April 1, 2025

Dear Families of Future 6th Grade Whatcom Wildcats ~

We are excited to welcome the class of 2032 to Whatcom Middle School next year! We would like to let you know about our middle school transitional activities this spring and how you and your students can be involved in those activities. This post also includes lots of information about enrichment selection and AVID.

Tours and Visits:

- Middle school counselors and administrators will visit 5th grade classes of feeder elementary schools between April 14th – April 22nd. They will talk about the middle school experience, how to choose enrichment classes, and answer questions.
- Students from Cordata, Northern Heights, Parkview, Silver Beach, and Sunnyland who will attend Whatcom next year have been scheduled to visit WMS with their classes. The schedule is below.

Date	School	Date	School
April 21	Cordata (10:00-11:00)	April 25	Northern Heights (10:00-11:00)
April 22	Parkview (9:45-11:00)	May 9	Silver Beach (9:45-11:00)
April 23	Sunnyland (9:45-11:00)		

- Students who will attend Whatcom next year, but don't go to one of the schools listed, are invited to join in with one of listed schools and visit WMS. Transportation must be provided by families. Please let us know when you would like to visit by contacting your elementary school, or Beth Pelto-Fishbeck at Whatcom MS.
- **6th Grade Parent Night is on May 8 starting at 6:30** at Whatcom Middle School. Parents can come to meet staff members and hear information on middle school curriculum and activities.
- 6th Grade orientation day, CAT Day, will be in late August the week before school begins. The date and time will be announced soon.

Enrichment Preferences:

- During the Middle School Counselor visits at the elementary schools, students will be asked to rank their enrichment selections in order of preference. The dates of these elementary school visits is below.

Date	School	Date	School
April 15	Cordata	April 14	Northern Heights
April 15	Parkview	April 22	Silver Beach
April 17	Sunnyland		

- Students that do not attend one of these schools will be sent an email with information on how to make enrichment selections.
- Prior to the MS Counselor visit at your elementary school, please watch the **6th Grade Enrichment Power Point** together with your student. The counselors will show this same Power Point during their visit. Students will be asked to rank the enrichment choices by their preference, with their first choice being listed first.
- It's important for you to know that if your child is interested at all in Band or Orchestra, 6th grade is the best time to start to learn those instruments. Students and families should also know that **Band and Orchestra are year long classes**, and we ask students make the commitment to be in their music class for the full year.

Whatcom Middle School Enrichment Classes:

- **Band**
  - Full year class
  - Explore playing in a large group with a variety of instruments. Students are given the opportunity to learn to play the instrument of their choice. Options include flute, clarinet, oboe, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, tuba, French horn, euphonium, drums, and others. No experience is required! As they continue to make music throughout their middle school years, students get the opportunity to go on field trips, play for others, learn amazingly fun music, march in the Monster Band at the Memorial Day Parade, and so much more!
- **Orchestra**
  - Full year class
  - Explore playing in an orchestra with a variety of instruments. Students are given the opportunity to learn to play the instrument of their choice from violin, viola, cello, or bass. No experience is required! As they continue to make music throughout their middle school years, students get the opportunity to go on field trips, play for others, learn amazingly fun music, and so much more!
- **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math)**
  - One semester class
  - STEM includes a variety of technology, design, and hands-on projects. Students may explore coding, computer aided design (CAD), video, photography, robotics, digital design, and building projects.
- **Art**
  - One semester class
  - Explore the world of art: painting, sculpture, ceramics, drawing, digital art, and so much more! Students will find satisfaction in following their creative interests.
- **Spanish**
  - One semester class
  - Explore the language and culture of Spanish speaking countries around the world using stories, actions, videos, music and art to learn basic vocabulary and conversation.

Enrichment class offerings are subject to change! If a class becomes unavailable or full, students will be placed in a different enrichment class.

We do our best to give students their top choices in enrichment classes, but students need to know they may get their third or fourth choice for enrichment classes due to circumstances beyond our control.

AVID:

- In addition to enrichment classes, all students will take either Team Time or AVID.
- During the Middle School Counselor visit, students will have the opportunity to learn about AVID and obtain a copy of the application.
- **Whatcom AVID information, WMS AVID informational video, and applications (digital and paper to print) can be found here:** https://whatcom.bellinghamschools.org/avid/
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), is a nationally recognized program that provides academic and social support for ALL students to help ensure a student's success in school, career, and college. The AVID system accelerates student learning, uses research-based methods of effective instruction, provides meaningful and motivational professional development, and acts as a catalyst for systemic reform and change.
- In Bellingham, all high schools and middle schools offer AVID.
- Students in the AVID program will learn about college, careers, financial literacy, organization, goal setting, and more.

Middle School Schedule:

The middle school day runs from 9:15am to 3:45pm, and will include the following class periods:

- Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Math
- Science
- Team Time or AVID
- PE – scheduled for either A or B days with enrichment being on the opposite day
- Enrichment class – scheduled for either A or B days with PE being on the opposite day
- Lunch (30 minutes)

Whatcom has two 6th grade teams, Puma and Edventure. Students are equally divided into teams and then placed in 6th grade classes that are carefully balanced according to gender, special programs, information from 5th grade teachers, and more. We work very hard to ensure that each classroom has an environment that is conducive to learning and growing for every student.

If there are any questions about enrichment choices, feel free to contact our Counselors or Registrar.

We look forward to meeting you and getting to know your student next year. Go Wildcats!

Counselor: Beth Schille-O'Connor – Elizabeth.Schille-OConnor@bellinghamschools.org

Counselor: Rita Hocking-Kombol – Rita.Hocking-Kombol@bellinghamschools.org

Registrar: Beth Pelto-Fishbeck – Beth.Pelto-Fishbeck@bellinghamschools.org

Principal: Mischelle Darragh – Mischelle.Darragh@bellinghamschools.org

Assistant Principal: Breann Hulford – Breann.Hulford@bellinghamschools.org