

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

Shamrock Connection

SECOND QUARTER

2022-2023 Newsletter Volume 12, Issue 3

Berrien Springs Public Schools

Berrien Springs hosts six Career Technical Education programs: Firefighting, Emergency Medical Technician, Construction, Law Enforcement, Business, and Accounting

By Stacey DeMaio
BSHS Principal

At Berrien Springs Public Schools, our commitment and care for students' post-secondary success is at the forefront with the opportunities the district offers through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

CTE programs are offered to all high school students, affording the opportunity for high wage, high need, and high demand employment experiences and opportunities upon completion of their program. These programs are rigorous, preparing students for the ever-evolving demands and challenges of industry and providing the necessary employability skills.

Successful completion of CTE courses will prepare students for vocational mastery necessary for entry level work. Classes incorporate real world hands-on experiences that are invaluable, developing the whole child while gaining the technical know-how and first hand experiences necessary to have a successful career.

Berrien Springs is proud to host six programs: Firefighting, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Construction Trades, Law Enforcement, Business Management, and Accounting. In addition, students have 59 additional options around the county.

February is CTE month, and we celebrate the dedication of our staff: Rich Albers, Brandi Narregan, Corey Burks, David Tripp, and Larry Jackson, and the success of all students enrolled in these programs.



The morning session of Construction Trades is building a 14 by 18-foot mini-house under the direction of Larry Jackson. "It is student led and student built," Jackson said. "Rough-framing, drywall, roofing and siding are just some of the skills they are learning. The house will be done in the spring and we are building two of them." Community contractors will help with the plumbing, electrical and HVAC. Pictured above, front row: Natalie Griffith, Mariah Steinke, Kaden Wilson, Katie Swank, and Karl Krause; and back row: Tawan Watson, Ben Cook, Keith Ross, Carter Wendzel, Braxton Wakes, and instructor Larry Jackson. Pictured upper left corner: Firefighter I and II instructor Corey Burks works with student Maru Hernandez of Berrien Springs on properly putting on all of the appropriate gear for tackling a structure fire. Students were practicing putting on gear in a timely manner. They also worked on forcible entry and fire suppression. BS-OT Community Resource Officer, Matt Oosterwal, and Law Enforcement instructor, Rich Albers, work with Ann Hutcherson and Emily Hendrixson on a police report writing project at Berrien Springs High School.

Creating a better world

Mars staff teach students to CARE and to be KIND as compassionate citizens in a global community

By Ryan Pesce
Mars Elementary
Principal

At Mars Elementary School, we want students to feel a sense of care and compassion from our staff. By teaching children to be kind and understanding toward others, we are not only creating a positive school environment, but we are also preparing them to be responsible and empathetic citizens of the world.

Here are some ways in which we teach students to care at Mars Elementary in Berrien Springs:

Encourage Empathy: Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. By fostering empathy in our students, we are helping them develop a greater sense of compassion and understanding towards others. We do this by encouraging students to put themselves in someone else's shoes, to listen actively, and to treat others with kindness and respect.

Model Kind Behavior: As teachers and staff, it is important that we model the kind and compassionate behavior that we expect from our students. This includes being patient, understanding,



Teacher Kristin Trail shares a smile with Francisco Larios-Blanco as they work on an art project.

and respectful towards each other and our students. We also encourage our students to be positive role models for one another by setting a good example of kind behavior.

Celebrate Kindness: Finally, we celebrate kindness in our school by recognizing students who demonstrate caring

and compassionate behavior. Whether it is through verbal recognition, special awards, or other forms of recognition, we make sure that our students know that their kind actions are valued and appreciated.

At Mars Elementary School, we believe that by teaching students to care, we

are helping to create a better world. By fostering empathy, kindness, and compassion in our students, we are preparing them to be responsible and caring citizens of the world.

Heart artwork, featured below, is provided by Mars Elementary students.



Services, including free meals, assistance with transportation and school supplies are available to students most at risk

By Chelsea Pollyea
Director
of Student Services

Every year over a million students in the United States are identified as homeless according to the McKinney Vento Act that was enacted by President Reagan in 1987. This federal law has been implemented in our district and serves students that do not have a residence that is fixed, regular and/

or adequate. These most at-risk students are identified in various ways primarily through our enrollment process. Once identified, students are eligible for a variety of services including, but not limited to, free meals at school, assistance with transportation to and from school, and necessary school supplies. Berrien County McKinney Vento liaisons regularly collaborate to

ensure we are meeting the needs of our McKinney Vento students.

Berrien Springs Public Schools also works with other community agencies to help provide resources to families. Many food pantries in our area supply needed food. There are also resources for housing, rent and utility assistance. Our district also partners with *Backpacks for Berrien* to supply these students

with weekend food bags. In emergency situations, motel vouchers are available as well as shelter referrals. The main goal of all these services is to break down the barriers for these students so they can maintain regular school attendance.

Berrien Springs Public Schools strives to provide a positive learning environment for all students.

Sylvester students are learning to care about how their *actions, words* and *gestures* impact others through the efforts of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support team

By Amy Williams
Sylvester Elementary
Principal

Sylvester Elementary is grateful for the continuous improvement efforts of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Team. This team has committed itself to improving student achievement at Sylvester by maintaining an unwavering focus on bringing about any necessary changes that will increase instructional time and decrease disciplinary office referrals. The team works together to discuss behavior referral data, observational data, and any perception data collected from across the building. The team proposes meaningful and contextualized adjustments to building policies, procedures and practices while keeping the best interests of students at the heart of all decisions. The team is committed to providing students with the foundational skills they will need to be productive students who are capable of developing and maintaining positive relationships at school.

The team is headed up by PBIS teacher, Mr. Jason Constable, and made up of at least one teacher representative for each grade level. The current members of the PBIS team at Sylvester are Mr. Jason Constable (PBIS Teacher and Committee Chairman), Mrs. Sonja Cullings (Sylvester Dean of Students), Ms. Brittany Mercier (Special Education Teacher), Ms. Melydia Rogers (EL Paraprofessional), Ms. Melissa McNeely (Third Grade Teacher representative), Mrs. Katie Stark and Mrs. Julie Terry (Fourth Grade Teacher representatives), and Mrs. Wendy Hoskins (Fifth Grade Teacher representative).



ROCKING RESPECT are students Olivia Driver, Kameron Murphy, and Ali Abdel-Warress; and back row: Greta Boven, Margarethe Daily, PBIS teacher Jason Constable, Natalie Schemenaur, and Miyah Hampton.

Most recently the PBIS Team at Sylvester has been focused on increasing **RESPECT** at Sylvester Elementary. The PBIS team worked together to establish a shared definition

for **RESPECT** at Sylvester. **RESPECT** is when you care how your actions, gestures, and words impact yourself, others and our school.

The team has further defined **RESPECT** to self,

others, and our school in the following ways;

RESPECT TO SELF: Be kind to ourselves, our bodies and our minds. Remember mistakes are learning
(Continued on Page 10)



Berrien Springs Middle School students work together with students from Blossomland Learning Center.

BSMS students work together with Blossomland youths to promote learning, develop caring, share experiences, and to have fun as a team!

**By Kim Kubatzke
8th Grade Integrated
Studies Teacher
and Jacob Skelly
BSMS Principal**

Our Shamrock students have been given the opportunity to work with a class at Blossomland Learning Center in Berrien Springs. Jamie Peloquin and Kim Kubatzke bring their students together twice a month. The classes take turns leading activities. The primary focus is on read-

ing and writing, however, there are many other benefits to this partnership.

As our Berrien Springs Public Schools' vision statement says, *"Together, inspiring students to think, learn, achieve, and care in a global community,"* we want to build our students' confidence and learn to work with people who are diverse, building compassion for one another. It is proven that by working together, attitude improves,

and children's brains develop stronger neural connections because the learning environment has changed into a relevant, real-life situation. Lastly, students become role models for each other. What one student is experiencing as a challenge may be seen as a win for another student. It is important for all students to share their diverse experiences so we can together learn to think, achieve, and care in new ways.

When Henry Winkler came to talk to the Lake Michigan College community, we knew we had to share with him that he is a great writer, and we love to read his books! He is the author of a children's book series entitled, *"Hank Zipzer."* These books are about a boy who suffers from dyslexia, which causes him many challenges in life. Each book shows how these challenges can be overcome. Henry Winkler signed a photo of us holding his books.

Together the students also try to have a little fun. On the last day of the semester, we

held a tower-building challenge. The students formed teams that had 25 minutes to build the highest tower they could muster with only 25 pieces of spaghetti, 25 marshmallows, and one foot of tape. The highest tower was over 16-inches tall.

"I look forward to the days when we meet with Blossomland (students) because I have become friends with Jack and I like his sense of humor," student Damon Cumming said. As a teacher, Mrs. Kubatzke watches the compassion students have for one another. One day, when the students at the middle school had come into class after a particularly rough morning of middle school angst, the students from Blossomland showed up, and immediately a positive change in mood took place. Students began smiling and leaving their personal issues behind to focus on being a member of our unique, caring, and diverse new learning community.



Students work together on a tower building challenge.



Choice and Personalized Learning: *Have It Your Way!*



By Valerie Carr
Virtual Academy
Director

Berrien Springs Public Schools is a district of choices! Secondary students enrolled at the Berrien Springs Virtual Academy (BSVA) have numerous creative learning options with the intention of meeting the needs of the individual learner. Within this program, there are students who not only complete virtual programming at the Virtual Academy building, but there are students taking classes around the county utilizing the following opportunities:

- ♣ Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Science courses
- ♣ Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in schools around Berrien County
- ♣ Early Middle College courses offered at LMC and

SMC

- ♣ The Math and Science Center at Andrews University
- ♣ Hybrid schedules as part-time students attending BSHS and BSVA
- ♣ Band, Choir, and Art, along with other electives at BSMS and BSHS
- ♣ Parent Partnership electives which span Berrien County as well

Virtual Academy students are also welcome to participate in clubs, perform in theatrical productions, and attend sporting events as a student spectator at BSMS and BSHS. The academy offers numerous “being there” experiences through field trips and also students can participate in field trips through the Parent Partnership. Students also take part in student council which plan numerous events for the student body and serve as liaisons between

students and staff.

Some students attend the Virtual Academy for a variety of reasons. The Berrien Springs Virtual Academy (BSVA) is an accelerated academic program designed to provide families with a unique learning experience; however, some students challenge themselves to move through coursework more quickly in hopes of graduating sooner. Other students like the flexibility being a virtual student offers. Some students want to work and need non-traditional school hours to do so. Others participate in travel sports and benefit from having control over the time they attend school. Some like the quiet atmosphere the BSVA provides and the one-on-one instruction from the fully certified staff at the BSVA to support individual learning needs. The BSVA

is also a great transition for traditional home school students interested in having a go with a face to face school environment for the first time with the support of their parents.

For more information

Families interested in the Berrien Springs Virtual Academy meet with the director before enrollment in order to learn the high standards and opportunities the BSVA has to offer for students, but we also hope to listen, learn, and provide choices for families to personalize learning in ways that are most conducive to the needs of your child!

#shamrockpride#CARE



“The staff at BSHS constantly offer a helping hand with our school work or even if you have a bad day they try to cheer you up and greet you with a smile. They also show they care when they organize fun activities after hard tests or weeks.

I also see BSHS students caring for each other during the passing period. When everyone is rushing to class and someone’s locker gets jammed, help is offered by students who pass them by.”

--Julissia Trevino,
Twelfth Grade



“At Berrien Springs High School, I see caring in many ways. The teachers, and other staff, care about our mental, physical and educational well being. I feel most cared for when I have time to talk one-on-one whether it is to a teacher or a counselor; them being willing to do this makes me know not only that they care, but that they believe in me. I know when teachers take time to explain a subject to me, especially after class, that they want me to do better and know I have the ability to do whatever we’re talking about.”

--Deborah Ditz,
Ninth Grade



Art teacher Patti Boersen with Sylvester Elementary art students Zachery Baptist, Cora Elsheikhi, Colton Stephens, Lilly Dushuanack, Bella Medlin, and Greta Boven, who are proudly displaying their artwork.

Mars and Sylvester students have been busy creating interesting and beautiful artwork!

**By Patti Boersen
Mars & Sylvester
Elementary Art
Teacher**

An artist is someone who creates art. Well, we have lots of artists at Mars and Sylvester! Students have

been busy this year creating interesting and beautiful work.

We have studied the elements of art and principles of design and incorporated lines, shapes, colors, value, pattern, and balance into our

artwork. We have discussed proportion and perspective. We have done collages, resists, watercolor painting, mixing paint to make tints and shades, and basic drawing. We have studied a couple of "old" famous artists

and a couple modern, up-and-coming artists.

It has been a great year so far in art and we are looking forward to creating much more!



Variety of art classes at BSHS let students' individuality shine through in their creations, especially their clay projects

**By Jennifer Cook
BSHS Art Teacher**

Berrien Springs High School offers many art classes. Art 1 is where students create projects to expand their knowledge of the elements of art. Art 2 is where students focus on the principles of design and more advanced techniques. Advanced art is where the curriculum becomes more individual and personalized.

The high school also offers a fantastic ceramics program. The ceramics class

at the high school can be taken after passing Art 1. This class teaches all ceramic techniques, including slab building, coil building, pinch, and wheel throwing. Students learn about all the stages of clay and glazes and can tackle the 3D form in so many ways using clay.

The high school ceramics class just recently finished our coil pots. It's exciting to see students finding success in working with clay projects.

These coil pots were created by BSHS students.





Discovery Academy students given opportunity to learn math, geometry, and algebra through a virtual reality program called *PRISMS*

**By Bill Bergan
Director**

Discovery Academy

The Discovery Academy is utilizing a virtual reality math program called *PRISMS* beginning the second semester of the 2022-23 school year. We believe that virtual reality will enhance math learning as our students will now have the opportunity to complete Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II beyond the two-dimensional

world and enter a three-dimensional environment in which students move freely while interacting with a series of real-life situations and problems.

Students who struggle with focusing and paying attention or those with achievement gaps will especially thrive with the virtual reality learning format. We believe having the virtual reality modules embedded into current coursework will

greatly increase engagement resulting in boosts in understanding and retention of concepts. Albert Einstein stated that “*thinking is muscular*” and as students physically move within the virtual reality environment to build and create, they become involved in the problem solving crosshairs of math and real life that are remembered and recalled in new situations. Studies show that muscle movement

while learning helps students recollect knowledge and reapply it.

Discovery Academy teachers have gone through extensive training and have allowed students to begin exploring the virtual reality world of *PRISMS*, tour the curriculum and get comfortable with the headset device and program. Students were initially given a brief survey about their new experience with virtual reality which revealed strong excitement for continued use and the possibilities moving forward. We will begin the semester with a cohort group of approximately 10-12 students and will carefully evaluate the progress in meeting goals around higher course grades and state test scores. Further surveying around usability, ease of learning and engagement will also happen with goals to increase participation to all Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 students .



Top photo; Teacher Frank Gonzalez can follow each student's math progress using *PRISMS* from his computer; Dashawn Welch tries on the equipment; and teacher Frank Gonzalez, Director Bill Bergan, and teacher Andrew Radenbaugh work with Alexa Harrison, Dashawn Welch, and Robert Jackson on the introduction to *PRISMS*.





Pictured left: National Honor Society members Suzy Markle and Madylin Keigley handed out pumpkin pie as part of the Thanksgiving dinner at Timber Ridge. Pictured above: NHS member Yeonwoo Seo, Co-Advisor John Vitek, and NHS members Jessy Hajaj and Adaliah Bennett helped serve the dinner.

Community service with HEART is at the core of the mission of Berrien Springs High School National Honor Society members!

**By Do Hyun (Paul) Cho
NHS Chapter President**

Kicking off the 2022-2023 school year, the Berrien Springs High School Lee F. Auble chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) initiated its projects. Starting the monthly projects as early as

October, our new members got to experience a new form of connection with the community by volunteering at the Animal Control Center in Benton Harbor. Through this project, our members got to work with the animals at the center and shared wholesome

interactions with the workers as well. This project was also an opportunity for our new members in our organization to start getting used to being a part of the Berrien Springs NHS chapter's culture, and our existing members were there to guide every single new member with their journey in Berrien Springs NHS.

It is safe to say that our members got to know each other much better through the teamwork and bonding that happened throughout the duration of the first project and our prior meetings.

With the successful completion of our very first project, we moved into the months of November and December, Thanksgiving and Christmas, respectively. The Berrien Springs NHS chapter goes to the Timber Ridge retirement home twice annually during the months of these two holidays and serves the community members delicious holiday meals and provides beautiful music. We believe that the interaction that our members have with the community members at the retirement home is important for our members' experiences as well

as the community members' holiday spirit. Now you can debate all you want about which holiday is better, but with our traditional visits to Timber Ridge, these two holidays claim a very special place in our hearts.

Now moving onto January, the Berrien Springs NHS chapter decided to reach out to our own *Neighbor To Neighbor*, a very well-known, non-profit organization in Berrien Springs run by community volunteers.

It turned out that the *Neighbor To Neighbor* organization was actively looking for volunteers because of its growing size and lack of volunteers. So this was a great opportunity for our members to step in and help out the organization by completing the deeds that were needed to operate such a facility to support our own Berrien Springs community.

Moving forward, there is a lot more planned for our Berrien Springs NHS chapter members, so be on the lookout for more updates! We really appreciate the love and praise from our community members. Please continue to support us as we pursue our Berrien Springs NHS journey throughout the year!



NHS member Nayeli Ibarra-Garcia served Alison McDonald her Thanksgiving dinner.



Shamrocks look forward to advancing in post-season play for basketball, wrestling and Competitive Cheer!

**By Joe Stephens
Athletic Director**

Our Shamrock athletes have worked hard through the long winter to prepare for post-season play. Our wrestling team has a full roster, and although they may not advance to team Regionals, we have a few athletes with the potential to make the individual regionals. Juniors Tyler Dowell, Dylan Russel, and freshman Caylen Tate have winning records and look to be some of the first wrestlers to advance past the first round in recent years.

Our girls' basketball team still has four regular season games remaining. They have an incredibly young roster, but they have the potential to hit the .500 mark on the season. The Lakeland Conference may be the best D2/D3 girls basketball conference in the state. The girls' team will only graduate two seniors, Karii Hurley, and Allison Weigand. Junior Grace Constable, sophomore Aubrie Smith, and freshman Zion Ellis have been the scoring sparks for

the Shamrocks.

The Competitive Cheer team is also very young but boasts great numbers. For the first time in school history, the Shamrocks have been able to put a JV team on the floor at meets. They compete in the large SAC cheerleading conglomerate with schools from the Lakeland, Southwest 10, and the original SAC. They regularly compete against 14 to 16 schools per evening during the week. There have already been some cheer honors awarded. Senior Amara Schneider is First Team SAC. Senior Kirsten Krause and Junior Alayna Wells earned Honorable mention.

The boys' basketball team has had a season full of close contests. Five of their first 15 games have been decided by one basket! They are led by seniors Allen Taylor, Kole Blasko, Desmond Clark, and Josiah Pittman. The team is currently 8-7 and in the middle of the pack in the tough Lakeland Conference. Their schedule is also loaded with great competition that

will prepare them for what they will see in post-season play.

New football coach

Elliot Uzelac has retired from coaching after three years as the head coach of the Shamrocks and over 50 years in football. Our Shamrock varsity teams were 20-8 over those years, and the program won one conference title.

The reins of the program have been handed to Ben Iliff. He has been the Defensive Coordinator of the varsity under Coach Uzelac. Coach Iliff has been an educator in the Watervliet school district for the last 21 years. He is looking forward to being able to put his personal stamp on the program while continuing the strong tradition of Shamrock football that dates back to many of our legendary coaching staff.

Postseason destination

The MHSAA has found Berrien Springs as a very desirable destination to have its postseason tournaments. In the fall, we hosted a

district football game because of our team's playoff seeding. Our game workers will be very busy this spring (especially our awesome community of track volunteers). It is a credit to them that our events run so smoothly. We truly have a reputation for being one of the best hosts in this part of the state. We have been fortunate to be selected as the host facility for all of the following MHSAA and MITCA tournaments. At a time when many athletic departments start to shut things down for the summer, Berrien Springs might be the busiest place for high school athletics in all of Michigan.

Upcoming Events

Track and Field Regional	05/19
Track and Field MITCA Team State Meet	05/26
Baseball District and Regional Semi	5/30, 6/2, 6/7
Softball Regional	06/10



10 BERRIEN SPRINGS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT



THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY for your support and donations in helping Berrien Springs Public Schools “Stuff a Bus” for the annual community-wide Christmas Care Program. New toys, non-perishable food, and checks were collected to help those in need during the holiday season. Pictured above with their special reindeer bus are Transportation Director John Legus, Dispatcher Amy Martin, and district drivers Tami Paquette and Erik Nieman.

#shamrockpride#CARE



“The teachers at BSHS help me when I am struggling and try their best to help me succeed. Whenever I am struggling through a standard or a topic, the teachers are always there after school to give me the time that I need to learn and succeed in this growing environment.

--Dominic Varga,
Twelfth Grade



Positive Behavior Intervention

(Continued from Page 3)

opportunities and show resilience to persevere.

RESPECT TO OTHERS:

Treat others how you would want to be treated. Be open-minded to different perspectives and cultures. We can learn from everyone.

RESPECT TO OUR ENVIRONMENT:

Show respect and care for our natural environment, as well as our classroom environment. Look after our classroom, school and community.

Some of the supports the team has designed to set our students up for success in terms of demonstrating **RESPECT** include:

- Establishing a building-wide shared definition of respect:
- “Respect is when you care how your actions,

words and gestures impact others.”

- Respect posters are now posted to promote respect throughout the building.
- Respect lessons taught weekly and referenced throughout the week in classrooms.
- Monthly VIP “Big Events” for a select number of students from each class that are consistently showing respect in class.
- Students are recognized during monthly grade level meetings and receive a prize.
- Additional “Respect Training” as needed for students. Students are assigned to retraining for respect after every referral for disrespect.



SENIOR HOLIDAY LUNCHEON--Approximately 220 senior residents enjoyed the annual Senior Holiday Luncheon sponsored by the school district and coordinated by Communications Director Gail Fox. Participants enjoyed a turkey lunch and musical entertainment from the band, choir, and kindergarteners. Several senior citizens won poinsettias. Pictured above: senior residents Shirley Lehmann and Harvey Oetman enjoyed the luncheon along with Pat and Jack Davis. Pictured below: Andrew Salliotte performed as a member of the ShamROCK Jazz Ensemble, and James Tramel, as well as other Shamrock football players, served residents including David Sprung.



ECRWSS
Residential Customers



SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER



CARE is truly at the heart of what motivates the staff at Berrien Springs Public Schools

By Dave Eichberg
Superintendent

Sometimes I'm inspired by music, especially song lyrics. Music artist Tim McGraw recorded a song titled, "*Humble and Kind*." This song contains a short lyric that I believe really represents the heart and commitment of our Berrien Springs Public Schools staff. "*When you get where you're going, don't forget to turn back around and help the next one*

in line. Always stay humble and kind." Most people in education are the last to toot their own horn and are often discreetly kind. They dedicate their entire career to helping those who represent the future, or as the song lyric states, "*the next one in line.*"

Humble and kind people tend to care deeply about life. Care is truly at the heart of what motivates our staff at BSPS. The district's vision

statement "*Inspiring students to think, learn, achieve and care in a global community,*" emphasizes the need for possessing a desire to care for others, teach others how to care for one another and demonstrate care in the execution of our daily work. This issue of the Shamrock Connection features articles that exemplify acts of caring. It is my hope that as you read these articles you will draw inspiration and comfort, understanding the extent to which "caring" is an essential part of the district's daily mission. **Go Shamrocks!**



David Eichberg



School board President, Paul Toliver, shares a story with these excited students at Mars Elementary.



**BERRIEN SPRINGS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
TOGETHER, INSPIRING STUDENTS
TO THINK, LEARN, ACHIEVE AND
CARE IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY.



@berrienspringspublicschools



@bspsschools



@bspsschools

For more information, please visit

homeoftheshamrocks.org

Contact Us

contactus@homeoftheshamrocks.org
(269) 471-2891