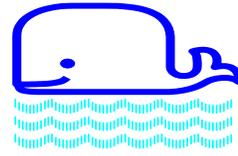


# “THE WHITNEY WHALE WATCH”



February 9, 2021

Dear Eli Whitney Families,

We continue to support all of the members in our learning community with the recent tragic news of Mrs. Patterson. The entire Eli Whitney staff is always available for our families and their needs. Mr. Bonaventura ([bonaventural@stratk12.org](mailto:bonaventural@stratk12.org)), Mrs. Henrick ([henrickk@stratk12.org](mailto:henrickk@stratk12.org)) and Mrs. Morelli ([morellij@stratk12.org](mailto:morellij@stratk12.org)) comprise our specialized support staff and can be reached through their email addresses. Mr. Veteri ([veterir@stratk12.org](mailto:veterir@stratk12.org)) and I ([florekv@stratk12.org](mailto:florekv@stratk12.org)) are also available to help. Mrs. Patterson made a positive impact on all members of our learning community. We will continue to take care of each other.



## **Return to School:**

Although our fifth and sixth graders' return to in-person learning was delayed by two days, on Thursday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, the majority of our students returned to in-person learning. Many students seemed happy to see some classmates for the first time since last March. Please know that we remain vigilant in our mitigation practices.



## **Sixth Graders:**

The Sixth Grade Committee has already met twice to plan activities for our sixth graders. We are hoping to plan events for this wonderful group of students as they start to get ready for middle school. We celebrate these students for their many accomplishments. We are proud of them as they continue to be positive role models for our other students.



## **Kindergarten Registration:**

If you have a child who will turn five (5) years of age on or before January 1, 2022, please complete the online Kindergarten Pre-Registration Form. The link is available on the Stratford Board of Education website. Go to: [www.stratfordk12.org](http://www.stratfordk12.org) and click on the "Families" tab. Then select "Kindergarten Information" and the "2021-2022 Kindergarten Registration Link". If you have any questions, please call the Registration Department at (203) 381-6924.



### **Food Drive:**

In addition to our on-going food drive, the P.T.S.A. is also organizing a food drive to support the Sterling House Food Pantry. It begins today and runs through the end of the next school week, Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>. Boxes will be placed outside each classroom for canned goods. In addition, monetary donations are also accepted. Please place this donation in an envelope that clearly identifies your child's name and the name of the classroom teacher. Please remind your child to hand this envelope off to your child's teacher. Checks should be made out to Eli Whitney P.T.S.A. The class with the most cans and the class with the most monetary donations will receive a special thank you surprise!



### **Snow Days:**

Snow days were discussed at the January Board of Education Meeting. It was decided that the district would maintain two "traditional" snow days. Since we used these two days this past week, any other inclement weather days automatically become remote learning days. This information is publicized by local newspapers and radio and television stations. It can also be accessed on the district website ([Stratfordk12.org](http://Stratfordk12.org)).



### **Learning Recovery:**

As you know, schools in Connecticut quickly transitioned to remote learning last March. Learning Recovery was put in place at the beginning of this school year in an effort to address possible gaps in students' achievement. During this time frame, many members of our staff have been working with our children. Academic interventions were provided as we carefully monitored students' progress. At this time, however, classroom teachers are resuming this instructional responsibility.



### **Music-Makers:**

On Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, we were treated to a virtual concert that was performed by Mrs. Lugo's Music Makers. The presentation featured a variety of musicians who shared both their passion for music and their talent. During the beginning of the concert, Mrs. Lugo shared that along with many other music teachers, she is inspired by the following poem by Arthur O'Shaughnessy.

***The Music Makers***  
*"We are the music-makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,  
And sitting by desolate streams.  
World-losers and world-forsakers,  
Upon whom the pale moon gleams;  
Yet we are the movers and shakers,  
Of the world forever, it seems."*

We appreciate these young musicians for reminding us to be "dreamers of dreams."



### **Cultural Arts:**

Our P.T.S.A. continues to be both creative and supportive. Although traditional cultural arts programs are not possible this year, our P.T.S.A. is organizing a virtual experience for all of our students. "Extreme Science" is a virtual interactive experience that is being planned for the month of March. As we approach the date of this cultural arts program, more information will be available.



### **The JiJi Challenge:**

As you know, we recently started the JiJi Challenge at Eli Whitney. This initiative recognizes students for their accomplishments in ST Math and is based on the number of completed puzzles in this math program. K–1 students should complete between 30 – 60 puzzles weekly, while students in grades 2–6 are expected to solve between 45 – 90 puzzles in a week. At our last report, we had 174 students who had completed at least 500 puzzles. There are now 175 students in this category. There were 61 students who had completed 1,000 puzzles in January and now there are 100 students at this level. We had 16 students at the 1,500 mark in January; there are now 22 students with at least 1,500 completed puzzles. In January there were six students at the 2,000 level and now there are 11 students who have solved at least 2,000 puzzles. The number of students at the 2,500 puzzle mark doubled from two to four. Although there were no students at the 3,000 mark in January, we currently have six students who had solved at least 3,000 puzzles. Not only do students enjoy using this program, but they also strengthen their problem solving skills at the same time.



### **Distance Learning Group:**

Many of our distance learning families have connected by participating in our parent Distance Learning Group. In an effort to support each other, this group has met a few times already to share some common experiences and thoughts. All families of distance learners are invited to attend any or all of these meetings. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Mrs. Gramling at [lizgramling@gmail.com](mailto:lizgramling@gmail.com). The next meeting is tonight, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 p.m.



### **No Food Policy:**

One of the purposes of the district’s “Food Allergy Management” policy is the prevention of severe allergic food reactions. *“Administrators and teachers will encourage non-food related alternatives to celebrate developmental milestones and student accomplishments.”*



### **Parent Goal:**

Schools regularly survey families in order to best meet the needs of the students. Our parent goal was derived from our spring 2019 Parent Survey. It states that, “Eli Whitney students will feel a sense of belonging in their school and learning environment.” If you have ideas that would support this effort, please feel free to reach out to your child’s teacher, Mr. Veteri or me.



### **Principal’s High Five:**

We plan to celebrate January “High Five” recipients with a virtual experience provided by Mr. Veteri tomorrow, February 10<sup>th</sup>. As you know, the Principal’s High Five Award recognizes students who consistently display our five values: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Honest, Be Safe and Be Kind. January’s Principal’s High Five Recipients include the following students: Roman Alexander, Elias Anicette, Skylar Jones, Alice Espinal Castillo, Andrew Heffern, Emma Soldi, Jacob Gonzalez, Olivia Niedermeier, Colby Wright, Sunjeev Yaramala, Haley Mitchell, Mason Morel, Devyn Passabet, Vallerie Pulgarin, Jose Barrios, Avery Berisha, Olivia Nealon, Rania Adnane, Aleyinna Cabrera, Jack Gomzi, Garrett Bryk, Crystal Cedillo, Taylor Fabian and Parker Smith.



### **COVID – 19:**

We appreciate everyone's support in following health guidelines. Washing hands, wearing masks and social distancing are key mitigation strategies. If a member of the household tests positive, it is important to notify our School Nurse, Mrs. Ciuci. Members of the household **MUST** quarantine for 14 days. If your child is not feeling well, please keep him/her home. In addition, if your family has traveled out of state or out of the country, please contact both your classroom teacher and Mrs. Ciuci as your family must quarantine before coming into the school building.



### **Safety Reminders:**

For the most part, our new safety measures are solidly in place. During the winter months, we need to be cautious of possible ice and snow. Everyone needs to exercise caution when walking on school grounds. Additional patience is needed in the back parking lot at both arrival and dismissal. Please remember **NOT** to park in the four handicapped parking spaces in the front parking lot. We need to reserve these spaces for their intended use. Students should be arriving at school just before 8:30 when supervision begins. Finally, kindergartners need to have a responsible adult waiting at the bus stop. We appreciate everyone's continued support with our many safety measures.



### **PTSA:**

In spite of the challenges of our current situation, our P.T.S.A. continues to be a vibrant and supportive group. It is never too late to join the P.T.S.A. If you are interested in becoming a member of the P.T.S.A., please contact Mrs. Gramling at [lizgramling@gmail.com](mailto:lizgramling@gmail.com). We are hoping for support in our food drive during the next two weeks for the Sterling House Food Pantry.



### **Upcoming Events:**

This week and next week are both four day weeks as we plan for a long weekend. Tomorrow and Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> are both remote learning days. Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> are both PLC Days with early dismissals. There is a scheduled shortened day on Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup> for Professional Development.

I appreciate everyone's flexibility and support as we continue to navigate through this challenging year. We also need to be mindful of inclement weather in February. If there is a delayed opening, school starts at 10:45 a.m. Student drop-off begins at 10:30 a.m. When there is an early dismissal, our school day ends at 12:30 p.m. You should check the district's website ([Stratfordk12.org](http://Stratfordk12.org)) for any announcements regarding a delay or early closing due to inclement weather. Please do not call the school for this information as the main office is extremely busy during these times. It is important to make sure your family has plans in place for these days as safety is our first priority.

Sincerely,

*Victoria K. Florek*

Victoria K. Florek  
Principal