

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

Shamrock Connection

FIRST QUARTER

2023-2024 Newsletter Volume 13, Issue 2

Berrien Springs Public Schools



Superintendent Dr. Thomas Bruce observed students working together on math and literacy assignments in the classrooms.

Mars Elementary

Teachers utilize small groups of students to promote interactive engagement in math and literacy lessons

**By Josh Feldpausch
Mars Elementary
Principal**

Wonderful things have been happening at Mars Elementary this year to inspire both students and adults! On October 24, 2023, Mars hosted the first District Board Walk of the year. We invited members of the Berrien Springs Board of Education to come to Mars, learn about our students and staff, and personally observe classrooms in all four grade levels represented on campus, from Progressive Fives to 2nd Grade. Dr. Thomas Bruce, our district superintendent, Paul Toliver, our school board president, and several other district leaders were present at this event. Our main focus was to observe student engagement in the classroom and around the Mars campus.

The first classroom we visited was Melissa Beregsasy's 2nd grade classroom. When we first walked in, it was immediately apparent that all students were engaged in the learning process and were actively participating. The students were in small groups, scattered throughout the

room, working on math skills, while Mrs. Beregsasy worked with a small group at her table. As we moved around the room and interacted with the students, they all were able to share what they were working on and allowed us to join their groups and participate in the learning ourselves. It truly was an inspiring time!

The second classroom we visited was Misty Grice's Progressive Fives (Pro Fives) classroom. These four and five year olds were actively working in small groups as well. There were several activities or centers set up around the room that included a name activity, identifying letters, listening to reading, and a cut/glue activity involving matching numbers. Each group spent several minutes at each center until Mrs. Grice would ask them to rotate. It was easy to see how students were becoming independent thinkers while learning to collaborate with their peers.

The third classroom we visited was Christi Mangold's Kindergarten classroom. They were in the middle of a lesson from our *Literacy Footprints*

curriculum which involved reading the story of the week, dictating sentences, rhyming, and segmenting. Mrs. Mangold was calling on students to help her throughout her lesson, asking them questions to get them thinking about the content, and inspiring them to become lifelong learners by celebrating their progress and leadership in the classroom. All students were engaged in the learning and were excited to demonstrate their understanding in the activity that was to follow.

Lastly, we visited Kristen Dow's 1st grade classroom. When we entered, Mrs. Dow was finishing a lesson teaching students to use sight words and the sounds (/th/ and /sh/) within sentences, as well as break apart sounds and recognize the phonemes within each sight word. Each student had the opportunity to work both independently and with a partner during the activity to follow. Similar to the other classrooms, the walls were full of student work that highlighted the learning that had been taking place since the beginning of the year. The

students all seemed happy to be there and were genuinely excited to be learning in this engaging environment.

After the four observations, our Board Walk team met in the media center to discuss what we saw, heard, and experienced in the classrooms. President Toliver expressed that he was amazed by the level of learning and engagement that took place in the classrooms that day. We all were able to express how grateful we are for our dedicated teachers who work hard each day to engage and inspire students to succeed.





Peg Bormann



Kim Keigley



Stephanie James



Erica Molden

Bormann and Keigley thanked for their service

James and Molden welcomed as new members of the Berrien Springs Board of Education

Berrien Springs Public Schools would like to thank Mrs. Peg Bormann and Mrs. Kim Keigley for their exceptional service on the Board of Education. Mrs. Bormann's 30 years of leadership have contributed significantly to our district's success. Mrs. Keigley's five years of service have been instrumental in financial management, advocating for facility enhancements, and demonstrating her commitment to providing educational programs for all students. Thank you, Mrs. Bormann and Mrs. Keigley, for your dedication and contributions to our district's

growth and success!

Berrien Springs Public Schools is excited to announce Mrs. Stephanie James as a new member of its Board of Education. Mrs. James, a Saint Mary's College alumna with a Political Science and Religious Studies degree, has been deeply involved in the district for a decade as a substitute teacher and volunteer. Her contributions include founding the Shamrock PTO, serving as president, and her current role as Treasurer in the Band Boosters. She is married to Corey, and they have two daughters, Esmé and Ai-

mée, who are students in the district. Mrs. James is committed to supporting students and staff, emphasizing the delivery of quality education.

Berrien Springs Public Schools is also pleased to announce Mrs. Erica Molden as a new member of its Board of Education. Mrs. Molden, an alumna of Walden University and the University of Phoenix, brings a wealth of experience from her tenure at 1st Source Bank and her involvement with Junior Achievement and the Women's Business Center at Cornerstone Alliance. A dedicated community member, she

played a pivotal role in the Shamrock P.T.O., volunteered extensively at Berrien Springs Public Schools, and actively contributed to local softball programs. She is married to Steve, and they have two children, Ryleigh and Kahle, who are students in our district. Mrs. Molden is committed to enhancing family engagement within the school community.

Welcome, Mrs. James and Mrs. Molden. Berrien Springs Public Schools looks forward to your contributions to our students and our district's growth and success.



District Facilities

Work advances on STEM Central Administration Office expansion, and new Transportation facility

**By Ron Bartz
Maintenance
& Grounds
Coordinator**

This past spring, two major construction projects commenced in our district, with expected completion by March 1, 2024. The STEM Central Administration Office is expanding by 6,400 square feet to centralize office staff and improve meet-

ing facilities, including a large conference room for Board of Education meetings and professional development. Beckering Construction, based in Grand Rapids, serves as the General Contractor, while CARM Design Group of Niles designed the addition.

The second major project is the new Transportation Building. The former Bob Cooper Chevrolet dealership

is being transformed into a new Transportation Facility, consolidating bus and transportation operations. This renovation includes a new roof, work bays, driver facilities, and improved parking.

This summer, the district invested \$1.8M in upgrades to existing buildings, including ADA-compliant restrooms and new bleachers at the Middle School, a new High

School roof, and updated air conditioning at Mars Elementary.

Future upgrades

The future plans include a secured entrance at Sylvester Elementary, office remodeling, ball fields, and facility refurbishments. These projects reflect our ongoing commitment to enhancing our school infrastructure to benefit our students and staff.

Legacy of Socktober success with 18,000 pairs collected over six years!

Kindness Crew collects more than 3,000 pairs of socks to help those in need



**By Micah Lambert
Sylvester Elementary
Principal**

At Sylvester Elementary School, our 5th graders are a part of the “Kindness Crew.” These remarkable students are not your typical fifth graders. They are on a mission to improve the world, one small act of kindness at a time. From sock donations to kind notes for their peers, their goal to spread kindness remains.

Their journey began when their teacher, Jessica Schoeneich, decided that she wanted her students to see and understand the impact being kind can have. They learn that being kind can be an act of bravery and that no act is too small to make a difference in someone’s day. The students came up with many ideas to show kindness throughout our school and community. The first *Kindness Crew* members learned of *Socktober* when they watched a Kid President video. They got more information and set a goal of 200 pairs of socks that year. They exceeded that goal and have received more and more donations each year.

The *Kindness Crew* started with just Mrs. Schoeneich’s students, but grew to include the entire fifth grade as their passion ignited the hearts of their classmates. This year, they have collected over 3,000 pairs of socks! Over six years, they have donated over 18,000 pairs locally! Donations are taken to *Neighbor To Neighbor* and stay within our community to help those in need.

Announcements and social media posts were made regularly to help with their goal. The student’s enthusiasm was contagious, and soon, the entire school was buzzing about the *Kindness*



Teacher Jessica Schoeneich with her fifth grade students who all contributed socks for the Socktober project: TreMichael Brewer, Hayley Briggs, Vera Brumley, Kaliar Conley, Parker Cook, Da’Naya Cummings, Manden Dixon, Jayden Futrell, Ixac Gess, Daniella (Dani) Hicks, Bridgette Hyde, Reese Low, Morgan Mamouzellos, Jaquarius McGee, Ta’Nijha McKnight, Kahle Molden, Lily Ortega, Avery Roots, Falcon Shaw, Blakley Smith, Sereniti Vance, Imanol Vazquez, Peyton Washington, and Liam Williams.

Crew’s mission. With the help of the PTO, students received a small treat for every pair of socks they donated. Mars Elementary and staff at Central Office collected socks as well. The students sorted, counted, and recounted as they worked toward their ambitious target. They inspired their fellow students and their families to join their cause. People donated socks in all colors and sizes.

As the month of “*Socktober*” ended, the *Kindness Crew* was so proud of the many stacks of socks in their classroom. They proudly delivered the socks to *Neighbor to Neighbor* with pride in their hearts. The staff is always extremely grateful for their donations and can give them to clients over the course of the year. The *Kindness Crew’s* actions spread warmth and hope through the socks they donated and their infectious spirit of compassion.

Their journey taught them and their community that kindness is a powerful force for change. No matter how young or old you are, anyone can make a positive differ-

ence. And so, the *Kindness Crew’s* legacy lives on, proving that kindness can change the world, one sock, one smile, and one heart at a time.





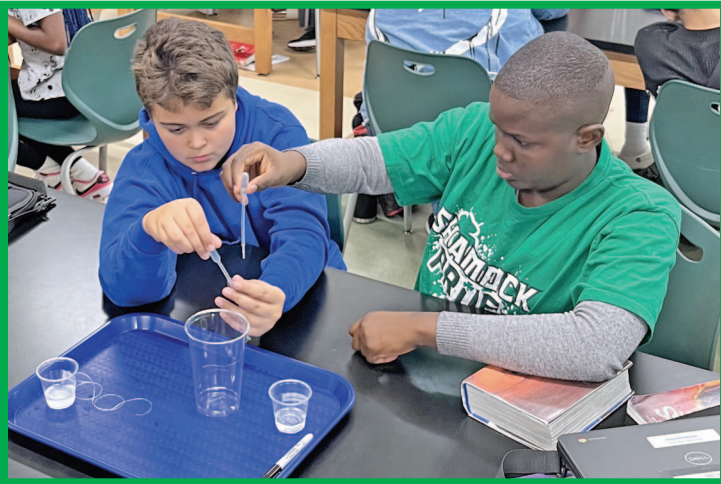
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- Newsletters
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Berrien Springs Public Schools 

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Students are learning how the human body works through OpenSciEd, a new science curriculum being used at Berrien Springs Middle School.

[Learning science through real world problems](#)

OpenSciEd gives BSMS students a rigorous platform to explore real life phenomena in the classroom

By Jake Skelly
BSMS Principal

This past summer, the Berrien Springs Board of Education adopted a new Science Curriculum for the Middle School. OpenSciEd has replaced the older IQWST Curriculum that the middle school has used for several years. OpenSciEd has received an “all-green” rating from EdReports, the nation’s most respected independent curriculum reviewer.

OpenSciEd uses real-life

phenomena to engage students in the curriculum by sparking interest and challenging students to analyze data and observations to solve real-world problems.

Currently, 7th graders are learning how our body systems work together to make us feel the way that we do. The students were introduced to a story about a girl named M’Kenna who went to the doctor because she had several symptoms that were concerning to her and her

parents. The students first learned what these symptoms were and what body systems they belonged to by researching the function of the digestive system, what organs are a part of the digestive system, and their functions.

Once the students have created some background information about the human body, they take the role of a doctor by creating a case study about M’Kenna. By reviewing the medical data of a healthy person against the

medical data of M’Kenna, learning about body systems and their functions, and analyzing real images from scans/procedures from a healthy person and M’Kenna, students will understand how the human body works and operates. In the end, students will be able to create a diagnosis for M’Kenna and have scientific evidence to support their claim.



Discovery Academy

Prisms Virtual Reality program ignites students’ curiosity and passion for exploring the world

By Bill Bergan
Discovery Academy
Director

Discovery Academy is excited to announce an exciting new addition to its science curriculum--the *Prisms Virtual Reality* program! *Prisms* provides an immersive learning experience that takes science education to a whole new level. Through the use of virtual reality technology, students can now explore various scientific concepts in a visual-

ly captivating and interactive way. This innovative program offers a hands-on approach to learning, enabling students to engage with scientific phenomena like never before.

Features and benefits

Here are some key features and benefits of the *Prisms Virtual Reality* program:

Immersive Learning: *Prisms* allows students to step into a virtual world that brings science concepts to life, making learning engaging

and unforgettable.

Interactive Experiences: Students can actively participate in experiments, simulations, and virtual field trips, enhancing their understanding and critical thinking skills.

Focused Exploration: *Prisms* offers a range of scientific topics and modules, allowing teachers the ability to tailor the learning experience of their students to actual interests and abilities, as well as to the existing curriculum.

Discovery Academy believes that integrating *Prisms* into its science curriculum will not only enhance students’ understanding of scientific principles, but also ignite their curiosity and passion for exploring the world around us.

Thank you for your continued support of Discovery Academy as it looks forward to embarking on this incredible scientific journey with students!

BSHS Marching Band earns Division 1 rating at MSBOA Marching Festival!

By Kelly Rosselit
Director of Berrien
Springs Bands

The Shamrock Marching Band had an excellent marching season this year! Their hard work at band camp and throughout September and October earned them several awards and trophies.

On October 7, the Shamrocks traveled to Lakeshore High School and participated in the Lakeshore Marching Invitational. They placed third and earned Best Percussion in Class C. The adjudicators gave comments and suggestions on improving their performance--which they did three days later.

On October 10, the Berrien Springs High School Marching Band hosted the annual Michigan State Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA) District 6 Marching Festival at Sylvester Field. Eleven bands (including the Shamrocks) participated in the event. Each band was judged on their music performance, marching skills, and the general effect of the show.

The Shamrock Marching Band earned a Division 1, the



Berrien Springs High School Marching Band Director Kelly Rosselit, Command personnel Jonathan Orlando, Kameron Autry, and Esmé James, Color Guard captain Olivia Constable, and Assistant Band Director Adam Emehig, celebrate their Division 1 rating.

highest rating in all categories for a final rating of "1". They played their best and earned the medals for it. The students got to perform on their home field and, as the hosts, they earned the distinction of being the final band to perform for the night.

This year, the marching band performed popular 80's music used in the Netflix TV show "Stranger Things." Tunes included: "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" by The Clash, "Running Up That Hill" by Kate Bush, and "Master of Puppets" by Metallica.

Upcoming performances

With the marching season drawn to a close, the band is looking ahead to the holiday season with several performances: December 5th, *Senior Holiday Luncheon* (AAC);

December 7, *Kindle Your Christmas Spirit*, (downtown at Berrien Springs Community Library); December 13, *Winter Concert* (AAC); and December 20, *Jazz Tour*.

Go Shamrocks!

Upcoming December Events

- December 3, Shamrock Holiday Craft Market Fair** at Berrien Springs High School gym.
- December 4-8, Sylvester Elementary Holiday Shop.**
- December 5, Senior Holiday Luncheon** from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Arts and Athletic Center at Berrien Springs High School.
- December 6, Half Day of School.**
- December 7, Berrien Springs Kindle Your Christmas Spirit Event** in downtown Berrien Springs beginning at 6 p.m. The choir and Jazz Band will perform.
- December 12, Discovery Academy Graduation.**
- December 13, Berrien Springs High School and Middle School Winter Band Concert** at the Arts and Athletic Center.
- December 14, Berrien Springs Board of Education meeting** at the Middle School.
- December 18, Berrien Springs High School and Middle School Choir Concert.**
- Dec. 25-29, Winter Break!**



Berrien Springs Public Schools
cordially invites the 60+ community to our:

Senior Holiday Luncheon

11:30 - 2pm
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
 Berrien Springs High School
 Arts and Athletic Center

RSVP
Friday, December 1, 2023
(269) 473-0691

Turkey and vegetarian entrees available.
 Students will provide entertainment.
 Lunch will be served at 11:45



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

PBIS rewards system helps create a culture of positivity at Berrien Springs High School

By Adalyne Wiley
BSHS student

Berrien Springs High School is dedicated to creating a more positive environment. One way to support this is the online Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) rewards system.

"We've started to create a culture in which we have high expectations and the staff has contributed greatly to this environment," Principal Mrs. Stacey DeMaio said.

Staff and student relationships have improved.

"Teachers notice the good things about you," sophomore Julie Alcalá, said

Others agree.

"PBIS shows me that they are actually paying attention

to you," junior Moriah Woodson said..

Students are rewarded with points for using **ROCKS** values (**Respect, Ownership, Compassion, Knowledge, Success**).

"We want to enforce the positive behavior more than the negative," Mrs. DeMaio said, "I feel like the good deeds are usually overlooked."

The recognition doesn't just make students feel more supported, it also helps create a better learning environment.

"PBIS gets people to actually do good stuff, like work harder and behave," sophomore Azucena Ventura said.

The online system makes it easier for students and staff

to see successes.

"It's a win-win because the staff are appreciating you and you're getting rewarded," sophomore Alexandra Cervantes said.

Along with getting reward, students also use the points to buy things from the shamrock shop.

"The U-Rocks online system is better than the paper ones," junior Ally Locatis said.

It is a lot easier to track and now you can spend the U-Rocks to get bigger and better prizes anytime.

"I love it. I check how many U-Rocks I have three times a day. It encourages students to be on their best behavior to get rewards. I want to earn the Sylvester Stadium Jersey, but

it's 1,200 points."

Since September over 19,558 U-Rocks have been given out to students for positive behavior.

"PBIS has become an important part of school life," junior Christopher Moler said. "It helps students and staff feel more successful in their achievements."

Having a rewards system creates a sense of community and friendly competition. In addition to the rewards system, BSHS has also introduced freshman academy classes, new homecoming events, expanded intervention opportunities, and other initiatives to contribute to the positive atmosphere.



#Together #Inspire #ShamrockPride



"At Berrien Springs High School there is a lot more around you; you have classes with upperclassmen which exposes you to different views. Upperclassmen are like role models. When you think of someone who is good at academics and sports, it makes you aspire to be like them."

--Leighton Sherwood,
Freshman



"PBIS is a win-win because the staff are appreciating you and you're getting rewarded."

--Alexandra Cervantes,
Sophomore



"Robotics inspires me to be a leader; working with the group makes me feel like everyone understands me. Being an assistant captain helps me set a good example."

--Ally Locatis,
Junior



"I am inspired by the staff members because they all come to school with great big smiles on their faces ready to enjoy the day. In the morning the high school feels very uplifting, especially with teachers like Alexandra Luttké who has a lot of energy. All the students should be comfortable approaching any teacher here at Berrien Springs High School."

-- Amari Taylor,
Senior



BERRIEN SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Contact Us

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(269) 471-2891



CONGRATULATIONS! The Berrien Springs High School varsity football team, coached by Ben Iliff, celebrates after winning the Lakeland Conference Championship at Sylvester Field.

Successful 2023 fall season celebrated by many Shamrock athletes, coaches

**By Joe Stephens
Athletic Director**

This has been an event-filled and successful fall season for Shamrock athletics. Many programs experienced some kind of success, even if they were in what is supposed to be a rebuilding year. Our community should be incredibly proud of the effort and energy that our programs and athletes have displayed. More importantly, their sportsmanship has been exemplary. These programs and the individual players have had an array of accomplishments this fall.

FOOTBALL: The team finished 5-3 in the regular season and were undefeated in Lakeland Conference play. This marks their second football league title in three seasons. The team qualified for the playoffs. They defeated South Haven in the District opener, but fell to No 3. Ranked GRCC in the District Final for the second straight season. Their final record was 6-4. **Lakeland Conference Honorees** are as follows: Andru Gonzalez 1st Team RB, Brody Brewer 1st Team DL,

Kyler Constable 1st Team OL, Owen Kerlikowske 1st Team LB, Tivadar Tasi 1st Team OL, Micah McFarland 1st Team DB, Charlie Ewalt 1st Team TE, Alex O'Dell HM DL, Walter Williams HM WR, Dominic Denkins HM LB, and Calvin White HM RB.

TENNIS: SAC 3rd place. Finishing behind state-ranked Allegan and Kalamazoo Hackett; Regional Champions as a team and in six out of eight flights. This was the program's sixth consecutive regional title in what could have been a rebuilding year with a very young team. The Rocks advanced to the state finals and finished in 8th place. **Regional Champions and State Qualifiers:** 1st Singles Phil Seo (1st); 1st Doubles Logan Jang/Eugene Ha (1st); 2nd Singles James Andersen (1st); 2nd Doubles Ethan McCrary/Joshua Andersen (3rd); 3rd Singles Ethan Tripp (1st); 3rd Doubles Sage Sanchez/Gio Ruhupatty (1st); 4th Singles Edwin Seo (1st); 4th Doubles; Jamir Flie/Jonathan Orlando (2nd); Coach Brian Shembarger was awarded Regional Coach of the Year by the Ten-

nis Coaches Association.

SOCCKER: These athletes had an underclassman led team this year and a very difficult schedule. The Shamrocks only went 1-13-1 this season. However, the team played spoiler in their win and one tie were both over a Buchanan team that had no other blemishes on their conference record. **Lakeland Conference Honorees:** Steven Thames, 1st Team; Elian Andriamparany 1st Team; Henry Garcia Honorable Mention; Yihyun Shin Honorable Mention; Luis Mariano-Gonzalez Honorable Mention

VOLLEYBALL: This team finished with a 1-24-1 record and finished 4th in the Lakeland. The team played together and worked hard for each other all season long. The Shamrock volleyball team lost to South Haven in the first round of districts. **Lakeland Conference Honorees:** Kathryn Bergan 1st Team Lakeland Conference; Jasyly Withers; Honorable Mention Lakeland Conference.

CROSS COUNTRY: Both the boys and girls teams improved their times all season.

The boys finished as runner-ups in the Lakeland Conference and 4th in the county meet. Noah Jarvis advanced to the state championship race at Michigan International Speedway. The following athletes received **All-Conference Honors:** Girls: Esmé James 1st Team; Evie Morrison Honorable Mention (HM); Catherine Craig HM; Boys: Noah Jarvis 1st Team Lakeland Conference, State Qualifier; Connor Beebe 1st Team; Payton Eckerly HM; Matthew Green HM; Nathan Haygood HM; Nick Pumani HM.

GIRLS GOLF: The team completed its first season in school history. Bri Hernandez and Adaline Weber both were able to shoot low enough scores to golf at the Regional meet. Not a single player on the six person team had ever golfed prior to the season!

SWIMMING AND DIVING: We had five girls participate in this year's swimming and diving co-op out of Bridgman. The team is made up of six Berrien County high schools. They compete at the Division 1 level in the MHSAA.

Go Shamrocks!

ECRWSS
Residential Customers

Superintendent's Corner

We are working towards creating an environment where each student thrives academically and personally

Greetings! As we embrace the autumn season, I am delighted to share the exciting developments and progress within our Berrien Springs Public Schools district.

The school year has kicked off with tremendous energy, and I am proud to report that we are off to a great start. As we navigate through the academic year, our focus remains unchanged on achieving excellence in education. To this end, we are centered on three core strategies: **attendance, achievement, and engagement.**

Strategic Focus:

Our commitment to improvement is underscored by our concentration on these three fundamental strategies – **attendance, achievement, and engagement.** They serve as our compass, always guiding our questions and conversations towards the development of our students. Through our commitment to

these key areas, we aim to create an environment where each student thrives academically and personally.

Key Initiatives:

We have identified eight key initiatives that serve as the backbone of our strategic plan:

1. Enhancing Evaluation Tools Effect
2. Clarity of Instruction and Assessment
3. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
4. Instructional Engineering/Staff Support (AI)
5. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
6. Expand Personalized Professional Development
7. Revisit Instructional Environment & Handbook
8. Improve Student Engagement

Each of these initiatives is led by a dedicated Key Result Team. They diligently report their progress each month

to their peers. The collaborative efforts of these teams are crucial in realizing our shared goals and objectives.

Transparent Communication:

To keep you informed, we have established regular updates through meetings and will soon be sharing our progress on our website. Transparent communication is vital, and we believe it is imperative to involve our community in our journey toward improvement.

Structured Approach:

Without structure, goals are mere wishes. Our focus on a select few initiatives ensures that we can concentrate our efforts on these areas, allowing us to witness substantial growth in teaching and learning across our district.

Looking Ahead:

In closing, we express our gratitude for your continued



Dr. Thomas Bruce

positive support of staff and our district. Together, we are confident that intentional and focused actions will propel us toward continuous improvement.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community.
Go Shamrocks!