

Together, inspiring students to think, learn, achieve and care in a global community.

Shamrock Connection

1ST QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS

2020-2021 Newsletter Volume 10, Issue 2

Berrien Springs Public Schools

Eichberg: Goal is to make a difference in one life at a time

By David Eichberg
Superintendent

"Inspiring students to think, learn, achieve and care in a global community." This is the vision statement for Berrien Springs Public Schools. This statement serves as our "north star." As a school district, this statement guides our why, what and how; it is what inspires our staff daily, it's the motivation for

how we think, and it embodies our sense of togetherness.

This is the first of four quarterly newsletters, published throughout the school year, designed to keep all of our school district stakeholders informed about the important work of Berrien Springs Public Schools. This newsletter is focused on three elements of our district vision statement: *Think, Inspire*

and *Together*. It is my genuine hope you will gain some insight into how each of these three elements are a significant part of the daily school lives of our staff and students. Thank you for your ongoing trust and support in Berrien Springs Public Schools! We are pleased to serve all of our students, parents and community members by making a difference in one life at a time!



David Eichberg

SYLVESTER ELEMENTARY

"WIN Time" helps teachers work together to meet the needs of ALL students

By Amy Williams
Principal

Sylvester Elementary

Our district vision statement, "Together inspiring students to think, learn, achieve, and care in a global community," starts with the word "Together". At Sylvester Elementary, "Together" defines the way in which we approach our most essential work--meeting the needs of ALL students.

This school year we have reallocated 40 minutes of instructional time to a building-wide intervention block. During our "WIN Time" (What I Need), students from every grade level are grouped with other students with similar learning needs.

We have students divided into 31 different groups across the building. The group size varies anywhere from a 1:3 adult to student ratio to a 1:25 adult to student ratio for enrichment groups. The students who are furthest behind on grade level skills are placed into the smallest sized groups.

Approximately 15% of our students are engaged in an "enrichment group" where they are receiving

additional instruction in a preferred encore area. Students were given a choice to pursue advanced learning and skill building in either music or physical education for this quarter.

An additional 12% of our students are working with encore teachers, who are highly qualified elementary school teachers of all subjects, through the lens of engineering and art to extend their already on-level skills in reading, writing, and

speaking.

Over 30% of our students are in groups of less than 10 students for 40 minutes a day getting differentiated and individualized instruction in deficit areas. About 30 students building-wide are placed in groups of less than five. It goes without saying, that group sizes of less than five students for an uninterrupted learning block of 40 minutes for targeted instruction would be nearly

impossible to manage without a TOGETHER building-wide approach.

The WIN Block structure allows every student building wide to get what they need to achieve growth targets and ultimately increase the likelihood of success on M-STEP and other grade level measures.

We are proud of the work we have done TOGETHER to ensure all students are inspired, thinking, and engaged!



The Kindness Crew at Sylvester Elementary led a sock drive for those in need. The students and staff collected 3,696 pairs of socks, which have been donated to service organizations. Those pictured are Ben Varrie, Alexa Pierce, Astrid Cortez, Drake Johnson, Devin Willis, Abigail Mandarin, teacher Jessica Schoeneich, and Ian Kamau.

A positive attitude, sharing of student reasoning, and encouragement gets students to see themselves as "problem solvers and doers of mathematics"

By Tracey Jaggi
Curriculum Coach

It is well understood that the words and messages we send to our students greatly influence their performance and can make a dramatic difference in helping them see themselves as capable learners. As adults in their lives, we need to make sure learners know we sincerely believe in them to persevere and be inspired by learning. Teachers at Berrien Springs Public Schools are working to provide activities and feedback to students that help promote each student's self-confidence as they see themselves as not only capable, but having a mindset for mathematics. Famous Stanford University math professor and leading mathematics author Jo Boaler reminds us from her 2015 book *Mathematical Mindsets*, that "As well as the messages we give students about their potential,

brain research is now showing that messages students pick up from their parents about math and their parents' relationships with math can also change students' math learning and achievement."

Just as teachers must be careful to choose their words carefully with students, so must parents when discussing mathematics or helping with homework. Messages given to students such as "math is hard" or "I was never good at math in school" promotes anxiety and is harmful to student performance. It is appropriate to recognize that math may require hard work and effort, but math is multifaceted and has plenty of room for creativity and collaboration. Our math curriculum at Berrien Springs Public Schools in face to face programs for both elementary and secondary students promotes discussion and sharing of strategies with peers. Teachers help facilitate and encourage students to

learn from one another and make sense of various reasoning and solutions. It is true that there often is one correct answer or value, but there are various ways to get to it. Teachers encourage students to deepen their understanding of math concepts by exposing them to various strategies, however ultimately students should develop their own understanding and efficiency for solving mathematical problems. Parents can help their children by encouraging them to understand multiple strategies but select the most appropriate one for them and/or the problem. As parents, you can ask your student to explain their thinking as well as you sharing your own with them. This will help build confidence in their thinking as well as developing the skill of learning from others.

Within the classroom, students participate in such activities that help collaboration and promote participation for all students. Teachers at Berrien Springs may have students participate in Number Corner activities as well as lessons and math games in elementary classrooms where students will discuss and share their ideas. One elementary example from third grade is asking students to explain how they would solve $25 + 25$, then $25 + 28$, and increasing until students are explaining how they

would solve $39 + 41$.

Middle and high school students discuss problem based activities within the lessons as well as respond to warm ups that allow for a variety of answers. The number sense routine below, *Would You Rather*, was taken from an 8th grade Illustrative Mathematics warm up. Students would explain which one they would choose and why: If you were babysitting, would you rather *Charge \$5 for the first hour and \$8 for each additional hour? OR *Charge \$15 for the first hour and \$6 for each additional hour? Explain your reasoning.

You can see from these examples, there is plenty of room for discussion and reasoning in the mathematics classroom. There is not always one right answer, but instead good reasoning for your answer. Teachers in Berrien Springs are building classrooms that encourage sharing of student reasoning. Parents can also ask their children to share their thoughts and reasoning around mathematical situations and problems. Parents can also share ways in which they use math to solve their own problems. Together both teachers and parents can encourage students to see themselves as problem solvers and doers of mathematics rather than having to endure mathematics in school.

SENIOR (60+)
VIRTUAL
HOLIDAY LUNCHEON
Thursday, December 2, 2021
Between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Seniors pick up a Holiday Meal
in front of Berrien Springs High School
Then, at Noon (12 p.m.)
Watch Live Streamed Student Performances
RSVP for your holiday meal
by Monday, November 29
(269) 471-2891

Combinations
 $25 + 25$

Strategies
 $25 + 25 = 50$
2 quarters is 50¢
 $25 + 25$
 $20 + 5$ $20 + 5$
 $40 + 10 = 50$



K-2 Social Emotional teacher and librarian Shelly Archer and some of her students show off their "A Little Spot of Emotion" books and plush toys. The goal is to bring "social emotional sunshine" to students and help them be in the "Green Zone"--- happy, focused, and ready to learn.

Social emotional sunshine helps put students in the Green Zone!

By Shelly Archer
K-2 Social Emotional
Teacher/Librarian

In the spring of 2021, the Mars Elementary Leadership Team began discussing the reentry of students to the classroom from the online learning platform. Many of our little ones have never been in a school environment, so we looked at ways to implement Social Emotional Learning throughout the day.

First, we perused a variety of curriculums, and decided on True Success [https://](https://truesuccesstools.org/)

truesuccesstools.org/. Each month, we discuss a different character trait: **Respect**, **Responsibility**, **Gratitude**, **Self-Control**, **Grit**, **Courage**, **Encouragement**, **Compassion**, and **Integrity**. There are quick videos and literacy lessons to correlate with the monthly theme. Our classroom teachers use these in their morning meetings, and common language is shared in our morning and afternoon announcements.

Next, our library time became the centralized place for our

Social Emotional Teaching. We teach the True Success or Social Emotional mini-lesson, book shop, and then apply our skills with STEM bins. STEM bins have open-ended play and building materials to apply our collaboration and communication skills. We also use the Zones of Regulation <https://zonesofregulation.com/index.html> for self-regulation techniques. We want our students to be in the **Green Zone**: Happy, Calm, Focused, Okay, and Ready to Learn!

Lastly, each classroom was given a set of *A Little Spot of Emotion* books and plush toys. Each emotion has a book and plush spot for students to read and use the strategies that are in the book.

If you come to Mars Elementary, you will hear students greet each other, "I'm glad you are here today" or "Have a lovely day!" If we meet the needs of the social emotional first, then the academic piece will come.

Keep Smiling!



BSMS librarian not only promotes a love of reading, but community, fundraising, and social opportunities for all students

---Every student has a library book with them for every class---

By Steve Spenner
Middle School
Principal

The library has always been a major part of the academic and social success at the Berrien Springs Middle School. Shamrock students have access to the library at a minimum of once per week



Middle School Shamrock students, like Jordan Cook, packed special, colorful boxes with treats such as cookies, chips, candy, and popcorn, and wrote thank you letters to fire, police, dispatchers, canine handlers, and ambulance workers after librarian Sheila Sheline read them a book about 9/11. "We wanted to thank them for their service, and tell them how important they are to us," Mrs. Sheline said.

and we have an expectation that every student must have a library book with them for every class. The ability to read in many different ways is so important to the success of our students. Every week there is built-in silent reading time for our students to build reading stamina and enjoy a book that they have checked out from the BSMS library.

This year students have been taught the Dewey Decimal system so they can find the non-fiction books they want in a more efficient manner. The library is organized by genre, which makes it easier for the students to find the things that interest them. Teaching these systems in the library allows students to use library time more efficiently and also allows students to find books that are interesting to them personally. Building a love and passion for reading starts with engagement and having high interest book available in our library.

The BSMS library does much more than promote a love for reading. Over the last few years, Mrs. Sheila Sheline has promoted community, fundraising, and social opportunities for all students in the middle school. Here are few things that have been happening in the BSMS Library:

- ✠ Received a grant from the 9/11 museum in New York



Sheila Sheline, librarian at Berrien Springs Middle School, was the recipient of a Shamrock Way Award as a "Support Staff Member of the Year" for promoting literacy and the love of reading amongst all of her students.

commemorating the 20th anniversary of the September 11 tragedy. Mrs. Sheline created lessons and received posters. She also organized and collaborated with 7th grade teacher on creating thank you cards and treats for local first responders.

- ✠ There are three themed parties scheduled after school to promote and celebrate reading for middle school students.
- ✠ We held a book fair during the first week of Novem-

ber. The library will also collect money and donate books to the **Christmas Care Program**.

- ✠ Working with local authors to come into the school and talk with students about reading and writing as a professional.
- ✠ The library also hosts the annual **Battle of the Books** competition in 7th grade.
- ✠ Between Thanksgiving and Christmas there is a annual Bookmark Art contest.

Project Lead the Way STEM classes engage students in engineering, design, architecture, and biomedical science

By Brian Terry
PLTW Engineering
and Biomedical Instructor

[“IED” Introduction to Engineering and Design:](#)

Students have been working diligently on learning and applying the engineering design process. Students have begun applying the design process while competing in weekly instant challenges where they brainstorm, design and build prototypes that satisfy specific constraints in a competitive setting. Students are currently designing the most difficult 5-7 piece puzzle cube they can. They are brainstorming several options and choosing the best based on their decision matrices. Students will soon build them out of $\frac{3}{4}$ ” wooden blocks and use 3D design software to digitally create their puzzles which they can then print out using 3D printers.

[“POE” Principles of Engineering:](#)

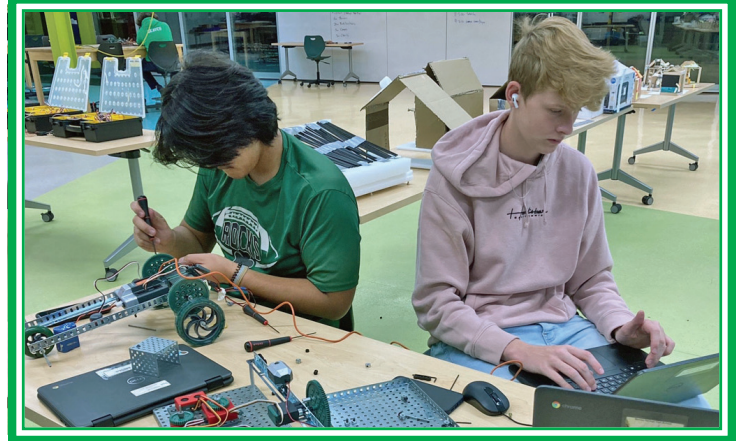
Students have been working on simple machines, compound machines and gear ratios through building demonstrations and mathematical formulas. Students are currently designing, building and coding a dragster which they will soon compete to see who has the fastest robot. Students will progress through a series of small projects including a robot arm launcher, maze runner, and finally a marble sorter!

[“CEA” Civil Engineering and Architecture:](#)

Students have been researching and building common aspects of architectural building and roofing designs. Students learn first hand why certain structures are designed the way they are as well as why some designs are found throughout different locations of the world. Students are about to begin using Autodesk Revit which is a professional architectural design software program which will give them great experience playing the role of an architect and civil engineer. They will use their newly acquired knowledge to design a pole barn for teacher Brian Terry this year complete with blueprints, a site map and a materials list!

[“PBS” Principles of BioMedical Science:](#)

Students are working to solve the mysterious death of a fictitious college student Anna Garcia. Students have processed a “crime scene,” analyzed fingerprints, hair and DNA analysis to help them with their declaration of death. They even got to extract DNA from a strawberry and banana to see how DNA extraction works. Students just dissected a sheep heart to help learn all the anatomical names of the parts of the heart. Students will soon be given another mysterious death which they will have to work through and solve in small groups in a more independent fashion. Who will be the best forensic detective?



Working on designing, building and coding a dragster are Tivadar Tasi and Hudson Baker; below, Jennifer Morara, Katelynne Curl and Eva Davis dissect sheep hearts to help learn all the anatomical names of the heart.



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Public Schools

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Visit our website at:

www.homeoftheshamrocks.org
or contact us at (269) 471-2891

BSHS Marching Band earns first place at Vicksburg Band competition!

By Kelly Rosselit
Band Director

The Shamrock Marching Band ended their season with a Best Performance award at Vicksburg on Saturday, October 16th. The band also earned Best Marching and Best Percussion at Vicksburg. The band improved and made strides to win after earning fourth place at Lakeshore on October 9th. The band also performed at the Michigan School Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA) Marching Festival held at Niles High School on October 12th; they earned a Division Two rating, signifying an excellent performance.

This year's show, "Dangerous Games," was a parody of the popular video game "Among Us" The band added theatrics to the show by



Drum Majors Klay Raschke and Lauren Geates saluted the judges and spectators as they passed the stands.

featuring Isabela Constable, senior and color guard captain. She was tasked to cause "trouble" during the show.

One of her pranks involved the senior Drum Major, Lauren Geates. Near the end of the performance, Isabela

"threw" Lauren off the podium (into a soft cushion), leaving junior Drum Major Klay Raschke alone in directing the band. Creating this kind of drama was fun for the students as well as the audiences at each competition. The Shamrocks received big cheers and reactions from the audiences throughout their performance.

Featured soloists

Other featured soloists were Zackary Hance, sophomore, on trumpet, and Jon Clough, junior, on tenor saxophone. Pieces performed during the show were "Pretender" by the Foo Fighters, "Suspicious Minds" by Elvis Presley, and an excerpt of "Funeral for a Friend" by Elton John.

Go Shamrocks!

Nearpod technology helps keep students engaged in learning by presenting content in a fun and engaging way

By Bill Schmidt
Technology
Integration Specialist

One of the concerns that is often expressed to me when I speak with teachers is the challenge of keeping students engaged in their learning. Students have grown up with technology all around them, and as educators, we are always looking for ways to utilize technology to create learning opportunities and improve student engagement. I would like to

share a technology tool that we have been using in the district for the past few years to help meet this challenge, and provide some of the ways that teachers are using it with their students.

Nearpod is a digital learning tool that allows teachers to create slide-based learning activities and resources that are interactive and engaging for students. A teacher can create lessons using quizzes, polls, collaboration features, images, drawing boards, web

content, virtual field trips, and more. Nearpod can also use gamification to make learning more engaging and fun for students.

One of the key features of Nearpod is that it allows teachers to easily integrate technology into the classroom while holding each student accountable for their learning. Students are actively engaged in their learning and teachers are able to monitor student progress in real time to see how the class is grasping the content of the lesson.

Teachers can use Nearpod to see how each of their students are progressing, and know that ALL students are participating during a lesson.

There are a number of teachers who are using Nearpod on a regular basis in their classrooms, and it is a technology tool that can be used with students at any grade level. Megan Roth, who is the technology teacher for grades K-5, has been using Nearpod effectively with her classes for a number of years. She uses it to teach students interactive digital citizenship lessons, as a "pre-test" and a "post-test" using some of the gamification features to encourage student engagement, and to gather student data to measure progress. Secondary teachers throughout the district use Nearpod to present their class notes to students in an interactive manner, encourage collaboration with students on a topic that is being presented, create interactive videos with built-in checkpoints, and create practice quiz and test questions for students.

One of the most challenging issues for teachers can be keeping students engaged and interested in their learning. Nearpod is a tool that can help address this issue by presenting content to students in a fun and engaging way, and encouraging all students to interact and actively participate during a lesson.

New **ROCK** program allows students to earn high school credits while building work experience with local businesses

By Bill Bergan
Discovery Academy Director
and Workforce Coordinator DeVonte' Jones

The Berrien Springs Discovery Academy has launched a new workforce program for students. The program is called ROCK (Readiness, Opportunity, Career, Knowledge), and it will provide an opportunity for high school students to transition from high school to postsecondary life. The ROCK program allows students to earn high school credits while building work experience with local community businesses. Students will develop life skills that will aim towards increasing and maintaining employment and becoming productive citizens. This program will focus on employability skills, resume writing, cover letters, filling out applications, interview skills, work and internship opportunities and experience, community relations, and other career readiness skills.

Students will work with the program coordinator to create an individualized training plan which will consist of goals and interests they may have after high school. Once the student has completed the ROCK program, they will be equipped with the tools and resources needed to become productive and innovative students in today's society.

For more information about the program, please contact DeVonte' Jones, Workforce Coordinator at Discovery Academy or visit our website at <https://homeoftheshamrocks.org/schools/discovery-academy>.

Preparing students for an ever-changing digital world

Different note-taking processes help students learn how to manage information in digital and print formats

By Valerie Carr
Virtual Academy
Director

The Berrien Springs Virtual Academy has been thinking a lot about literacy and expanding the notion of how to manage all types of information in such a way that students become lifelong learners. Since digital media has become commonplace, the notion of text has evolved to how people read and utilize information efficiently and effectively whether it be a database article, news, video, infographic, podcast, or something not even invented yet.

It is imperative to help students build a biliterate reading brain to help people think, learn, achieve, and grow

to prepare for their future. This means students must learn how to manage information in digital and print formats. There are a few key differences between the two. Print is linear which allows readers to become more deeply immersed in text. Reducing distractibility such as hyperlinks and advertisements online is essential for deepening knowledge and reading immersion. Reader view helps reduce distractibility and increases focus.

Print provides the information on a flat page, but the Internet has a vast amount of information. Helping students determine what information is most important in print is challenging, but even more challenging online when there are endless possibilities of

information. Print contains information that is vetted by a publishing company where online does not necessarily have a fact checking agency. So how does one discern what is real? Helping students determine aspects of reliability builds credibility and confidence in their knowledge.

Balancing these three aspects, how does one determine what is important? The Virtual Academy is helping students determine different note-taking processes that meet each student's individual learning needs. Whether students need physical note cards, color coded note cards, digital notecards through Google Slides, different print strategies, a color coding system, post-it notes, tangible

metacognition strategies, annotation through Google Docs, or different note-taking apps, these all have a place in a Virtual environment and best serve students when they determine which process is most suitable for individual learning needs. Teaching students to synthesize their notes prior to quizzes and tests allows students to self-assess how well they have learned the information. Simultaneously, we have been building a physical library of books that increases students' access to print and agency in choice over text. This allows students the opportunity to practice both types of reading to prepare students for an ever changing digital world.

ATHLETICS

Shamrock tennis team earned Regional crown, football team captured the BCS Red Conference & the boys' cross country team brought home the BCS Championship!

By Joe Stephens
BSHS Athletic Director

This fall season has been event-filled and successful for Shamrock athletics. Every fall sports program has experienced some success, even if they are in what was supposed to be a rebuilding year. Our community should be incredibly proud of the effort and energy that our student athletes have played. More importantly, their sportsmanship has been exemplary. These programs have had an array of accomplishments this fall. Many of these teams are still completing their season or still in the voting process for postseason awards.

FOOTBALL:

The team finished 9-0 in the regular season and are BCS Champions. As of publishing they are 10-1. They are also going to have several all-conference players and possibly all-state awards as the season wraps up.

SOCCER:

Noah Mock was named BCS 1st team All-Conference; Josiah Pittman, BCS Honorable Mention, and Charleigh Mille, BCS Honorable Mention.

VOLLEYBALL:

The Rocks were Eau Claire Tournament Champions and moved

their conference standing up to 4th place after the conference tournament. They participated in the *Dig Pink* for Breast Cancer benefit game at South Haven as a part of their in-school assembly. Olivia Elliott was chosen as a member of the BCS Red Division 1st Team, and Jakyrah Palmer received BCS Red Division Honorable Mention.

TENNIS:

They are SAC Champions, Regional Champions as a team and in every flight, and they advanced to the state finals and finished in 11th place. At state, they won several matches and many flights to survive to play on day two of the tournament. *Regional Champions and STATE QUALIFIERS:* 1st Singles, Paul Cho; 2nd Singles, Payton Anderson; 3rd Singles, Yeonwoo Seo; and 4th Singles, Jack Elliott; and 1st Doubles, Brandon Tripp/Adam Johnson; 2nd Doubles, Eric Blake/Erik Belin; 3rd Doubles, Jeremy Kwon and James Andersen; and 4th Doubles, Ben Cook and Jonathan Kertawidjaja. Coach David Shembarger was awarded Regional Coach of the Year by the Tennis Coaches Association.

CROSS COUNTRY:

Both the boys and girls teams put on great showings at their new home

course on the Berrien County Youth Fairgrounds this season. They were able to host two events out there. The girls' team was in a rebuilding year, but they received some All-Conference awards: Victoria Wurzel - 1st Team BCS Red Division, and Esme James - BCS Red Division Honorable Mention. The boys' team won several major races on their schedule. Most notably, they

were Berrien County champions and BCS champions. Honored were James Burke, BCS MVP Red Division, 1st Team All-Conference; Luke Morrison, BCS Red 1st Team, and Qualified for State at MIS; Sam Markle, BCS Red Division Honorable Mention; Noah Jarvis, BCS Red Division Honorable Mention; and Andrew Salliotte - BCS Red Division Honorable Mention

WORK ON ARTS AND ATHLETIC CENTER ADVANCES: The wood flooring for the new basketball and volleyball courts was recently delivered to the construction site of the new Arts and Athletic Center that is being built onto Berrien Springs High School. The \$20 million dollar addition is being funded through a voter approved bond and is expected to be completed in March of 2022 with full usage beginning in the fall of 2022. Highlights include a 750-seat auditorium with state of the art lighting, sound and stage, a large gym with four full size basketball courts, and four volleyball courts. There will also be a band room, choir room, dressing rooms for theater groups, four locker rooms, and a stage-craft area.



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#SHAMROCKPRIDE



"BSHS motivates me with the opportunities that I have when it comes to classes: The biomedical classes, the language classes, and the engineering classes. There are many opportunities to get a head start on what you want to go into when you're older."

- Haley Gravitt
(Freshman)



"The people around me motivate me the most. Whether it be my friends, teammates or teachers. I feel that having confident and motivated people around me is the best way to grow and be successful."

- Peyton Eckerley
(Freshman)



"It makes me happy to be with all of my friends and to be around teachers who care about us so much."

- Rebekah Griffiths
(Sophomore)



"Having the teachers teach you, talk to you every morning, and having them help you makes me and everyone feel so welcomed into Berrien Springs."

- Tyler Burnside
(Junior)



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