

Bobcat Tales

Whiteford Agricultural Schools
6655 Consear Road
Ottawa Lake, MI 49267

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Whiteford School District
Ottawa Lake, MI 49267



2020 – 2021 SCHOOL HOURS / CALENDAR

Building	Starting Time	Ending Time	Early Dismissal Time
Elementary	7:55 AM	3:10 PM	11:10 AM
Middle/High School.....	7:55 AM	2:55 PM	11:00 AM

Sept. 2 Student Orientation
(Schedule by building)

Sept. 8 First Day of School
(students report at Noon)

Oct. 30 NO SCHOOL

Nov. 12-13 EARLY DISMISSAL

Nov. 25 EARLY DISMISSAL

Nov. 26-27 NO SCHOOL
(Thanksgiving Break)

Dec. 22 EARLY DISMISSAL

Dec. 23-
Jan. 1 NO SCHOOL
(Christmas / Winter Break)

Jan. 13 EARLY DISMISSAL

Jan. 18 NO SCHOOL
(Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

Jan. 22 EARLY DISMISSAL

Feb. 5 NO SCHOOL

Mar. 17 EARLY DISMISSAL

Apr. 1 EARLY DISMISSAL

Apr. 2-9 NO SCHOOL
(Spring Break)

April 13 STATE TESTING DAY
..... NO SCHOOL K-7, 12

May 31 NO SCHOOL
(Memorial Day)

June 11* EARLY DISMISSAL
(Last day of school)

*pending weather delays/closings

* Parents are reminded that additional days may be added to the school year should we exceed our state limitation on number of days/ hours cancelled or delayed during the school year.

Food Pantry Dates / Hours

Crossroads Church

1st Thursday of Month
4:30 PM—6:30 PM

St. Michael Lutheran Church

2nd Saturday of Month
10 AM—11 AM

Zion Lutheran Church

2nd/4th Tuesday of Month
10 AM—12 PM

WHITEFORD AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS Bobcat Tales

This newsletter is also available on the district's website: www.whiteford.k12.mi.us

October 2020

2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS!



The start of the 2020-2021 school year brought a great deal of challenges, but none that couldn't be overcome by the fierceness of the Bobcats. Students and staff were welcomed back to school on September 8th and quickly adapted to many new health and safety protocols that were put into place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Outdoor learning spaces popped up across all areas of the campus with students enjoying learning in the crisp, fall air while also socially distancing. When the pandemic comes to an end many of the new protocols will gladly end, however, outdoor learning on Whiteford's beautiful campus will probably be here for years to come!





*Superintendent
of Schools*
VALERIE ORR

Board of Education

President
Tracy Malhoit

Vice President
Dave Dixon

Secretary
Christine Bischoff

Treasurer
Shane Hillard

Trustees
Mike Iott
Kristi Mock
Janelle Young

Upcoming
Board of
Education Meetings
7:00 PM

October 12

District Mission / Vision

*Engaged ...
in our learning
Encouraged ...
by our community
Empowered ...
for our world*

We are Whiteford!

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE...

Dear Bobcat Family,

The 2020-2021 school year is off to a great beginning despite the significant challenges we faced in getting the year started. Hundreds of hours of work and preparation went into planning for the start of this school year, however, observing students in classrooms for the first time on September 8th made all the preparation time worth it. In my twenty-year career in education, I have never witnessed students and staff more excited to be back to school. I am extremely grateful to ALL of the countless individuals who helped us return to in-person and remote learning. We certainly couldn't have done it without the tremendous support of our Bobcat family.

In early August, the district kicked off an Amazon #Wishlist campaign. The campaign was started to help offset the formidable costs that have occurred due to COVID-19. Each staff member of the district had an opportunity to add items to the wishlist with the hope that a generous donor might grant their wish! The campaign was a tremendous success!!! We received almost \$20,000 in donations of classroom supplies and PPE. The outpouring of support that we received from our Bobcat community is something that we will remember forever. When the teachers returned to their classrooms, the items were waiting for them. Many of them exclaimed that it felt like Christmas! Thank you for welcoming our staff and students back to their classrooms in such a loving and supportive way.

While the school year is running smoothly and students have settled into a routine, we are still being vigilant with our health and safety protocols. Parents, thank you for screening your children for symptoms each morning and keeping sick students home. I have personally spoken to the parent of every sick child thus far, and I have appreciated your support and understanding of the new district protocols. Parents have been incredible partners so far in helping to keep our school buildings open. Staff are disinfecting classrooms constantly and students are being continually reminded to keep their masks over their noses! It hasn't been an easy transition, but we have been steadfast in our determination to maintain our safety protocols. As issues have arisen, we have immediately worked to remedy them. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any health or safety concerns.

Finally, I have to say that I am loving my new role as Interim Principal at the MS/HS. Honestly speaking, I may have asked myself what I was thinking taking on the additional responsibility during a pandemic :). However, interacting with students and staff in this role has been a breath of fresh air and I am thankful for the opportunity to support them in this way. I am enjoying getting to know families and look forward to the remainder of the year. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to support your child or family this year. It will surely make my day!

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Bobcat Tales and thank you again for all of your support in helping us get our students back to the business of learning! Stay safe and be well!

Sincerely,

Valerie Orr

Valerie Orr
Superintendent



COMFORTABLE WEATHER HELPS WITH CREATIVE COVID LEARNING

SUBMITTED BY LINDA GROCH, 3RD GRADE TEACHER

With all the new restrictions this year because of Covid 19, teachers and students are having to get creative with the way they teach and learn. One way teachers are becoming more flexible is to move lessons outside when they can, and the dry, comfortable weather has been helping. The students are loving being outside, whether it's to do a math lesson, science scavenger hunt, read or write in a journal, or just an extra recess break.

Partner work has always been an important part of learning. It teaches students to collaborate, compromise, become better listeners to each other, and learn to respect and appreciate others' ideas and ways of thinking. Working outside takes away the time constraints the students have when working together. Students are able to use plastic chairs that the district has provided when working outside so they don't need to carry their chairs in and out of the classroom.

In general, students seem to be super excited to be back in the classrooms this year, despite the new rules and restrictions. There is an energy and sense of well-being that is contagious. It is always amazing how adaptable and flexible students can be. Here are a few quotes from third graders about how they feel being back at school:

Brennan Chiotti: "I love being back in school so I can start learning again."

Kira Raker: "I love going back to school and I do not even mind the extra rules."

Ava Blaisdell: "I feel charged up to be back at school because I like everything about it and I am so excited about it."

Lauren Lievens: "I am excited and happy because I didn't really like online, it was too confusing and hard. I am happy to be back with my friends."

Avree Ingram: "I love school because teachers help me learn and I like school because of Derby."



OCTOBER IS COLLEGE MONTH

SUBMITTED BY JASON MENSING, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ADVANCEMENT

October has become College Application Month across the state of Michigan. This was done to emphasize the importance of post-secondary planning for our high school Seniors. The next steps for our graduates include numerous pathways such as, but not limited to, attending 2 year or 4 year Colleges and Universities, going into the military, attending trade school, or entering the work force. With the challenges of Covid-19, it is our objective to continue to work with students to ensure that they are aware of the opportunities that exist and what they need to do in order to accomplish their goals. Ken Groch, Jennifer Head, and I will be working with small groups of students during their W.I.N. periods to help them complete the student portion of the FAFSA as well as complete at least one application to a trade school, college, or connect the student with a Military Recruiter depending on the student's goals. After this is completed we will work with a local university to have a representative of their financial aide department host a zoom call to help answer any questions students may have with regards to the completion of FAFSA and learn more about how financial assistance is available for our college bound students. We will reach out to our Seniors who are learning virtually this year by phone to try and ensure their questions are answered and they know how to complete the FAFSA and apply for a college or trade school.

SAT Testing

On October 14th, our students who lost out on the chance to take the PSAT or SAT last year due to the stay at home order and Covid-19 will be provided the opportunity to take these assessments. Fortunately the state decided that all our students will be able to take these important assessments this fall.

9th Grade will take PSAT 8/9

10th Grade will take PSAT 10/NMSQT

11th Grade will take PSAT 10/NMSQT

12th Grade will take SAT with Essay

The spring testing will continue as it has been traditionally offered. We are thankful our students will be able to take these tests on site as many of the students understand the importance of our college entrance scores.

NEW FACES AT WHITEFORD SCHOOLS

We're excited to announce more new faces this year. Please help us welcome the following new Bobcats!



Hello! My name is **Lauren Ehman**, and I'm so excited to be a new member of the Bobcat family as the Elementary School Counselor! Growing up in Temperance, I always loved the tight-knit community that Whiteford has, so I feel lucky to finally experience it. I graduated from The University of Toledo in May with my Master's Degree in Counselor Education with a focus in School Counseling. I love to travel with my family, read new books, and paint! I'm a cat mom, and my favorite thing to do when I'm home is take them for walks! I'm enjoying getting to know our Whiteford students, and I look forward to continue building those relationships.

Hello! I am Julia Huntington and I look forward to being the K-8 STEM Teacher this year at Whiteford. My alma mater is MSU with a degree in Elementary Education and a focus in Mathematics. I am a fourth generation teacher. I now live in Ann Arbor and this spring got engaged to my fiancé, Jacob! I enjoy playing with my cats, Poppy and Cotton and doing DIY /home renovation projects. I feel so welcomed here in the Bobcat community and am excited for a great school year!



Hello Bobcat family! My name is Chris Andrews and I am super excited to be part of your "Bobcat den" this year and to be working with Mr. VanBrandt in the virtual lab. Over the past several years my family has discovered the little gem in Whiteford and have been so happy to experience all that a small school does to mold and shape our future leaders. I am married to the love of my life, Matt, who is an elementary PE teacher in Bedford and together we have seven children. Before being called home for the last 24 years to raise my family, I was a high school science teacher in Sylvania as well as a registered nurse. I love to travel, be outdoors and love it even more if it allows me to spend additional time with my family. Now that I am part of the Bobcat team, I am ready to serve and encourage others and help make this a great year. Go Bobcats!

ATHLETIC BOOSTER NEWS

Kroger Community Rewards Program

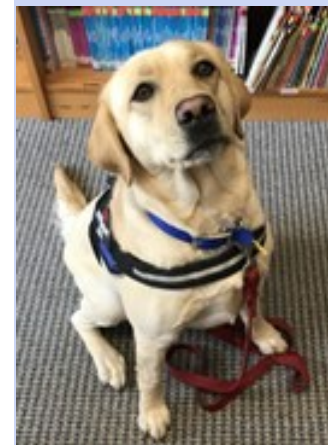
If you are not currently supporting an organization through the Kroger Community Rewards Program, please take a few minutes to register today and help support Bobcat athletics. Go to www.kroger.com, log into your account and follow the links to the Community Rewards page. Select organization number **PV787** as the donation recipient. Remember, this is free money and will not affect your fuel points!

Founders Day

Unfortunately, the restrictions on outdoor social gatherings have not been relaxed, therefore, the 2020 Founders Day event was cancelled. Any donors who have already sent in their donations are being contacted by the district so the donations can be returned. Thank you so very much to the donors who elected to donate the money back to the Founders Day fund. The generous support of our surrounding community is truly heartwarming and inspiring! Your donations will be used to fund student programming, staff recognition programming, and athletic purchases.

WELCOME DERBY!

SUBMITTED BY MICHAEL SHEPHERD, ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



Whiteford welcomes our newest Bobcat, Derby the Therapy Dog! Derby is a two year old yellow labrador that has been trained in schools to offer emotional support and increased engagement for students. Mrs. Shelly DeVantier, fourth grade teacher, has spear-headed this endeavor. She is Derby's main handler on Whiteford's campus and also cares for Derby at home.

Derby, otherwise known as "The Derbs", "Derby Girl", and/or "Derbster", is a wonderful addition to our school. She has helped all of us transition back to our school routine as we have had to adapt to a regular school day schedule with many new and unusual protocols due to the pandemic. The presence of a therapy dog has been found to help decrease stress and enable students to work through issues such as anxiety, anger management, conflict management, and other social/emotional challenges. A therapy dog can also serve as a vehicle for forming adaptive and positive social interactions.



Research has demonstrated that therapy dogs in the school setting can make a measurable difference in reading achievement, student motivation, attendance, and contribute to critical social and emotional development in students. Guided activities and group discussions help teach students how to handle interpersonal conflicts and develop appropriate, constructive responses. Derby will support our Social Work and Counseling Team with their monthly classroom lessons.



The inclusion of a therapy animal in literacy learning offers children unique educational, emotional, and social support. Therapy animals promote a positive relationship among students, teachers, and animals which contribute to a social learning environment mediated by interaction. They provide a less stressful, nonjudgmental environment where students feel they can take risks. The presence of therapy animals also influences student motivation for meaningful learning.

We are so happy to have Derby with us every day as we learn and grow in these changing times. She has provided a positive light for the kids, and is well-loved as she greets our Bobcats every morning as they enter the building!



Whiteford Track & Field Facility Nears Completion



For more information, visit
www.whiteford.k12.mi.us/bond

STUDENT ATHLETICS IN 2020

As with all things, 2020 has brought unforeseen challenges to our Athletic Programs. Some rules that have been put in place by the State of Michigan to ensure safety are the following:

1. Facial coverings must be worn by all spectators, athletes, and coaches always.
2. Social distancing should always be maintained by spectators and athletes when possible.
3. Tickets and passes are not accepted at this time; instead each participant can have two guests attend in support of their athletes. Athletes are provided vouchers prior to each game to give to their guests.

The TCC has agreed to charge 5 dollars for guest passes at all contests throughout the league. Obviously, there are numerous other protocols and procedures that have been put in place to ensure increased safety for all our student athletes. As the Athletic Director, I have experienced great pride in watching all of our coaches work hard to implement these to the best of their abilities to ensure our students could have the opportunity to participate in school sports. Our Cross Country program was the first to host an event since our March shutdown, hosting the annual Nick Haynes Cross Country Meet. Our program has gotten off to a great start to the season with the boys team finishing 3rd in our first TCC Jamboree under the leadership of new coach, Jay Yockey. Our Volleyball program has a jam-packed schedule, and they have won their last two contests. The TCC appears to have tremendous competitive balance and each match should be exciting for our girls, led by Buffy Ruddy who is returning as our Head Volleyball Coach. Finally, our Cheer Program has added the leadership of Mrs. Kim DeSilvis this year, she is a Spanish teacher at Whiteford MS/HS and has gotten off to a great start with a strong turnout of young women who are working very hard in developing their strength and acrobatic skills.



Sports clubs and governing bodies across the country continue to respond to health and public safety recommendations regarding the coronavirus and team schedules. The Whiteford Recreation Club (WRC) is no different. We realize the importance that sports bring to our kids and the community, but we also want to ensure everyone remains healthy and safe.

The boys and girls basketball season is quickly approaching. We are working with the state and school directors to get approval to play. All we know right now is we are expecting a delayed start, but we have every intention of having a season. As we get more clarity and details, we will continue to monitor the coronavirus situation and communicate via Facebook and the weekly News Blast. Please follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/WhitefordRec>.

The Whiteford Recreation Club is also looking to fill two positions on the Board of Trustees... Secretary and Trustee. Please contact Nick Puhl – President (nickp3441@bex.net) or Ryan Dubendorfer – VP (ryanduby@gmail.com) if you are interested or would like more information. We only ask for an hour of your time each month. When the restrictions are lifted, the WRC Board of Trustees will meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the high school library. This is also an open forum and we welcome and encourage everyone to attend.

WHITEFORD PARENTS ASSOCIATION (WPA) NEWS

SUBMITTED BY JACLYN WARREN

Greetings! I hope everyone-parents and students-are getting back into the swing of this new school year. The WPA jumped right back in, kicking off the always-anticipated Otis Spunkmeyer cookie dough sale on September 23rd. Though fundraising looks a little different this year, we are off to a good start as of this writing! Our next big annual event coming up is Santa's Workshop. Many of you have volunteered over the years, assisting students with their shopping and wrapping gifts. Santa's Workshop won't look the same this year, but we are looking for creative ideas to still allow the WPA to host this event for the students. Please join us at our next meeting to give us your input!

I am excited to share that the WPA board has had some changes this year. Debbie Sanjur has taken over the secretary position from Juli Consear, and Dianna O'Neal and Melanie Masters will be co-treasurers this year, with Dianna taking over the position from Melanie next year. Melanie and Juli have both served in their positions for a number of years and I would like to thank them on behalf of the rest of the board.

The WPA meets monthly, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 8:30 AM. Please note, this is a time change from previous years as we are now meeting via Zoom. We welcome moms, dads, grandparents, and anyone else willing to donate some of your valuable time. Now, more than ever, we will need fresh eyes, new voices, and creative brains who can help us navigate the uncharted territories this school year. We hope to see you at our next meeting!

***Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date with all our latest news, events, meetings, and volunteer opportunities. Simply search for Whiteford Parents' Association! You can also email us at whiteford.parents@gmail.com. This year, it will be extra-important to stay connected with us via email or Facebook, so you can get the link to the monthly Zoom meetings. Already following us? Please invite your Whiteford friends to like our WPA page, too! We are very thankful for our faithful core group of moms, but would like to see our membership increase.

HOW TO CONTACT US

MAIN PHONE

734.856.1443

PHONE PROMPTS

- 4 Elementary Office
- 5 MS/HS Office Athletic Dept.
- 6 Transportation Superintendent/ Business Office/ Maintenance

ADMINISTRATION / SUPPORT SERVICES

Superintendent/ Interim MS/HS Principal

Valerie "Val" Orr
ext. 401

Elementary Principal

Michael Shepherd
ext. 110

Director of Student

Advancement/AD

Jason Mensing
ext. 109

Elementary Counselor

TBD
Ext. 309

Dean of Student Services/Career Coach

Ken Groch
ext. 122

MS/HS Counselor

Jennifer Head
ext. 102

Director of Transportation, Buildings & Grounds

Charlie Butz
ext. 401

Chief Financial Officer

Michelle Strick
ext. 106

OFFICE FAXES

Elementary Office

734-856-4724

MS/HS Office

734-856-2564

Superintendent / Business Office

734-854-6463