

**STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE 2008-09**

Elementary School K-6 Edition

**Whiting Lane School  
West Hartford School District**NANCY M. DEPALMA, Principal  
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This profile was produced by the Connecticut State Department of Education in accordance with CT General Statutes 10-220(c) using data and narratives provided by the school district or testing services. Profiles and additional education data, including longitudinal data, are available on the internet at [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov).

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**TYPE OF SCHOOL**

School Type: Traditional/Regular Education

School Grade Range: PK- 5

**STUDENT ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment on October 1, 2008: 495

5-Year Enrollment Change: -6.8%

**INDICATORS OF EDUCATIONAL NEED**

Need Indicator	Number in School	Percent in School	Elementary Schools	
			% in District	% in State
Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Meals	79	16.0	16.1	34.2
K-12 Students Who Are Not Fluent in English	42	10.7	10.3	7.0
Students with Disabilities	141	28.5	11.5	10.9
Students Identified as Gifted and/or Talented	24	4.8	4.7	2.3
Kindergarten Students who Attended Preschool, Nursery School or Headstart	49	80.3	90.3	79.7
Students in Grades Above School's Entry Grade Who Attended Same School the Previous Year	296	89.4	91.5	84.8

**PROGRAM AND INSTRUCTION**

Instructional Time	School	State Elementary Schools
Total Days per Year	184	181
Total Hours per Year	989	988

State law requires that at least 180 days of school be offered to students in kindergarten through Grade 12, 900 hours of instruction to Grades 1-12 and full-day kindergarten, and 450 hours to half-day kindergarten students.

**Type of Kindergarten:** This school offers full-day kindergarten.

Average Class Size	School	District	State
Kindergarten	20.0	19.9	18.3
Grade 2	17.7	19.2	19.3
Grade 5	20.7	24.0	21.0

Required Hours of Instruction Per Year in Selected Subject Areas		
Grade 5	School	State
Art	36	30
Computer Education	0	17
English Language Arts	418	427
Family and Consumer Science	0	1
Health	32	22
Library Media Skills	25	18
Mathematics	201	198
Music	36	32
Physical Education	54	40
Science	76	98
Social Studies	75	91
Technology Education	0	2
World Languages	36	12

### World Language

Formal instruction (at least 1 hour per week) in Spanish starts in Grade K in this school. Statewide, 6.4% of elementary and middle schools that serve Grade K start world language instruction by this grade.

### Lunch

An average of 30 minutes is provided for lunch during full school days.

Special Programs	School	Elementary Schools	
		District	State
% of K-12 Students in Bilingual Education Program or Receiving English as a Second Language Services	10.7	10.3	7.0
% of Identified Gifted and/or Talented Students Who Received Services	100.0	100.0	78.7
% of Special Education Students Attending This School Who Spent Over 79% of Their Time with Their Non-Disabled Peers	54.6	75.0	80.3

## LIBRARY AND COMPUTERS

Free on-line access to periodicals, newspapers, and other resources is available to all Connecticut schools through the Connecticut Digital Library at [www.iconn.org](http://www.iconn.org).

Instructional Computers and Library Materials	School	Elementary Schools	
		District	State
# of Students Per Computer	2.9	3.2	3.3
% of Computers with Internet Access	100.0	100.0	99.0
% of Computers that are High or Moderate Power	100.0	100.0	94.6
# of Print Volumes Per Student*	28.1	33.4	28.2
# of Print Periodical Subscriptions	26	20	13

\*Because a certain number of volumes are needed for a library of adequate breadth and depth, a small school may need a higher number of volumes per student.

**SCHOOL STAFF**

<b>Full-Time Equivalent Count of School Staff</b>	
General Education: Teachers and Instructors	27.70
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	1.50
Special Education: Teachers and Instructors	12.00
Paraprofessional Instructional Assistants	39.00
Library/Media Specialists and/or Assistants	1.50
Administrators, Coordinators, and Department Chairs	1.00
Instructional Specialists Who Support Teachers (e.g., subject area specialists)	1.00
Counselors, Social Workers, and School Psychologists	3.50
School Nurses	2.00
Other Staff Providing Non-Instructional Services and Support	14.10

In the full-time equivalent count, staff members working part-time in the school are counted as a fraction of full-time. For example, a teacher who works half-time in a school contributes 0.50 to the school's staff count.

<b>Teachers and Instructors</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Elementary Schools</b>	
		<b>District</b>	<b>State</b>
Average Number of Years of Experience in Education	11.6	11.6	13.3
% with Master's Degree or Above	73.8	79.2	78.1
Attendance, 2007-08: Average # of Days Absent Due to Illness or Personal Time	6.7	7.0	8.6
% Assigned to Same School the Previous Year	88.1	82.0	83.3

**HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

**Teacher E-Mail Addresses:** All teachers at this school have been issued e-mail addresses.

**Online Homework Information:** A portion of the school's website is devoted to homework pages.

The following narrative about how this school promotes and supports parental involvement was submitted by this school.

At Whiting Lane School, ongoing communication is provided through diverse methods. Weekly classroom newsletters, teacher communication books, homework logs, grade level websites, a school main page linked to the district website and resources are just a few of the means utilized to foster contact with the community-at-large. The Whiting Lane website <http://www.whps.org/school/whiting/index.htm> provides a source of considerable information regarding the school and through its link to the West Hartford Public Schools website. Both provide rich resources relative to timely news, policy and practice. This year they served as the most opportune means of quickly relaying information regarding problems that could potentially impact students. The expectation of a 24 hour turnaround time for responding to parental concerns is the norm. Our school newsletter, The Whiting Wire, is a most efficient and cost effective means of getting important information out to parents on a regular basis. Routinely, this publication includes features on how we are addressing issues that have been brought to our attention by our parents, teachers, children, the PTO, etc., while providing other timely news of importance. Full integration of electronic formats for parent communication were also introduced. Formal parent conferences are held over a four-day period each Nov. and March. Teachers are vigilant in making sure that a meeting is arranged for every student in his or her class. In addition, two Student Assistance Teams meet weekly to discuss students who have been referred (either by teachers, parents, or other personnel). A student Action Plan is designed, monitored, and reviewed to determine if referral to PPT is warranted. Parent input and cooperation is critical. Our after school Homework Center provides assistance for children most in need of academic support and our Morning Club promotes team building through physical activities designed to promote good sportsmanship and respect for others. Mentors are recruited and trained annually and teamed with students who will benefit by this relationship. Our ever increasing ELL population requires investment in outreach to parents whose native language is not English. Attempts are made to provide home communications and testing when warranted in other languages. Our heralded annual Chinese New Year celebration is an activity designed and orchestrated completely by our ELL students and performed for the entire student body. PTO "Room Parents" act as liaisons between teacher and parents. They garner parental support for assistance in classroom based activities (e.g., hands on presentations, cultural events). The PTO events held throughout the year foster home-school partnerships (e.g., Special Persons Breakfast, New Families Picnic).

## SCHOOL DIVERSITY

Student Race/Ethnicity		
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian	2	0.4
Asian American	58	11.7
Black	58	11.7
Hispanic	70	14.1
White	307	62.0
Total Minority	188	38.0

**Percent of Minority Professional Staff:** 6.8%

**Open Choice:** 1 student(s) attended this school as part of the Open Choice program. Open Choice brings students from urban areas to attend school in suburban or rural towns, and students from non-urban areas to attend city schools.

**Non-English Home Language:** 20.7% of this school's students (excluding prekindergarten students) come from homes where English is not the primary language. The number of non-English home languages is 21.

### EFFORTS TO REDUCE RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION

Below is the description submitted by this school of how it provides educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

Close to 50 countries of origin are represented within the Whiting Lane School community. Flags representing each country and those of newly enrolled foreign students continue to be added to our main lobby permanent collection. A new flag is presented to the principal by the ESOL students each year at the Fifth Grade Recognition Ceremony in June. Approximately 21% of students are from non-English speaking homes. Total minority population is 37.9%, with the subgroup range between .04 and 14.1% (i.e., Am. Indian, Asian American, Black, Hispanic). The percent of students receiving special education services is 28.4%. Whiting Lane continually seeks ways to improve existing practices and to maximize the richly diverse skill sets and experiences that exist at every level within our total constituency. Students are encouraged to think beyond themselves and engage in initiatives that foster service to others. The Whiting Lane School Code forms a foundational philosophy that promotes a culture of caring (i.e., "Whiting Lane Students are respectful and responsible, make good choices, and we always take care of each other. The "Code" is recited daily by the entire school every day at the close of morning announcements. Cultural Council presentations during the 2008-2009 school year included Hip Hop Dimensions and Ginga Brasileira. Program objectives for both groups include historical instruction on the Hip-Hop and Afro-Brazilian cultures. Through music, dance, and poetry, these artists promoted the tenets of teamwork and artistic expression while breaking common cultural stereotypes. 2008-2009 grants included: Poet in Residence (to support 4th grade writing curriculum), and Anita Arrives: A Look at Reading and Writing through an Author's Eyes. The Whiting Lane music department started a steel band to support the 3rd grade curriculum in Caribbean studies. A district Parent Outreach Coordinator provided a "Café Latino" evening for Hispanic parents to provide them with the opportunity to discuss issues of concern and have questions answered in their native language. The Coordinator also translated our Parent Handbook into Spanish in efforts to foster communication and enhance home-school relations.

### STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Physical Fitness: % Reaching Health Standard on All Four Tests*	School	District	State	% of Schools in State with Equal or Lower Percent Reaching Standard
Grade 4	29.4	38.5	33.6	44.2
Grade 6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Includes tests for flexibility, abdominal strength and endurance, upper-body strength and aerobic endurance.

**Connecticut Mastery Test, Fourth Generation, % Meeting State Goal.** The Goal level is more demanding than the Proficient level, but not as high as the Advanced level, reported in the No Child Left Behind Report Cards.

Grade and CMT Subject Area	School	District	State	% of Schools in State with Equal or Lower Percent Meeting Goal
Grade 3 Reading	59.6	64.7	54.6	57.2
Writing	64.1	74.4	62.5	50.3
Mathematics	60.3	73.2	62.8	44.3
Grade 4 Reading	87.0	74.9	60.7	95.3
Writing	76.5	77.5	64.2	70.2
Mathematics	91.3	77.1	63.6	95.8
Grade 5 Reading	85.7	77.7	66.0	88.4
Writing	84.7	75.8	66.5	85.4
Mathematics	89.3	80.5	68.8	90.5
Science	74.6	67.6	58.1	77.5
Grade 6 Reading	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Writing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

These results reflect the performance of students with scoreable tests who were enrolled in the district at the time of testing, regardless of the length of time they were enrolled in the district. Results for fewer than 20 students are not presented.

For more detailed CMT results, go to [www.ctreports](http://www.ctreports).

To see the NCLB Report Card for this school, go to [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov) and click on "No Child Left Behind."

Student Attendance	School	District Elementary Sch.	State Elementary Sch.
% Present on October 1	91.1	94.8	96.2

### Disciplinary Offenses

Disciplinary offenses committed by students include all serious offenses, offenses involving drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, and all incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion. In the 2007-08 school year, 6 students were responsible for these incidents. These students represent 1% of the estimated number of students who attended this school at some point during the 2007-08 school year. For more information and data on disciplinary offenses, go to [www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov), click on "CEDaR" and then on "Student Data."

Number of Incidents by Disciplinary Offense Category, 2007-08		
Offense Category	Location of Incident	
	School	Other Location
Violent Crimes Against Persons	0	0
Sexually Related Behavior	0	0
Personally Threatening Behavior	1	0
Theft	2	0
Physical/Verbal Confrontation	3	0
Fighting/Battery	4	0
Property Damage	0	0
Weapons	1	0
Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco	0	0
School Policy Violations	0	0
Total	11	0

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**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND ACTIVITIES**

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The following narrative was submitted by this school.

At Whiting Lane the year begins with a thorough analysis of CMT data by the full faculty, all grade level teams, and on an individual teacher basis. Students not at goal/proficient level are identified, as are the most vulnerable subgroups. In addition, a thorough review is made of the students in the advanced categories. This provides baseline data that is incorporated throughout the year in on-going assessment practices. Scores on the 2009 CMT indicated strong performance overall (77% at goal in reading; 80% in math) and especially in grades 4 and 5 (87%/86%; 91%/89%). Grade 5 results continue to place Whiting Lane students in the top tier across the district in all areas including science. In reviewing cohort growth all grades demonstrated significant progress. In Writing, 77%, 82%, and 95% of students in grades 3, 4, and 5, scored at/above goal. While this performance was exceptional for Whiting Lane, our work with underperforming groups (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, black, Hispanic, and ELL) continues to require particular emphasis. Grade level teams meet in seminar with administration twice a month and weekly at grade level team meetings. All meetings focus on improving instruction and student achievement. Within the annually developed School Improvement Plan, specific needs are identified, Tier 2 Indicators are generated (i.e., interventions that provide more intensive instruction or social/emotional supports (e.g., small groups, highly focused instruction on specific skill sets, frequent progress monitoring, etc.)), new and continued strategies are detailed, a plan for monitoring and evaluating evidence is outlined, and professional development activities are proposed.

Our Special Education teachers worked closely with classroom teachers in the development of specific strategies and techniques to assist identified students in meeting their IEP goals and objectives in a consistent and cohesive fashion, while fostering our culture of belonging. This is particularly noteworthy as Whiting Lane School sustains a high PreK-5 special needs population, particularly with students identified on the autism spectrum. In efforts to refine our pre-referral process, our Student Assistance Team revamped its approaches to more efficiently conduct meetings and resourcefully generate and monitor interventions. Two teams now meet weekly. Modifications made in these areas considerably impacted our demonstrated increase in assessment scores on all grade levels.

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**SUPPLEMENTAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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The space below was optionally used by this school to describe aspects of the school not presented elsewhere in the profile.

The Whiting Lane School mascot is "Flash," the Wise Owl, and its motto is "Knowledge...guaranteed for life!" Both serve to remind all students that few other ideals come with a lifetime guarantee and will serve them as well in achieving personal aspirations and the goals outlined in the Whiting Lane Mission Statement. The value of lifelong learning is cultivated from the start of each student's tenure in Whiting Lane and is daily supported by and reflected in the educational practices of all staff, parents, and community members alike. Respect and Responsibility remained a school goal. The Second Step Program and Responsive Classroom techniques continue to be incorporated into classroom-based lessons at each grade level. Service, giving back to and supporting the community are fundamental values at Whiting Lane. While its Student Council meets during the school day, its initiatives most often include activities centered on school improvement efforts in and outside of school (e.g., "The Recycling Crew"), building school spirit (e.g., Crazy Hat Day), targeted fund raising (e.g., "Pennies for Patients," the Red Cross, soldiers in Iraq/Afghanistan,) and community outreach (e.g., winter coat/mittens collection, West Hartford Food Pantry). Whiting Lane School is actively engaged in supporting Autism Speaks. For the past three years, the entire community rallied in its fundraising efforts for "Walk Now for Autism." This past year Whiting Lane was again named the recipient of the Greater Hartford Walk 2008 Gold Team Award for its level of contribution to the cause. The Hoot (online school newspaper) has student reporters in grades 3, 4 and 5 select monthly issue themes, interview members of the student, staff, and parent community, and submit articles for consideration by parent and teacher moderators. Our school proudly won the townwide Energy Conservation Challenge as part of the district's efforts to create a culture of conservation. We continue to seek alternatives to "going green." One of our most important initiatives is the "Bring the Greenhouse back to Whiting Lane" project. We are working towards the creation of a greenhouse on our campus, along with a community garden.

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