basketball: Relentless

The 2025–26 Whitefish Bay Girls Basketball team didn't just win a championship; they shattered a fifty-year ceiling to bring home the first Gold Ball in program history. Guided by the motto "Relentless," the Blue Dukes transformed a grueling schedule into a blueprint for excellence, setting a state finals record with 22 three-pointers and averaging a powerhouse 72.6 PPG. This team proved that "Relentless" wasn't just a slogan—it was a daily standard of discipline and unselfish play that powered them through a dominant postseason sweep.

While the record-breaking offense dazzled, it was a "stop for the ages" that secured their legacy. Ranking in the state's Top 10 for point differential, the Dukes' defense held opponents to a stifling 47 PPG, culminating in a final, defensive stand that sealed the title. Led by a gritty core of seniors, juniors, and sophomores, this team played for the name on the front of the jersey and the future Blue Dukes who will follow. By raising that Gold Ball, they didn't just end a season as champions; they cemented a forever legacy as the first to do it—the historic, the relentless Whitefish Bay Blue Dukes.



SCHOOL RECOGNITIONS

WIAA INDIVIDUAL STATE CHAMPIONS

- Anne Dickinson
(Swim - 200 & 500 Freestyle)
- Maggie Dickinson
(Swim - 50 Freestyle & 100 Backstroke)
- Aibhy King
(Swim - 100 Butterfly)

WIAA STATE TOURNAMENT APPEARANCES

- Girls Cross Country
- Girls Gymnastics
- Boys Cross Country (one athlete)
- Girls Tennis (six athletes)
- Boys Wrestling (two athletes)

WIAA DIVISION 3 REGIONAL CHAMPIONS

- Boys Football

NORTH SHORE CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS

- Boys Soccer
- Girls Tennis
- Girls Swim & Dive
- Boys Swim & Dive
- Girls Basketball

NORTH SHORE CONFERENCE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

- Thomas Began - Golf
- Steven Camacho - Swim
- Anne Dickinson - Swim
- Tyler Emmory - Dive
- Alex Jacquart - Soccer



ACTIVITIES

THE IMPACT OF INVOLVEMENT

Activities at Whitefish Bay High School serve as the cornerstone of student participation and belonging, offering a platform for students to explore their interests, express themselves, and find their communities. With over 84 active organizations, students have the opportunity to compete, perform, publish, and lead in ways that extend beyond the classroom. Activities and clubs foster unique partnerships between staff and students, deepening mentorships and strengthening school spirit through shared goals. By participating in activities, students build a foundation of essential life skills and lifelong relationships that prepare them for success after graduation. Whether through creative expression or collaborative teamwork, clubs ensure that every student has the chance to contribute to the school's legacy, making a positive impact that will shape the future of Whitefish Bay High School.



GET INVOLVED: EXPLORE, LEAD, SERVE

Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength is dedicated to cultivating a vibrant, inclusive school culture by launching impactful campaigns. Pack the Stands & Seats prioritized students showing up for one another. Efforts were supported by Spirit Leaders who challenged students to step out of their comfort zones during unifying events like the winter ugly sweater competition. Sources of Strength bridged social gaps with the “You Can Sit With Us” pink-out day, ensuring every student felt seen, and partnered with Bay Gives Back to fundraise for Pathfinders. With a focus on empathy, the group spearheaded the Letters of Love campaign for children in hospice. The year concluded with the fourth annual Wellness Day in the Bay—a day of reflection through breakout sessions and the Duke Dash Color Run.

700+

Students involved in at least one activity

104	total activities	4	performance
20	compete	3	publish
16	leadership & service	61	enrichment



POINTS OF PRIDE

Bay Gives Back (BGB) fosters a culture of service by mobilizing hundreds of students to address critical needs. High-impact initiatives included collecting 9,000 lbs of food for Kinship Community Food Center, sponsoring over 400 families for holiday meals, and distributing 2,000 books through Little Laundromat Libraries. By bridging gaps, BGB provides resources while developing the next generation of leaders.

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) helps students build professional confidence and expertise. Following success at regional and state levels, five students qualified for Nationals in categories including Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Financial Statements, and Advertising.

Bay Robotics tackled this year's "Decode" challenge with a custom-built robot designed to master autonomous navigation, precision ball-launching, and strategic endgame parking. The group remains deeply committed to excellence in STEM by collaborating with industry experts and fostering community outreach.

Whitefish Bay Debate evolved into a powerhouse team, sending seven competitors to state. Their success extends to the national stage, with students competing at the national level.

With over 100 students participating, **WFBHS Theater** lived up to its motto, "Inspiring Passion." The community enjoyed professional-level productions—*Little Women*, *42nd Street*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, and *Six the Musical: Teen Edition*—each exploring history in innovative and meaningful ways. With *42nd Street* earning a Jerry Award for Outstanding Musical, the program celebrated its seventh win in the category!

In its first year, **Auto Club** has been firing on all cylinders! The group's primary focus is restoring two donated 2009 Tomberlin Crossfire 150R dune buggies. The group had both machines operational and painted in time to debut them in the Whitefish Bay 4th of July parade.

The **Blue Duke Dancers** fueled Whitefish Bay spirit from the sidelines to the court before taking their technical artistry to the WACPC State Championship. The team's hard work and growth culminated in a performance during a Milwaukee Bucks game.

As the school's student-led newspaper, **Tower Times** empowers students to manage every facet of production. With six issues published, the group is expanding its reach by planning a website relaunch and pivoting toward podcasts and multimedia content.

For years, the **Black Student Union (BSU)** has been vital in creating a "community inside a community," providing a home base for Whitefish Bay's Black students to build meaningful connections. This year, the group deepened its exploration of heritage with an impactful trip to America's Black Holocaust Museum.



Teaching & Learning Services Special Education & Pupil Services

Mike O'Connor

Director of Teaching & Learning Services

Tim Lemke

Director of Special Education & Pupil Services



PURPOSE IN EVERY PRACTICE: Knowing Our Impact on the Whole Child

The vision of the Whitefish Bay School District is to be “An Exceptional Place to Learn,” a goal that is brought to life every day through the efforts of our students, the dedication of our staff and the support of our community. By grounding our work in the values of our Focus Plan, we ensure that our impact is felt not just in data points, but in the growth of the whole child.

Celebrating Exceptional Growth and Achievement

Our impact is most visible in the remarkable academic success of our students. This year, the Whitefish Bay School District earned a score of 97.5 (Significantly Exceeds Expectations) on the District Report Card, the highest score of any public K-12 district in Wisconsin. Further underscoring the strength of our District, Whitefish Bay High School was again ranked the #1 high school in the state by U.S. News and World Report.

Beyond achievement, we are leading the state in student growth. With an overall growth score of 92.6 on the District Report Card, students are progressing at rates significantly higher than state averages in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. More specifically, the median student in Whitefish Bay is growing faster than 61% of all students in Wisconsin! Importantly, this impact is inclusive; nearly every demographic group, including students with disabilities and English learners, demonstrates above-average rates of growth compared to their peers statewide.





The Human Impact: Beyond the Data

While numbers tell part of the story, the true impact of our educators lies in their commitment to the whole child. In alignment with the Focus Plan, staff members work to create caring and inclusive environments where students develop the social-emotional competencies necessary to thrive. While some of this work happens in formal settings, such as Homeroom or Morning Meetings, much of the personal development of students comes through the positive relationships they forge with the educators who care deeply for them.

Impact is also found in the vibrant world of arts, music, and career exploration. By engaging students as individual learners in an innovative community, they are equipped with the knowledge and character to succeed in a global society. Whether by empowering student decision-making in the art classroom, or exploring the world of work through a Youth Apprenticeship, every student is becoming life, career, and college ready. Dedication to the whole child fosters empathetic citizens who are prepared for challenges far beyond the classroom.

The Growth of Educators

To maximize student impact, educators are equally committed to their own continuous improvement. School-based leadership teams engage in processes to confront data-based problems and monitor progress through clear action plans. Several times throughout the school year, teams review data to ensure that actions are producing the results students deserve. This relentless drive for excellence ensures that teaching practices remain responsive to the ever-changing needs of students.

The District values its staff, and empowers them to make decisions that will have a positive impact on students. Throughout the past year, secondary staff members collaborated on refinements to curriculum, which ensures all students have access to the same high-quality, rigorous instruction, regardless of teacher. Additionally, after months of careful deliberation and study, the elementary staff selected Benchmark Advance as the curricular resource that will best support the literacy development of students into the future.

BY THE NUMBERS:



SCORE SUMMARIES



Wisconsin 2024-2025 Report Card

The district earned an overall score of 97.5 and a rating of Significantly Exceeds Expectations on the 2024-25 Wisconsin School Report Card.

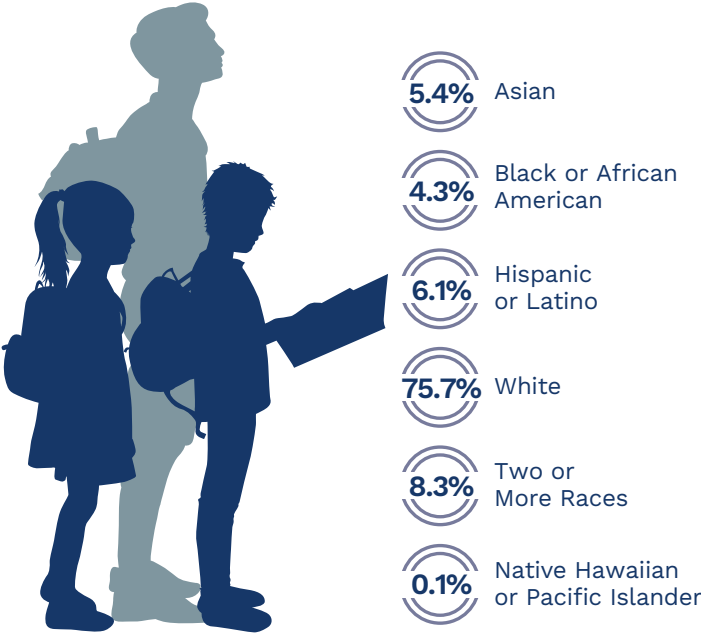
★★★★★
Significantly Exceeds Expectations

Scan the QR Code to view the 2024-25 District Report Card.



DEMOGRAPHICS & OUTCOMES

Student Groups



Students with Disabilities



Economically Disadvantaged



English Learners



SPECIAL EDUCATION

MEMBERSHIP:

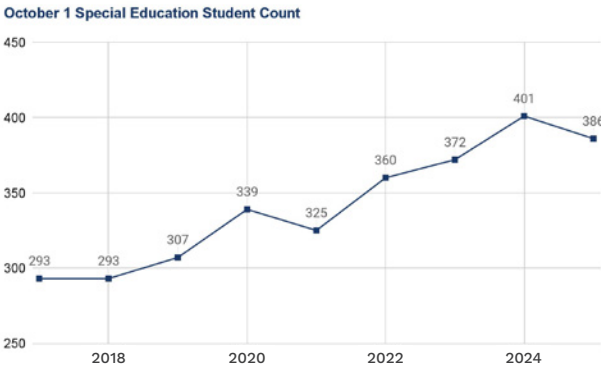
The number of special education students has increased significantly over recent years, which has been a trend statewide in public schools. As the number of special education students increases, so do the costs for supporting these students and ensuring that they have the resources they need to be successful.

REIMBURSEMENT:

Public school districts in Wisconsin only receive about 40% in funding for special education costs that are typically required expenses included in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Special Education Membership

How has special education membership changed over time?



The number of special education students has increased significantly over recent years, which has been a trend statewide in public schools. As the number of special education students increases, so do the costs for supporting these students and ensuring that they have the resources they need to be successful.

Source: Department of Public Instruction



Recreation & Community Education Department

Carin Keland

Director of Recreation and Community Education



CONNECTION. GROWTH. COMMUNITY.

Whitefish Bay is a community of engagement! This year, community feedback helped to shape meaningful improvements across the Recreation & Community Education Department. By listening closely to the community and using thoughtful, data-informed planning, we've expanded engaging, high-impact opportunities for all ages. Engagement and impact are reflected in strong participation and lasting connections formed across the community.

As our community evolves, so do the ways people can get involved through the Recreation and Community Education Department. Getting started is easier than ever, with an improved registration experience with automated waitlists that make it simpler to join popular offerings. Staying informed is just as seamless through The RecGram, our digital newsletter, which keeps readers up to date with timely news and opportunities.

Collaboration is a driving force behind successful Recreation programming. Local partnerships, community support, and area connections all play a role in broadening access and enriching experiences, from youth sports opportunities to the Community Garden. Collective efforts ensure that opportunities continue to grow and reach more people.

At its core, the Recreation & Community Education Department is about more than programs. It's about fostering a vibrant, connected community. Whitefish Bay remains a place where people come together to live, play, and grow.

“

The Whitefish Bay Recreation Department is the best! From the variety of offerings, to the participants, to how they treat their instructors!

- Fitness Instructor

”



POINTS OF PRIDE

100+ Connects Family members attended a celebratory skating event for an evening of connection and fun.

150+ volunteers planted and maintained the Community Garden.

The installation of a concrete walkway at Lydell Playground provides **increased accessibility**.

The Rec Department offered an NFL-sponsored **Girls Flag Football League**, the first in the North Shore area.



Safety First

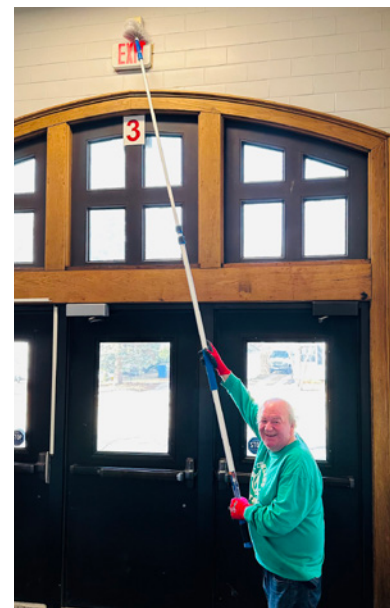
The Whitefish Bay Recreation & Community Education Department hosted a Bike Safety Rodeo in partnership with the Village of Whitefish Bay, the Whitefish Bay Police Department, and the North Shore Health Department. Participants learned how to ride their bikes safely, had helmet checks, purchased new helmets if needed, and had fun!



Buildings & Grounds

Ben Irwin

Interim Director of Buildings & Grounds/Safety



MAINTAINING EXCEPTIONAL PLACES

The Buildings & Grounds team is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and visitors have access to facilities that are safe, clean, and well maintained. In addition to daily operations, Buildings & Grounds continues to prioritize long-term planning, safety, energy efficiency, and support for use of spaces beyond the school day.

Each year, the department undertakes a variety of facilities projects. The restoration work on the High School tower continued into the 2025-26 school year due to the tower's historical intricacies and detail. The tower will remain a fixture in the community for years to come. Other notable projects include upgrades to the air circulation system in the High School English Wing, pool and filtration system improvements, replacement and enhancements to security camera systems, and updating of building access processes.

Aging infrastructure and systems which have exceeded their lifespan result in high repair costs for custom parts and complex repairs, such as the recent repair of a failed gas regulator valve and repair to a boiler, both at the High School.

In the coming year, the district and greater community will be considering a new path forward with the long-range facilities planning process. Aligned with the district's Focus Plan, the facilities planning recommendations will serve as a guide over the next 20+ years for safety, maintenance, accessibility, and addressing aging infrastructure across district facilities.



POINTS OF PRIDE

The Buildings & Grounds team completed countless preventative and reactive maintenance work orders, including those to **electrical, plumbing, HVAC, roofing, indoor and outdoor surfaces, and fire/life safety systems**.

Ongoing **safety and security improvements** were made at each building, demonstrating a commitment to identifying strengths and opportunities across the district.

Taking a **proactive approach to safety**, district emergency operations and school safety plans provide a guide to mitigate, prevent, prepare for, and respond to incidents.

All students and staff **participate in emergency drills and response exercises**, encouraging preparedness for all possible events.

The district has achieved a **22% reduction in utility usage** since 2003, reflecting our focus on energy efficiency.

The district maintains **strong partnerships** with the Whitefish Bay Police Department, North Shore Fire/Rescue, and North Shore Health Department, which help us stay informed and prepared to meet evolving safety needs.



AN OVERVIEW OF DISTRICT FACILITIES PLANNING

In April 2026, the Whitefish Bay community voted down the Whitefish Bay School District's request for \$135.6 million for renovations at Cumberland, Richards, Lydell, and Whitefish Bay High School (\$67.9 million) and construction of a new middle school (\$67.7 million). Nonetheless, our buildings still have a very high level of need. In the coming months the team will review the options identified by the Facilities Advisory Committee to determine how to best address the facility needs across the District. We plan to have a referendum question on the November 3, 2026 ballot as a result of this review.

At the time this bulletin went to print, the board had not yet approved a referendum question for the ballot. By August 27th at the latest, **the question should be available on our website, along with additional information about the proposed projects.**



LEARN MORE

Scan the QR Code or visit <https://tinyurl.com/WFBBuildingFutures> to view the question that will be on the November 3, 2026 ballot.





Business Office & Human Resources

Ben Irwin
Director of Business Services

Hannah Chin
Director of Human Resources & Legal Counsel



FINANCIAL AND HUMAN IMPACTS

BUSINESS OFFICE

As we close out the 2025-26 school year, planning is well underway for the next fiscal year. The 2026-27 school year represents the second year of the 2025-27 State Biennial Budget, which is important because the state budget has a significant impact on the district's operational budget each year. The biggest challenge that we have faced over the last 15 years is state funding that has not kept up with inflation. As a result, the Whitefish Bay School District, similar to many other districts across Wisconsin, has struggled to keep up with many operational expenses including teacher compensation and facility maintenance.

One of the most direct ways that the 2025-27 State Biennial Budget impacted the community was through a per pupil increase to the revenue limit, with no state aid to help offset the difference in the tax levy. This is the first state budget in 15 years to not include any state aid increase to help offset the change in the revenue limit, resulting in an increase in local tax levies across the state. In forecasting the levy for 2026-27, the district is taking steps to maximize state aid in order to reduce the tax burden on local property owners.

HUMAN RESOURCES

This year, the Human Resources (HR) Department demonstrated strong leadership, responsiveness, and commitment to supporting employees at every level. The department successfully guided the transition to a flexible paid time off model, providing clear communication and thoughtful implementation to ensure a smooth shift for staff. The department also distributed a pulse survey, creating meaningful opportunities for employee voice. At the same time, HR maintained its high standard of excellence in volunteer, substitute, coach, and advisor engagement, ensuring these essential team members felt valued. Through proactive service, collaboration, and professionalism, the Department reinforced a positive workplace culture across the District.



POINTS OF PRIDE

4 additional class sections will be added to elementary buildings to help with reducing class sizes.

2.63% inflationary salary increases were provided for all staff and an additional **\$500 supplemental increase per teacher** to be more competitive in the market.

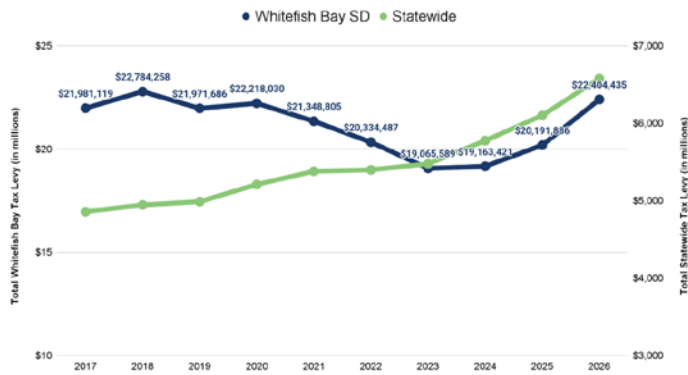
\$26,158 in interest savings by paying off the remaining debt obligation from the 2009 referendum.

Relatively strong health (3.7%) and dental insurance (3.0%) renewals helped keep costs down for both employees and the District.

WHITEFISH BAY TAX LEVY

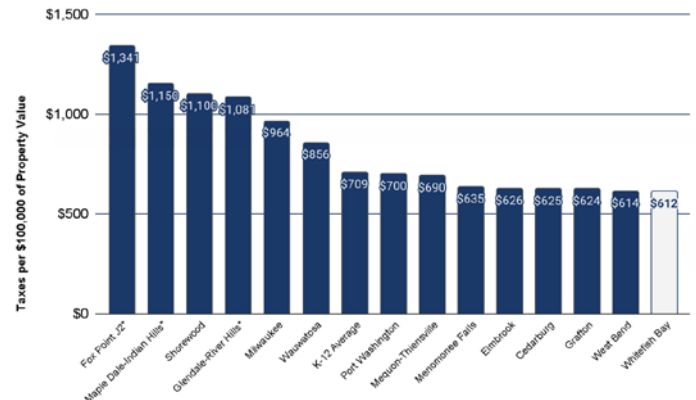
TAX LEVY HISTORY

Total School Tax Levy History



TAX LEVY RATE COMPARISON

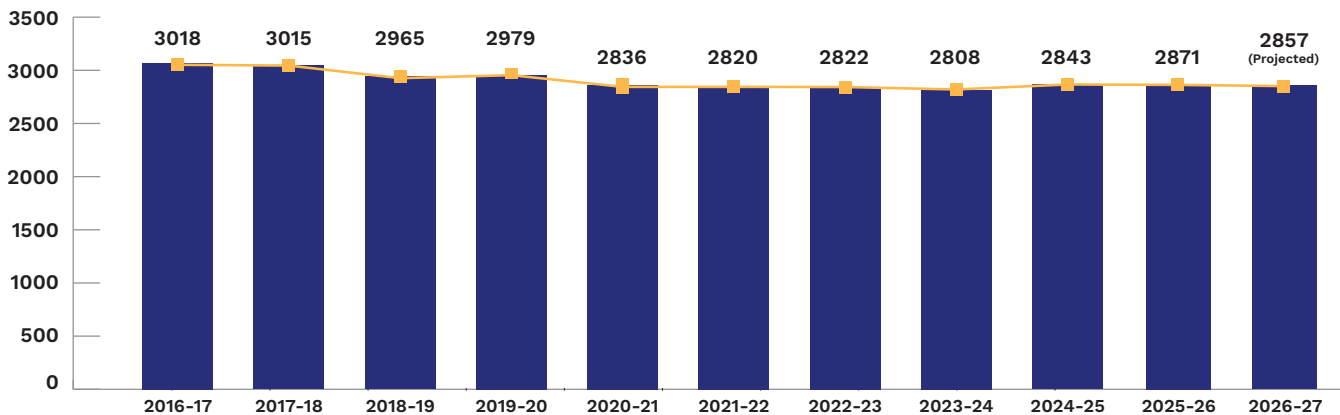
2025-26 Property Tax Rates (per \$100,000 of Property Value)



After a decline in the total tax levy starting in 2020, the total levy amount for the Whitefish Bay School District has increased over the last few years due to a number of factors including state budget, private school vouchers, and final debt payments from the 2009 referendum. However, the total levy amount set for the Whitefish Bay School District in 2026 was still less than the total amount levied in 2018 and the percentage change to the levy over the past decade has stayed below statewide trends. In addition, the tax levy for Whitefish Bay is one of the lowest in the area when compared to neighboring districts.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS: STUDENT COUNT

3rd Friday in September Pupil Count



REVENUE BREAKDOWN

Revenue for public school districts in Wisconsin comes primarily from local and state sources. For the Whitefish Bay School District, revenue from local sources, such as the tax levy, is slightly higher than revenue from state sources, such as General Aid and categorical aid. Federal grants and other miscellaneous revenue make up the remaining amount of total revenue.

EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

In most school districts, salaries and benefits make up the majority of expenditures. In the Whitefish Bay School District, salaries and benefits represent roughly three-quarters of all the expenses in the General Fund. When the Fund 27 transfer is included, which is mostly for employee salary and benefit expenses in special education, that percentage exceeds 85%.

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about School Finance in Wisconsin





Whitefish Bay

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Whitefish Bay Schools
1200 East Fairmount Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53217

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AGENDA FOR BUDGET HEARING AND ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 2, 2026

Whitefish Bay High School
Auditorium
1200 E. Fairmount Ave.

STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS – 7:00 P.M.

BUDGET HEARING – 7:15 P.M.

1. Call to order by the School Board President.
2. Distinction Between the Role of the School Board in Adopting the Budget Compared to the Role of the Electors in Adopting the Tax Levy.
3. Presentation of the Proposed Budget.
4. Discussion and Questions Concerning the Proposed Budget.
5. Action by the School Board to Adopt the 2026-27 Budget.

ANNUAL MEETING IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE BUDGET HEARING

1. Call to Order by School Board President.
2. Verification of Published Notice of Meeting by School Board Clerk.
3. Introduction of School Board Members and Administration.
4. Election of Chairperson for Annual Meeting.
5. Adopt Rules Governing the Annual Meeting.
6. Approval of the Agenda.
7. Reading of Minutes of Last Annual Meeting.
8. Presentation of the Treasurer's Report.
9. Annual Tax Levy.
10. Salaries of School Board Members.
11. Expenses for Travel of Board Members Outside of the District for Duties of the District.
12. Authorization to Lease Facilities.
13. Designate 2027 Annual Meeting Date and Authorize 2026 Annual Meeting to begin Immediately following the Budget Hearing.
14. Motion to Adjourn.

An Exceptional Place to Learn



Whitefish Bay
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Cumberland
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Richards
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Whitefish Bay
MIDDLE SCHOOL



Whitefish Bay
HIGH SCHOOL



Whitefish Bay
RECREATION
Bringing Community Together