

AFE Forum:

The Pitfalls of Raising Children in an Affluent Community

Thursday, April 24th

7:00pm

Whitefish Bay Public Library
Second Floor

*Join speaker Philip Chard
and a panel of school
guidance counselors to
discuss the adverse affects
of an affluent community
on children and what
positive steps parents can
take to ensure a healthy
childhood.
(See inside flyer)*

Visit:

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*The Advocates for Education
of Whitefish Bay Website*

*An independent source of infor-
mation and discussion for parents
of children in Whitefish Bay
Schools*

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ing curriculum, testing, class
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Teacher & administrator
profiles*

SAVE THE DATE!



Advocates for EDUCATION

Winter 2008

of Whitefish Bay, Inc.

www.advocatesforeducation.org

Facility Updates Pending for District Schools

The District Facilities Committee, chaired by Sandy Murphy and Tom Scrivner, presented its report to the School Board on February 13. The School Board will consider the report and solicit community discussion of the recommendations before making its decision as to which, if any, projects to pursue in the future. The Facilities Committee, comprised of District parents, teachers, administrators and community members, has spent the past year preparing the report.

The timing of the effort is prompted by the expected retirement of long-term school district debt in the next few years. In the mid-1990s, the former Henry Clay School was remodeled to become the current Whitefish Bay Middle School. Retirement of the district's long-term debt and related property tax levy offers an opportunity to examine the need for facilities upgrades. School property tax levies for long-term debt must be used for capital improvements, not operations. Because of

the statewide education spending cap, use of long-term debt is the only way to finance capital improvements.

The Facilities Committee report describes a three-tiered approach to facility improvements projected to preserve and enhance the District's buildings for the next 15 years. Any and all of the improvements would require voter approval, as they all involve long-term borrowing to finance the projects. The three tiers, in order of priority are:

- **The Stewardship Plan:** This plan includes basic improvements through a variety of electrical, plumbing and heating projects at each school, primarily infrastructure and maintenance projects that have been deferred due to the constraints of spending caps. Also included are technology updates and building-related security

modifications at each school. While the cost of the Stewardship Plan would be \$14 million, the actual annual cost of funding the



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MISSION Statement

Advocates for Education is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that works to promote high quality public education in Whitefish Bay by:

- *Informing residents about education issues and encouraging public participation in matters affecting the schools*
- *Fostering a social and political climate favorable to public education*
- *Advocating for public policies that promote high quality public education in Whitefish Bay*

Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay

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AFE Hosts World Language Forum



tion of cultural differences around the globe. Tony Frontier said key questions the curriculum review committee will contemplate include: Should an additional language, such as Chinese, be offered? Are the programs in place appropriately rigorous? Should fifth-graders be allowed to select which language they learn in order to facilitate a smoother transition to their language study at the Middle School?

A panel of language teachers from the district, as well as a current high school student who studied abroad, was also available for questions from the audience. Participating on the panel were Sandy Jacques, Richards School French teacher, Heidi Ludorf, WFB Middle School German teacher, Belinda Bjerkvold, WFB High School Spanish teacher and Lauren Arena, a senior at WFB High School who spent time in Panama last summer through an American Field Service (AFS) exchange program.

Advocates for Education (AFE) presented World Language in Whitefish Bay: Is It World Class? on November 8th, 2007. Speakers Dr. Helena Curtain, renowned foreign language curriculum specialist and Tony Frontier, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Whitefish Bay School district presented an insightful look at the district's current foreign language requirements and whether they conform to the recommendations of

language specialists. The district is currently conducting a review of its world language curriculum. (See related article for a list of the recommendations the committee proposed to the School Board for review.)

Dr. Curtain emphasized how learning a foreign language (any foreign language!) can lead to higher scores on verbal intelligence tests, greater mental flexibility, and a deeper understanding and apprecia-

New Recommendations for World Language Curriculum

The World Language Curriculum Committee has concluded its review of the District's current language curriculum and presented its recommendations to the School Board on February 27.

The Committee recommended changes at each level of language instruction, although first through fourth grades will remain largely the same. In an effort to ensure the alignment of core concepts and skills throughout the World Language program with State of Wisconsin standards, the District's program would be redeveloped following the Understanding by Design Curriculum model in the 2008-2009 school year. Key elements of this curriculum model include first deciding what the ending knowledge skills need to be (also known as "mapping backwards"), developing key benchmarks and assessments for what quality student work looks like, and finally designing classroom activities which are closely aligned with the desired knowledge skills. While the Understanding by Design curriculum model has been used in the District for the past five years, this will be the first time the model is applied to language instruction.

Other proposed changes include the development of a portfolio system to monitor student progress across

languages and levels. The structure of the current sixth grade World Language Exploratory course would be moved to fifth grade in an effort to expose students to additional languages at an earlier age and better enable them to choose a language of study in Middle School. This would broaden the current offering of Spanish at Cumberland School and French at Richards School by providing exposure to Spanish, French and German in the fifth grade. In turn, students would then be able to choose a single focus language for study in sixth grade, increasing the number of years of study of that focus language.

A key recommendation involves ensuring common assessments across all Level 1 courses, engaging in writing assessment at two different levels and providing performance assessment at Levels 3 and 5 for High School students.

The Committee also recommends that further study of whether to add Chinese to the District's language offerings be considered, with these results being presented to the School Board in November, 2008. The current practice of offering Advanced Placement (AP) courses will also come under further scrutiny, with consideration being given to the merits of other models.

Security: A Community Education

Doug Reynolds, a Beloit school district safety officer, met in January with Whitefish Bay school and police officials to review what possible measures can be taken in our school district to tighten security and educate the community in how to make our schools safer. Whitefish Bay Police Chief Robert Jacobs has also been working closely with District Superintendent James Rickabaugh and Gary Siegman, the District's Safety Coordinator and Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds to review District safety procedures. Chief Jacobs believes the message that needs to be sent to our schools and our public is one of working together as a community, not as individuals, to ensure the safety of Village schools.

Current District safety measures include 29 surveillance cameras throughout the District's properties, locking main doors during the school day, and an upcoming conversion to a FOB system of electronic keys for all personnel. On Reynolds' advice, Whitefish Bay administrators will continue to update emergency plans for both natural disasters and security situations. Each plan will be tailored to reflect physical differences among the school buildings as well as to be age appropriate for the students involved. These plans could involve lockdown drills at the high school or middle school in order to help stu-

dents get into the habit of locking doors and taking defensive measures if an intruder is in the building. The Facilities Committee Report on needed changes to the District's buildings includes a recommendation for the remodeling of all area school vestibules in order to cut off access to school buildings until visitors are seen by a staff member.

Another emphasis will be on heading off tragedies such as those which make the headlines. Reynolds focused on raising student awareness by telling students to pay attention to their instincts. "Experts tell us the most important thing is information in advance - above and beyond locked doors and visitor badges," he said. Reynolds commented that while he saw "engaged and obviously caring teachers and smiles on students" in our hallways, he still cautions vigilance against students feeling as though what occurs in other parts of the country could never happen here.

Siegman believes "this kind of determination to make children safe is what schools, police, parents and even students need. It's the mindset we have to have in this day and age." Siegman also pointed out that while many future changes might seem inconvenient at first, it is necessary for the entire community to understand that this is the direction we have to take to keep our children, teachers, staff and administrators safe.

DID YOU FORGET?

RENEW

TODAY!

Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay, Inc.

Continue to be part of the team of voices speaking on behalf of children.

- Active Member(s) (WFB resident or parent/guardian of WFB School District student) @ \$20 per household
- Supporting Member(s) @ \$20 per household
- Enclosed is an additional donation to support AFE. Due to the lobbying mission of AFE, donations are not tax-deductible.
- I am interested in volunteering for AFE. Please call me.

\$ _____ donation enclosed.

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Send this form today to:

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NEWS from our Schools

Whitefish Bay High School

- Whitefish Bay High School will celebrate its 75th anniversary on Saturday, May 10th, 2008. The festivities will kick off with the annual Run/Walk the Bay sponsored by the Whitefish Bay Education Foundation and will continue with building tours, special exhibits, musical entertainment, a barbecue dinner, and the closing performance of *The Odd Couple* at 8:00 p.m. All past, present and future Whitefish Bay High students are welcome.

Whitefish Bay Middle School

- The Whitefish Bay Middle School was recognized by the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators as an Exemplary Middle School for their continued growth with achievement in math and reading.
- New Grade Eight electives have opened up many interesting options for students. The new offerings in the arts and literature include: Sports Literature, Novel to Film, Adventure and Science Fiction Literature and

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EDUCATION**
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FORUM CO-SPONSORS:

Cumberland School PTO

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For information regarding AFE membership, please contact: Tara Serebin (963-9192) or visit our web site at: www.advocatesforeducation.org

The Pitfalls of Raising Children in an Affluent Community

Because of the opportunities and resources it affords, most parents view affluence as a positive influence in child development. Poverty is often linked with child neglect, academic failure, substance abuse and delinquent behavior.

However, family research shows that affluence has its own perils for our youngsters. In fact, the children of affluent communities may be at greater risk than their disadvantaged peers for developing a host of behavioral and emotional maladies. We will examine how affluence can adversely influence child development and identify positive steps that parents can take to avoid these pitfalls.

Join the discussion at an AFE forum
with featured speaker:

Philip Chard

**Thursday, April 24
7:00 PM**

Whitefish Bay Public Library
Second Floor Program Room
5420 N. Marlborough Drive

A panel representing the Whitefish Bay School District including Bill Henkle, HS Principal, Jeff Truel and Susan Ramsey, district guidance counselors, will be on hand to give their perspective and answer questions.

About our speaker:

Philip Chard is a psychotherapist, book author, newspaper columnist and nationally acclaimed speaker. He writes an award-winning weekly column, called "Out of My Mind," that appears in the MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL, and he is author of *The Healing Earth*, a groundbreaking work in eco-psychology that received the 1995 Midwest Publishers Award. He is a contributing writer to *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul* and has appeared as a guest expert on ABC Television's *20/20*. Philip has over 30 years experience counseling children and families.

AFE forums are free & open to the public

For forum information, please contact Deb Schmidt at 967-0875.

Facility Updates Pending for District Schools

plan is equal to the current District debt payments which are due to expire, and would therefore not result in a tax increase for village residents.

- **The Educational Improvement Option:** This option proposes adoption of all components of the Stewardship Plan, plus building additions at each school. The additions include a music wing at the high school, a fitness center at the middle school, and large multi-purpose cafeteria/auditorium space at each elementary school. Also included is the renovation of existing space vacated due to new construction. This option would cost an additional \$14.5 million.
- **The Master Plan Option:** All of the previous changes are included in this plan, plus second-story library/media center additions at the elementary schools, a new gym

and substantial renovations at the middle school, and additional performing arts enhancements at the high school. This option would cost an additional \$12 million beyond the Educational Improvement Option.

The Facilities Committee recommends that the School Board approve the Stewardship Plan, strongly consider adoption of the Educational Improvement Option, and review of the Master Plan Option. The School Board will consider these recommendations and identify the tax implications of each plan. As part of the review process, the School Board will be looking to the community for an indication of their interest and support of each option.



You can review the full Facilities Committee report by going to the District website home page at www.wfbschools.com and clicking on the tab entitled 2008 District Facilities Study Committee Report on the left-hand side of the page.

AFE is committed to keeping you informed as the School Board develops and finalizes its plan for future infrastructure improvements. Please watch for future AFE updates and notification of opportunities for public input through e-mail alerts, newsletters and on our website at www.advocatesforeducation.org.

NEWS from our Schools

Contemporary Literature. Creative Publications is an offering for students who wish to illustrate or write a creative literary piece. A new financial course, Dollars and Sense, will focus on the world of finance and the impact it has on our daily lives.

Cumberland Elementary School

- The Fifth Grade Community Service Club has exceeded their goal of \$3000 by creating hands-on fundraisers such as leaf raking for neighbors, shoveling snow, and a silent auction. They will donate their efforts to the Second Harvest Backpack Buddies program.
- Student Council is back! Three new Student Council sub-groups have been formed this year: the Green Team will focus on the environment; the Spirit Team will promote school spirit; and the Cumberland Community Team will focus on service projects. Fourth

and fifth graders are eligible to participate.

- Teachers are integrating Smart Board (an interactive white board) technology into instruction, extending the ways they use technology to support students' learning.

Richards Elementary School

- An Anti-Bullying Campaign has recently been launched at Richards School. Students and parents were asked to sign contracts agreeing to join together to "stomp out" bullying.
- The Junior Great Books Program at Richards saw a record number of students participate this year. The lunchtime book group encourages students to read classic tales and then openly discuss them with a parent leader. The groups meet weekly for eight weeks and is open to third, fourth and fifth graders.