

**NEXT PTO MEETING: Tuesday, 9/8 at 6:00 pm via [Zoom](#)**

**This is a long email!** Make sure to expand your email to see our whole message. You'll see a singing hedgehog at the end!



## FROM YOUR PTO PRESIDENTS

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year. It was great to see so many of you at Materials Pick and the Parade on Thursday! We've been missing seeing our school community and feeling the synergy that comes from people being and working together. Thank you to all the staff who showed up and all the volunteers who helped out!

Did you know that as a parent/guardian of a child/ren at VHE, you are automatically a member of the PTO? No membership form or fee required! PTO meetings are generally scheduled for the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

We hope you will join us for our September PTO meeting on Tuesday, September 8 at 6:30, when Principal Mary Seidl will debrief with us after the first day of virtual learning and answer any questions. At subsequent meetings, we plan to find time to break into smaller breakouts to brainstorm ideas for the year and make it easier for people to get to know each other.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas for how the PTO can support students, families or teachers as we set out on virtual learning, please be in touch to let us know.

**Kim Wheeler-Yates & Emily Cusic Putnam**, Co-Presidents



## Principal Seidl's Spotlight

### Welcome to Van Hise 2020-21

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our reverse car parade and material pick up. We had over 350 students receive materials. What

a beautiful day to launch our 2020-21!

If you were unable to join us, no worries! Please email me at [mseidl@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:mseidl@madison.k12.wi.us), and we will make arrangements to get those materials to

you before the end of the first week of school.

This week our teachers met with parents for connection conferences, held grade level town hall meetings, and welcomed back students at our reverse parade and materials pick up! 2020-21 is starting off like no other. I want you to know that each and every one of us on our VHE team is committed to lifting the learning of our Hedgies this Fall. We recognize that to do this we will be partnering with families and care providers. It makes sense that we launched this year with multiple opportunities to connect with our families, and we look forward to our continued partnership - we are truly strong together!

**This school year will not look the same as when students are with us AT the school; however, it will include:**

- **Live instructional opportunities four days a week**
- **Rigorous academic work that will result in accelerated student learning**
- **Increased feedback for students on their work**
- **Opportunities for students to connect with their teacher and classroom**

To accomplish this, we will begin this school year, as we do all school years, by building routines and structures that support student growth. Typically we spend the first two weeks of school learning “how” to do school - where to line up, what materials are needed from lockers throughout the day, how to access resources in and out of the classroom, etc. While we will not be talking about procedures within the building, we will be doing this same teaching about procedures in virtual learning. How to use See-saw, where to find resources online, and when and how to meet with the teacher if needed are a few of the many topics that we look forward to meeting with students about in the coming weeks to build a solid foundation before we launch rigorous academics.

We often refer to the beginning of school as a time when we need to go slow to go fast. It is critical that we insure all students have devices and know how to navigate tools in using them before we take off with instructional lessons. I invite you to do the same at home as we are doing at school. Work to establish home routines and practices that will support your Hedgie this school year. Build a strong foundation to support learning. For example, while at school, we will be talking about how to access tools on Chromebooks, at home you might be talking about how to insure that students are turning off distractions and using a space that enables them to engage fully when teachers are providing live lessons. It is through our partnership that we know our Hedgies will accelerate in their learning! **Truly stronger together.**



Kindly, Mary

## Events at a Glance | SEPTEMBER

**ALL YEAR**

**SEPTEMBER 3**

Please reach out if your family needs assistance.

Rachael Nachtwey, Social Worker  
rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us

BACK TO SCHOOL REVERSE  
PARADE & MATERIALS  
PICKUP

**SEPTEMBER 8**

First Day of the 2020/21  
School Year!

**SEPTEMBER 8**

PTO MEETING via Zoom

6:30 - 7:30 pm  
Zoom link [HERE](#)

**SEPTEMBER 17**

**EMPOWERMENT GROUP FOR PARENTS OF BLACK & BROWN  
STUDENTS**

Sign up [HERE](#)  
6:00 PM

## Empowerment Group Starting for Parents of Black & Brown Students



At Van Hise, we value the voices of all families and want all in our school community to experience a sense of belonging. We understand that in our school there are significantly less students of color, and this may bring unique challenges. We also know that historically our black and brown children have lacked voice, and we want to support practices that will lift this voice. For these reasons, Van Hise is welcoming parents of black and brown children to a shared parent forum on **Thursday, September 17 at 6 PM**. This empowerment group will provide a space for parents to share their experiences and gather together. We welcome you to attend. Ms. Chanel and I are hosting this event. If interested, please [click here](#) to sign up for additional information to join our conversation.

-Principal Seidl



**Next PTO Meeting**  
**Tues, Sept 8, 6:30 PM**  
Zoom Link [HERE](#)

We encourage you to join us for the September PTO meeting to hear what's happening, have your voice

heard, get involved, and meet other parents.

**All Van Hise families are automatically members of the PTO.**

## Nurturing our students together



Dear VHE Parents,

At Van Hise, we believe that mental health and wellbeing is part of the basis for a happy and successful life at school and beyond. We strive to improve the well-being of our students and staff in everything we do, build resilience, identify and monitor concerns, and support and partner with students and families who face challenges.

Children and youth today are experiencing more and more stress, especially as we all cope with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing racialized violence. Find out how your child is feeling. Communicate that what they are feeling may be normal. At the same, we encourage you to be attentive to signs that may merit attention. For example,

- Sudden behavioral changes like withdrawal or irritation
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Sudden loss of interest in activities
- Talking about death or suicide

If you observe any of these behaviors in your child or have any concern about their mental health or wellness, we encourage you to reach out. You can reach out during school hours (8:00-3:30) to:

**Tara Salzwedel, School Psychologist** (M, W, Th) -

[tsalzwedel2@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:tsalzwedel2@madison.k12.wi.us), (608) 285-2530 *Google Voice (call/text)*

**Rachael Nachtwey, School Social Worker** - [rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us)

(920) 545-5276 *Google Voice (call/text)*

**Mary Seidl, Principal** - [mseidl@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:mseidl@madison.k12.wi.us), (608) 204-4804 (office), (608) 807-6929 (cell)

Together, we can have a positive influence on youth and provide them with the skills they need to achieve social-emotional wellness. In certain situations, you may encounter a crisis or emergency that merits immediate action. Please keep in mind the following resources:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 608-280-2600 or 1-800-273-8255

Text "HOPELINE" to 741741

24/7 Parental Stress Line - 1-800-632-8188

Contacting your preferred medical provider (e.g., Pediatrician) through your healthcare provider

For more emergency resources, go to [https://bit.ly/MMSD\\_SMH](https://bit.ly/MMSD_SMH)

As with every aspect of school life, effective support for students' mental health and wellbeing depends on the strength of input from our families and the wider community. We look forward to working together for the wellbeing of our students. We also continue to encourage an open dialogue with all our families and would value feedback on any of the above, or otherwise, that may help us improve wellbeing throughout the school.



## LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP

We know some families in our community have urgent needs. The PTO is here with resources to help. By working through our school Social Worker, family needs are kept private and confidential.

Please be in touch with Ms. Nachtwey if your family needs assistance of any kind during these difficult times.

**Rachael Nachtwey, Social Worker**  
[rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:rlnachtwey@madison.k12.wi.us)



## Looking for a way to volunteer in the community?

Some families are looking for opportunities to get out and provide volunteer time and service to our Madison community. Below is information about how to sign up to help deliver for the West High Area Collaborative Food Pantry Delivery. Thea's Table is the organization that is giving volunteer coordination and logistic support for the effort.

### FROM THE WEST HIGH AREA COLLABORATIVE:

The West High Area Collaborative is seeking volunteers to help deliver meals once a week during virtual learning. As the school year kicks off, school social workers will be checking in with all their students and parents to determine need. Toward the end of September, we expect to have a lot of referrals and need help with delivery. Do you have 1-1.5 hours once a week to deliver meals to 3 or 4 families?

Thea's Table is a volunteer-run program to help families when they are in extreme need due to homelessness, illness, financial difficulties, etc. Families are referred by MMSD school social workers, who remain the main contact for the family. They can stay on the program until their situation stabilizes, they are able to use local food pantries, or otherwise become more food-secure.

While schools are virtual-only during COVID, Thea's Table delivers food to each family's home. Food is picked up between 12 and 1 on Thursdays, so families must be able to have someone home to receive it between 12:30 and 2 pm. We are usually able to provide fresh milk, bread, fruit, produce, frozen meat, canned goods, dairy products, eggs, and snacks.

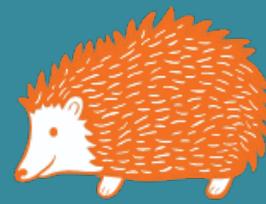
Thea's Table is currently looking for volunteer drivers to pick up food each week from Westminster Presbyterian Church, 4100 Nakoma, for 3-4 families and drive to the family homes. There is no direct contact: once at the home, the driver calls or texts to tell the family that the food is there, then unloads the food to the front of the building.

Anyone interested in helping with Thea's Table, or wanting more information, may call or email Mary Lou Taylor, director, at [mlt9@mac.com](mailto:mlt9@mac.com) or 414-405-1021.

**[MORE INFORMATION HERE](#)**

## Our Updated PTO Website

We are keeping our fresh PTO website up-to-date with information, dates, and links to PTO and Van Hise events. **Bookmark [www.VanHisePTO.org](http://www.VanHisePTO.org)!**



You've reached the end. We hope to see you Tuesday at the PTO meeting!

Van Hise Elementary School  
Madison, Wisconsin

**VAN HISE** PTO  
ELEMENTARY



**VHE SCHOOL WEBSITE \* VHE PTO WEBSITE**