

Monthly Report – October 2007
Ronald J. Farrar, Principal

Overview of Activities for October

- Whitin School Monthly Faculty Meeting on October 1
- Student Photos Taken by Laprade Studio on October 2
- World Smile Day Celebrated at Whitin on October 4
- Professional Development Day for All Staff on October 5
- Whitin PTO Monthly Meeting at 6:30PM on October 10
- Whitin School Council Meeting on October 17
- Halloween Social for Students in Grades 5-6 on October 31

Subject/Course/Classroom Activities

Professional Development Activities:

Uxbridge Public School staff members participated in a variety of Professional Development training sessions on Friday, October 5. Whitin School classroom teachers attended vertical and horizontal meetings to address curriculum and assessments practices. Paraprofessionals participated in safety training sessions on CPR and restraint training.

PTO Reports and Parent Information

Whitin School PTO held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 10 at 6:30PM in the school library. A group of Whitin parents attended this meeting. Copies of the PTO meeting agenda and monthly Parent Newsletters are attached for your review.

Parent Officers of Whitin PTO for 2007-2008:

Laura Derderian	Co-President
Chris Stack	Co-President
Andrea Consoletti	Co-Treasurer
Michaelle Phillips	Co-Treasurer
Maria Morales	Secretary

General School Information

Extracurricular Activities:

The full program of extracurricular clubs and student activities is underway at Whitin School. Following is a listing of after-school activities and advisors:

Intramurals	Dean Tourangeau
Student Council	Cathleen O'Brien
School Newspaper	Debra Prince
Yearbook	Mike Flanagan – Cathy Chauvin
Math Olympiad	Christine Robbins
Destination Imagination	Karen Knapik
Lego Robotics	Gretchen Roche
Bands	Kathleen Penza
Chorus	Jeanne Rapoza
Drama	Cathleen O'Brien

Whitin Security System:

On Thursday, September 27 the new security system at Whitin became fully operational. Staff members are asked to wear their identification badges at all times. Information regarding student access and procedures for parental pick-up were communicated. We are thankful for the cooperation of all during this transition. We will continue to look for other opportunities to keep our students safe.

Student of the Month:

This month Whitin recognized students from each grade level who were caught “Making a Difference” in the life of someone else. Each student received as an award a pencil, bumper sticker, and a backpack full of school supplies. These backpacks were donated by Representative Jennifer Callahan.

Upcoming Events:

- November 2 – End of 1st quarter
- November 5 – Monthly Whitin Faculty Meeting
- November 6 – Curriculum Planning Half-Day
- November 12 – Veterans Day Holiday – No School
- November 13 – Report Cards Sent Home to Parents
- November 14 – School Council Meeting at 1:00 PM
- November 14 – Whitin PTO Meeting at 6:30 PM
- November 19 – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- November 22 – Thanksgiving Day

Dear Families,

On Saturday, October 13, 2007, the Whitin Middle School PTO will be selling baked goods at the Second Annual Vendor & Crafters Fair to be held at Uxbridge High School Gymnasium from 9am to 2pm. The fair is again being sponsored by Lauren Salzberg, who is a representative of Stampin' Up! The fair will be expanded this year to include crafters with quality items as well as vendors and local small businesses.

The PTO has received a free booth and would like your help in providing various baked goods donations to sell at the fair. This event will be an all profit fundraiser, which will go towards student activities. Parents who would like to donate are asked to complete the form below and send it to school with your child. **Donations should be brought to the UHS gym between 8am and 10am on Saturday, Oct 13.** Let us know if you need to make other arrangements to drop off donations at a different time.

Any questions, email Laura laurader6975@hotmail.com or Chris stackmail@charter.net

Please return reply form by Thursday, October 4.

Name _____ Grade _____

Email _____ Phone _____

_____ Pies _____ CupCakes _____ Cookies

_____ Breads _____ Brownies _____ Homemade Candy

_____ Other baked goods (please specify)

_____ Financial Donation

The Importance of Teacher Intervention

Stephen L. Wessler and William Preble

Recently I talked with two middle school boys about students' use of degrading language and slurs in their school. They said that students used degrading words toward girls and toward gays and lesbians "all of the time." They added that racist and anti-Semitic language was used on a regular basis, but less frequently. A short time later, I also talked to one of the teachers in that school (let's call her Ms. Smith). I asked her whether the school had a problem with students engaging in verbal harassment of traditionally targeted groups. She told me that she never heard such language either in her class or in the hallways.

The next day I spoke to the same two boys and told them that I was confused. I reminded them of our prior conversation and then told them that I had spoken with Ms. Smith and that she did not hear the kind of slurs or put-downs that they had described. Almost in unison, both boys said, in slightly different words, "Oh, nobody would use those words in front of Ms. Smith." What became apparent in further conversation with the two boys was that Ms. Smith, in effect, created a moving zone of civility as she walked through the hallways and conducted her classes. She was known as a teacher who always intervened to interrupt the use of put-downs, slurs, teasing, and harassment. It is ironic, but in my experience not unusual, that Ms. Smith, who was so effective in stopping harassment in her presence, was unaware of the prevalence of degrading language elsewhere in the school.

Most students I talk to know a teacher like Ms. Smith. But sadly, these same students tell me that they know a large number of teachers, staff, and administrators who, in their view, hear degrading language, slurs, and put-downs as they walk through the halls or in the cafeteria, but these adults fail to react at all. In fact, approximately one-third of the high school and middle school students surveyed by William Preble in Maine and New Hampshire schools told us that when faculty, staff, and administrators hear students using degrading language and slurs, they do not intervene.

When students believe that an adult heard degrading and uncivil language but failed to speak up, the effect is powerful and disillusioning. Most students understand from an early age that other students will use put-downs and engage in teasing and harassment. Students, however, expect that the adults in their schools will speak up to create an atmosphere of respect. The students who are most devastated by slurs and put-downs are those who believe that an adult whom they both care about and look up to heard the comments and did nothing. These students often interpret the silence of teachers as condoning the slur or put-down.

Students sometimes are mistaken that a teacher has actually heard degrading comments. However, the implicit, unintended message sent to students who engage in harassing conduct is equally damaging if teachers do fail to react. Students construe the silence as implicit permission to continue verbal harassment. As a consequence, some of these boys and girls do continue their harassment and, over time, engage in increasingly disruptive and violent behavior.

What Kind of Intervention Works?

The same kind of intervention does not work equally well in every situation. In the hallway or in the classroom, the most effective intervention will vary depending upon a number of factors, including whether the degrading language was used "routinely" without any intended target,

whether the comment was used to intimidate a specific student, and whether other students heard the comment. However, every effective intervention has common elements:

- timeliness
- consistency
- firmness
- respectfulness

Effective intervention by teachers can successfully change the conduct by reducing the use of degrading language, can make targeted students (as well as bystanders who feel that the words are about them—even if no one else knows) believe that someone cares about their concerns, and can provide powerful models for students to speak up when they hear slurs and put-downs.

Timeliness

Faculty should respond immediately to the use of degrading comments and put-downs for several reasons. First, interventions will have the greatest impact when students have a clear memory of the words. Second, when faculty delay speaking to a student, other students who heard the comment likely will not be present to hear the faculty member's response. Consequently, those other students may believe that the teacher did not care about the comment or even that the teacher condoned its use. Third, an opportunity delayed may well turn into an opportunity lost. Faculty who plan to speak to students "later" may forget about the incident, may be unable to find the student, or may lose the impetus to speak up.

Consistency

When faculty consistently intervene to interrupt students' use of degrading language, they set a standard for acceptable conduct in the school. On the other hand, when faculty members intervene only occasionally, they send a mixed and confusing message: degrading comments and put-downs are unacceptable some of the time but are not so bad at other times. Consistency, however, does not demand perfection. It is very difficult for most of us to respond *every single time* we hear harassing and disrespectful comments. Sometimes we have not fully heard the comment; other times we are distracted; and in other situations we just do not have the energy to say anything. Being consistent requires being vigilant and pushing ourselves to speak up for a civil and respectful atmosphere; but consistency takes into consideration human nature—none of us is perfect.

Firmness

The use of degrading language is a serious problem in our schools and deserves a serious and firm response. When faculty members respond to slurs and put-downs in a joking or lighthearted way, they send a confusing message. Students may wonder whether the faculty member really was disturbed by the language or was only going through the motions of intervening.

Respectfulness

When faculty intervene to respond to the use of slurs and disparaging comments, they model for

students the courage and confidence to speak up for a safe school environment. But faculty also create a role model for students by *how* they intervene. It is important for several reasons that the intervening adult treats the student who used a slur respectfully. First, an intervention that embarrasses or humiliates a student is more likely to make the student angry or resentful than encourage the student to seriously evaluate his or her conduct. Second, many students who use slurs do not intend to do anything disrespectful or hurtful. Rather, they are simply using a word that they hear others use all the time. When faculty suggest through their response that the student was acting in a purposefully mean-spirited way, the student may feel unjustly criticized and become both defensive and resistant to change. Finally, other students watch *what* faculty members do and how they do it. If adults in the school intervene respectfully, students will do the same.

The Effect of Intervention: Interrupting the Pattern of Escalation

Faculty who consistently and firmly interrupt the use of degrading language break the pattern of escalation from the lower levels of verbal harassment, to stronger language, to threats, and, finally, to violence. When the escalation is prevented, schools become safer places.

The Effect on Bystanders

When degrading language is used, many of us tend to judge the impact of our interventions by whether we have succeeded in stopping students from saying the offending word again. But this is only one measure of the effectiveness of intervening. I have spoken to many teachers who become increasingly disheartened that their interventions are ineffective because they hear the students they interrupted continue to use degrading language and slurs. In fact, one of the most powerful impacts of interrupting the use of degrading language may be invisible to most teachers.

Although reducing the use of degrading language is a major concern, an equal concern is the impact of that language on students who feel that the language is targeted at them. The teacher who hears two students use a slur while walking in the hallway and is deciding whether to intervene may not know which other students are walking nearby. One of those students may have an older brother or sister (or a parent) who is gay or a favorite first cousin who is black. That student likely will interpret the degrading language as being targeted at herself or himself or at a beloved family member. Moreover, those students, although accustomed to hearing slurs in the hallway, are likely to be devastated if an adult (particularly an adult whom they admire) walks by and says nothing. Conversely, when teachers intervene, the effect on those students who believe they are the target can be extraordinarily powerful.

Role Modeling Civility for Students

Perhaps most important, when teachers, guidance counselors, nurses, coaches, administrators, and others intervene to interrupt the use of degrading language, they model the confidence and skills necessary for students to stand up and speak up for civility and respect. Faculty cannot change a culture of incivility alone—they need the help of students.

→ **Check out the next issue of *ASCD Express* for a discussion of the importance of peer leader programs that empower students to stand up and speak up for others who are**

the targets of harassment.

Source: This article was adapted from Chapter 4 of [*The Respectful School: How Educators and Students Can Conquer Hate and Harassment*](#) by Stephen L. Wessler and William Preble.

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Uxbridge Supports Our Troops
Holiday in a Shoebox Campaign

Each year USOT sends care packages to local military personnel stationed overseas during the holidays. Last year we sent over 400 shoeboxes! Help us reach our 2007 goal of 500 shoeboxes by participating in the following:

World Card-Making Day, Saturday, October 6th

Join us at the Uxbridge Town Hall from 9-12 noon. We will be making holiday cards for the troops to include in our shoebox shipments. All supplies will be provided. Our goal is to make 500 cards! Stop by and make one card, or stay all morning and make a stack!

For more information about this event, contact Holly at 508-234-4984 or holly.stamps@mac.com

Pack A Shoebox for the Troops!

Send a little holiday cheer by packing a shoebox for a serviceperson! Drop off your unsealed shoebox at the Uxbridge Town Hall or the Whitin School between October 6 and November 16. Your shoebox donation will go a long way in making the troops feel a little more comfortable over the holidays. If you prefer to put your donations in a bag instead of a shoebox, that's fine, too!

Prefer to donate? Checks may be made payable to Uxbridge Supports Our Troops and dropped off or mailed to the Uxbridge Town Hall (21 S. Main St.). If you have any questions regarding this campaign, or would like to add a name to USOT's list, please call either Diane at 508-278-5131 or Linda at 508-278-9425.

Suggested items for shoebox:

AA or AAA batteries	Cookies	Lip balm
AT & T international phone cards	Holiday decorations	Socks
T-Shirts	CDs and DVDs	Hard Candy
Red Sox or Patriots memorabilia	Pens and pencils	Snacks
Hand-held games	Playing cards	Candy-coated gum

www.uxbridgesupportsourtroops.com

Whitin Middle School PTO Meeting
Wednesday October 10, 2007
6:30pm in Room 211

Agenda

- ❖ Review September Meeting Minutes
- ❖ Review Treasurer's Report
- ❖ Calendar of Upcoming Events
- ❖ Update on Amazing Hero Art Show
- ❖ Update on Yankee Candle Fundraiser
- ❖ Update on SpiritWear Fundraiser
- ❖ Update on School Council
- ❖ Plans for Halloween Dance
- ❖ Plans for Vendor Fair
- ❖ New Business

**WHITIN MIDDLE SCHOOL PTO
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday September 12, 2007**

Attendance

Deb Blackburn, Andrea Consoletti, Laura Derderian, Nancy Hanson, Kay Klos, Linda Kuros, Donna Lombard, Maria Morales, Karen Pascucci, Sandy Petrillo, Michaelle Phillips, Chris Stack, Tracy Wagner, Amy Mayer, Ron Farrar

Review of Meeting Minutes from August 21, 2007

Minutes from the August meeting were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report was accepted with a balance of \$8,524.27. The Lemonade Stand fund was dissolved and consolidated into the regular PTO account. We reviewed the estimated expenses (\$17,710.50) for the school year 07-08.

Update on Back To School Night

This annual event was very well attended and all information received was positive and upbeat. Although there were only 37 surveys returned, all were positive. Parents liked the team approach as opposed to each teacher speaking individually.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Sep 14	Professional Development Day - no school
Sep 18	Yankee Candle Fundraiser ends
Sep 19	Amazing Hero Art Show
Sep 28	Mid Term Progress Reports Spiritwear Fundraiser ends
Oct 1 & 2	Laprade photos taken
Oct 4	World Smile Day celebrated
Oct 5	Professional Development Day - no school
Oct 8	Columbus Day - no school

Update on Yankee Candle Fundraiser

All orders due on September 18 and will be mailed on September 24. Orders will be delivered around the 3rd week of October.

Update on Spiritwear Fundraiser

All orders due on September 28. Orders will be delivered sometime in October. Kay made a presentation to the 5th grade on what items were available for purchase.

Backpack sales should be kept separate from Spiritwear as it is a separate fundraiser, which has already been paid. They will be sold in the cafeteria during all lunches from Monday Sept 17 thru Friday Sept 21. They will also be sold in the school store when it opens for the year.

School Council Report

School Council will start next month. Meetings will be held the 2nd Wednesday of every month between 1:15pm and 2:00pm. Members will continue to discuss school improvement plan and the mission.

Mr. Farrar also discussed having PTO become a true Parent-Teacher organization by involving more teachers as well as more parents.

Plans for Amazing Hero Art Show

Art teachers are very excited. There is a procedure in place to get all 650 students in the gym. PTO members are also invited. A motion was made and seconded for PTO to buy the first painting at \$350.00. Sandy Petrillo agreed to purchase for the school (at her discretion) the 2nd painting at \$300.

New Business

The message from the PTO on the Whitin Middle School Parent Newsletter for October was reviewed. Maria will send the updated information to Mr. Farrar by next Wednesday.

There were several new fundraisers discussed.

- Target Grant for Education / many funds available / teachers need to apply / Andrea will speak to team leaders and explain
- Verizon Volunteers / the company would give money to school for Volunteer hours worked by Verizon employees.
- BoxTops / Student Council will again collect / Chris to get specifics from Mrs. O'Brien
- Vendor Fair October 13 9am-2pm to be held at Uxbridge High School / Whitin Middle School will be the only bake sale at the fair. Maria to compose a letter to send to parents asking for baked goods donations. We will also sell bags. Chris will ask Hannaford Supermarkets for a donation of water to be sold at the fair. We could also sell cozies (water bottle holders). Kay will get prices from Old Colony. A motion was made and approved to buy 100. We will sell at the fair then have them for sale at the school store for \$5.00.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday October 10, 2007 at 6:30pm in room 211.

Submitted by,

Maria Morales
Secretary

Uxbridge Public Schools

Professional Development Day Schedule – Whitin Middle School

Friday, October 5, 2007

Schedule for Certified Staff

- 7:30 – 8:00AM** Breakfast for All Certified Staff – UHS Cafeteria
- 8:00 – 9:15AM** Workshop for All Certified Staff – UHS Auditorium
Continued Focus on Attitude – Teamwork – Climate
Progress Report: Standards-Based Education Practices
- 9:30 – 11:30AM** Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment Team Planning
Grades 5-6 at Whitin and Grades 7-8 at UHS
- 11:30AM – 12:15PM** Staff Lunchtime (BYOL)
- 12:15 – 2:30PM** Curriculum-Instruction-Assessment Planning
Team Meetings Continue

Schedule for Paraprofessionals

- 8:00 – 8:30AM** Breakfast for All paraprofessionals – Whitin Cafeteria
- 8:30 – 11:30AM** First Aid and CPR Training in Whitin Cafeteria
- 11:30AM – 12:15PM** Staff Lunchtime (BYOL)
- 12:15 – 2:30PM** First Aid and CPR Training in Whitin Library



WHITIN MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT NEWSLETTER October 2007



School Photos on Monday, October 1 and Tuesday, October 2

Following is the school photo schedule for this year:

Grade 5 student photos will be taken on Monday, October 1.

Grades 6-7-8 photos will be taken on Tuesday, October 2.

Parents will have many portrait package options to choose from. Order envelopes from Laprade Studio were given to students earlier this week. Completed order envelopes, with check enclosed, must be brought to school by students on their picture day.

Mid-Term Progress Reports

Next week is the mid-point of the 1st quarter marking period at Whitin School. Teachers in each class will be busy completing Progress Reports for all students. Teachers will be listing mid-quarter grades, and entering comments about class behavior, participation, homework, and effort. Parents can expect children to bring home Progress Reports by Tuesday, October 9.

Amazing Hero Art Presentation

On September 19th artist Rob Surette presented his exciting and moving Amazing Hero Art show to all the students and staff of Whitin Middle School. During his hour long performance Mr. Surette painted 5 large portraits of historical and inspirational people, impressed the audience with magic tricks, and moved the students and staff with motivating words of wisdom on the importance of "being somebody." The Whitin community extends a sincere and heartfelt thank you to the Uxbridge Education Foundation, which provided the generous grant to bring this presentation to us. Also, thank you to the PTO, Petrillo family, Klos Family, Simply Wood Floors, Inc. of Mendon, Prime Prudential Properties and Koopman Lumber, both of Whitinsville. Their generous donations allowed us to purchase all 5 portraits to display in Whitin School. This presentation will be remembered for a long time by everyone who attended.

World Smile Day is October 5

Due to no school for students on October 5th, World Smile Day is being celebrated on Thursday, October 4. It is a day dedicated to good cheer, good works, and lots of smiles.

The catch phrase for the day is, "Do an Act of Kindness...Help one person smile."

Whitin Middle School is planning several simple activities to encourage everyone to celebrate World Smile Day. Students and staff are encouraged to wear yellow and black on Thursday to represent "Smiley". The wearing of home-made smiley-faces is encouraged. Also, everyone is asked to perform one random act of kindness – to make someone smile.

No School for Students on October 5

There will be no school for all Uxbridge Public School students on Friday, October 5. Teachers and school staff will be participating in a full-day program of professional development training; teachers will be attending a variety of workshops, seminars, and special training sessions. Once again, there is no school for students on Friday, October 5.

Monthly PTO Meeting on October 11

The next monthly meeting of the Whitin Middle School PTO is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10, 2007 at 6:30pm. This month's meeting will be held in Room 211. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

A reminder to take part in the fundraisers which will help with many student activities and fees. Come to the meeting and find out more!

Hannaford Helps Schools - Earn school dollars for every participating product purchased. This program is running now through December 1, 2007.

Target Take Charge of Education Program - Target donates to the school 1% of purchases made using the Target REDCard. Visit target.com/tcoe
Keep clipping those BOXTOPS!

Visit the Whitin Middle School PTO Booth at the 2nd annual Uxbridge Vendor & Crafter Fair to be held on Saturday October 13, 2007.

Notes from the Nurse

Reminder to Grade 7 parents: All students in Grade 7 are required to have a tetanus booster prior to the start of school. If you have not sent this information into the health office, please do so as soon as possible.

Free physicals can be scheduled at the WIC van located in the Hannaford parking lot on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. Additional locations and times are in the nurse's office. Also, area health professionals provide free health care at the Free Clinic at Northbridge High School on the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 6-8 PM.

If you are having difficulty getting health coverage, please contact Mrs. Donahue @ 508 278-6361.

Substitute nurses are needed for all school buildings (Early Learning Center, Taft Elementary, Whitin Middle and Uxbridge High School). If you are an RN with a Massachusetts license and are interested in substituting in our schools please call Mrs. Donahue @ 508 278-6361.

Holiday in a Shoebox Campaign

Whitin Middle School Student Council will join the Uxbridge Supports Our Troops organization in sponsoring this year's Troops' Holiday in a Shoebox Campaign. The Shoebox Campaign is a way for you to show your support for U. S. soldiers who are stationed overseas. All you need to do is fill a shoebox with a variety of items listed on the back of this newsletter, and drop off the unsealed shoebox at any of our schools. See attached sheet for more information.

See attachments on our new security system and PTO Bake Sale.

Halloween Social for Grades 5-6 on October 31 – More Information to Follow

Ronald J. Farrar, Principal

October 25, 2007

Date: October 1, 2007
To: Whitin School Faculty
From: Mr. Farrar & Ms. Mayer
Re: Faculty Meeting

Faculty Meeting Agenda for October 1, 2007

- Whitin Carrot(s)
- Welcome to New Staff
- Encouragement Notes to Students
- Mid-Term progress reports: Due by Wednesday, October 3rd
- Plans for this Friday's Professional Development Day
- Whitin School Council: Responsibilities & Representatives
- PTO Update/Invitation
- Yankee Candle Fundraiser
- Report on Troops' Holiday in a Shoebox Campaign
- World Smile Day: Thursday, October 4th
- Library Request
- Upcoming Halloween Social
- Student of the Month-Backpacks
- Food for Thought Article



**A message from the Whitin Middle School
Student Council 2007 – 2008 . . .**

<i>Who?</i>	Staff, Faculty, Students
<i>What?</i>	World Smile Day!
<i>When?</i>	We'll celebrate on Thursday, October 4 th — no school on the 5 th !
<i>Where?</i>	Whitin Middle School and Uxbridge Food Pantry
<i>Why?</i>	Reaching out to others

What Do We Do?

1. Wear the colors of the smile (black and yellow!).
2. Perform a random act of kindness throughout the day.
3. Witness a random act of kindness and report it to your teacher.
4. Bring in an item for the Uxbridge Food Pantry; soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, antibacterial soap, tissues, toilet paper, wet wipes, powder, or nonperishable kids' snacks. Collect these items in homerooms. They will be picked up at the end of the day by a Student Council member.

***Thank you for joining us in our first
community service project of the year!***

