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The Advocates for Education of Whitefish Bay Website

*An independent source of information and discussion  
for parents of children in Whitefish Bay Schools*

AFE forums & coffees

Links to education resources

AFE newsletter archives covering curriculum, testing,  
class size and more

School funding updates

Teacher & administrator profiles

***Advocates for Education.***

*Your link to quality schools in Whitefish Bay.*

SAVE THE  
DATE!

AN AFE FORUM:  
Thursday, March 22nd, 7 p.m.

***Balancing Act:  
Focusing on Learning Over Grades  
in Whitefish Bay***

*Is there too much emphasis on student test  
scores and academic competition in our  
schools? How can parents, teachers and  
administrators encourage a lifelong love of  
learning?*

Join a lively discussion at  
***The Whitefish Bay Public Library***

*Second Floor Program Room*



# Advocates for EDUCATION

Winter 2007

of Whitefish Bay, Inc.

[www.advocatesforeducation.org](http://www.advocatesforeducation.org)

## AFE FORUMS ADDRESS SCHOOL PRESSURE

*Emphasis on Learning  
over Grades Will Be  
Topic of March Forum*

Advocates for Education is taking on an issue affecting many students and families in Whitefish Bay: pressure to succeed in school. More than 50 parents gathered at the Whitefish Bay Public Library November 29th for AFE's fall forum called Great Expectations: How much is too much in Whitefish Bay? Guest speaker Michael Mazius, clinical psychologist and village resident, served as moderator. A follow-up forum is scheduled for March 22nd (*see back page*).

Dr. Mazius talked about pressure students feel to succeed academically and in extra-curricular activities. The conversation centered on what parents can do to help children shape their own values and address the anxiety kids experience as they work their way through the curriculum and social system. Dr. Mazius offered tips on how parents can talk with children about their true priorities, and avoid making scheduling decisions that add to family stress.

During a lengthy question and answer period, district administrator Jim Rickabaugh and principals, school counselors and teachers in attendance fielded questions about the amount of homework students are assigned, grade inflation, student overachievers and the number of

Advanced Placement courses some high school students take. One theme of the discussion was the district's perceived emphasis on grades over learning.

Advocates for Education board members and many parents at the forum concluded that the conversation should continue. A follow-up forum is scheduled for March 22nd at the Whitefish Bay Public Library. Discussion will focus on testing and test preparation in the district, and how the community can emphasize quality of learning.

AFE fall forum moderator Dr. Michael Mazius is co-director of the Northshore Center Clinic in Mequon. He recommends several books on topics raised at the November forum. The first two provide guidance to parents of anxious children. The third examines academic underachievement:

*Freeing Your Child From Anxiety*  
by Tamar Chansky

*Helping Your Anxious Child*  
by Rapee, Spence, Cobham and Wignall

*Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades  
And What You Can do About It*  
by Sylvia Rimm



## 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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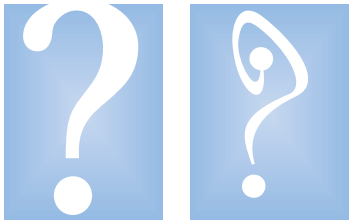
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# Two Candidates Seek Open School Board Seats

**T**wo experienced school advocates are running unopposed for two open seats on the Whitefish Bay School Board. Incumbent Cheryl Maranto is seeking re-election after serving a three-year term. Maranto is associate professor and chair of Marquette University's Department of Management. She says she serves on the school board because of a deep commitment to quality public education.

Maranto predicts budget management will continue to be the board's biggest challenge.

"After 13 years of revenue caps, the opportunities for cutting without impacting children have already been exploited," she says. "While we continue to look for savings, and thankfully the projected shortfall for next year is considerably smaller than it was this year, it becomes increasingly difficult."

On the positive side, Maranto says, "I have been truly impressed with the energy and momentum that teaching staff have generated in working on the Focus Plan,\* and the increased collaboration among teachers that has occurred."

Cheryl Maranto has lived in Whitefish Bay for 17 years. She has a son at the high school and a daughter at the middle school.

The second candidate for Whitefish Bay School Board has qualifications that are hard to beat: she served on the board for 12 years, including four as president, before stepping down two years ago.

Pam Woodard says her hiatus from the board gives her good perspective on issues confronting the district.

"The challenge of continuing to run schools with the

revenue cap formula put in place in 1993 is still significant, even more so now," she says. "Making difficult decisions about allocating resources will continue to be a challenge. The funding formula is not just a school district issue, but a state issue. We have an opportunity to be involved in helping to craft solutions."

Woodard cites the tension between testing and learning as another important issue for the Whitefish Bay community.

"It is important to assess learning," Woodard says. "However, I believe we want our children to soar beyond the standardized tests in their quest for knowledge and love of learning."

Woodard currently serves as chief facilitator for the Wisconsin Character Education Partnership, a group promoting the teaching of values and character development in schools. She's lived in Whitefish Bay for 24 years. She has three grown children, all graduates of Whitefish Bay schools.

Both Woodard and Maranto have served on the board of Advocates for Education; Woodard currently follows state political trends as vice-president-- advocacy for AFE.

Election day is April 3rd.

\*The Focus Plan is a district commitment to reexamine policies, practices and decisions to align with strategic goals based on national trends in education. Information on the Focus Plan is on the Whitefish Bay Schools' website, [www.whitefishbayschools.com](http://www.whitefishbayschools.com). Click on "district office," then "office of the director of curriculum and instruction" for information.



Have a school question?  
AFE is plugged in  
NEED A SPEAKER?  
AFE has ideas  
Contact AFE president  
David Froiland  
[dfroiland@foley.com](mailto:dfroiland@foley.com)



## SCRIVNER STEPPING DOWN FROM SCHOOL BOARD

**T**homas Scrivner, current president of the Whitefish Bay School Board, has announced he will not run for re-election after completing his third term. As he prepares to step down, Scrivner says ongoing funding concerns are the greatest challenge for Whitefish Bay schools. During the 2005-2006 school year, the board approved more than \$600,000 in budget cuts.

Scrivner says, while the state funding formula and other factors continue to result in a budget crunch, Whitefish Bay district administrator Jim Rickabaugh and other school administrators are excellent money managers.

"I think the district has been careful, prudent and innovative in financial management," he says.

In addition, Scrivner believes, Whitefish Bay administrators have planned well for long-term financial challenges such as the employee post-retirement insurance liability, a multi-million dollar budget item that many districts fail to anticipate.

"Smart districts are paying attention to this issue and figuring out how to put together a funding mechanism now," he points out.

Scrivner says the district has a modest debt level and has responsibly maintained its aging school buildings. Because day-to-day business is well-managed, Scrivner says the Whitefish Bay School Board can focus on big issues affecting the schools, including educational, social and economic trends.

Tom Scrivner is a partner in the Michael, Best & Friedrich law firm in Milwaukee, representing companies in labor and employment matters. He and his wife, Meredie, a founder of Advocates for Education, have two children, both of whom are graduates of Whitefish Bay High School.



## Our best foot forward

**W**hitefish Bay Schools district administrator Jim Rickabaugh is developing a plan to ensure that families considering Whitefish Bay schools get good first impressions. Rickabaugh began work on the policy last fall, after Advocates for Education board members expressed concern that parents were receiving mixed impressions of Whitefish Bay after contacting school staff for information.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Whitefish Bay is sometimes outdone by districts including Shorewood, Nicolet and Elmbrook, which work to showcase their school systems for prospective families. First impressions are important to a district's reputation, but also to the bottom line. Each new child means thousands of

dollars in state aid for a school system.

Rickabaugh has set new guidelines for staff members taking telephone inquiries and arranging for in-person visits. Staff will be required to offer a school tour led by the principal, provide printed information and identify remaining questions. Prospective families will be asked if they'd like to contact parents of Whitefish Bay children in the same age group, and they will receive a follow-up letter, call or email. Prospective students will be offered the chance to shadow a student in their grade. The district plans to develop promotional materials including a high school graduation profile, and compile a list of parents willing to make calls to prospective families.



**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.

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