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

Shamrock Connection

2022-2023 Newsletter Volume 12, Issue 2

Berrien Springs Public Schools



Learning to dance together are Jonathan Clough as Adam/The Beast and Sofia Pate as Belle; pictured above, Melody Kertawidjaja as Chip and Sofia Pate as Belle practice a scene from the musical.

Students are discovering the joy of sharing the gift of music!

Community invited Nov. 19-21 to experience the magic of music and performance at "Beauty and the Beast"

By Carrie VanDenburgh BSMS/BSHS Choir Director

Berrien Springs Public Schools has 60-plus students performing or helping backstage for our upcoming musical, *"Beauty and the Beast."* The show runs November 19-21 at 7 p.m. at the Arts and Athletic Center auditorium.

We are excited to welcome the community for yet another enriching arts event. We invite each of you to experience the magic of music and performance in our new building by attending one or all of the various performances scheduled throughout the school year.

The high school choirs had their very first concert in the new auditorium on October 24th. The Women's Chorus, Men's Ensemble, Concert Choir, and Bel Canto raised their voices

to celebrate all their hard work. Each choir sang two to three numbers and then sang "The Awakening" together at the end. The Awakening talks about a dream, or rather a nightmare, of what our world would be like if there were no music and how our world would be filled with despair and no hope. As the song progresses, we then awake from this nightmare with the hope of a new day. At the end of the piece, the choir proclaims, "Let Music Live." I chose this song because it is my hope that students will discover the joy of sharing the gift of music and feel encouraged to celebrate that song in everything they do and say.

Our new Arts and Athletic Center building and classrooms have been such a rich blessing, providing a wonderful space to celebrate this wonderful gift of music and to hear it fill



Practicing one of the dinner scenes are Jonathan Kertawidjaja as Cogsworth the Clock, Jonathan Clough as Adam/The Beast, Melody Kertawidjaja as Chip, and Paul Cho as Lumiere the Candlestick.

the hallways. I'm thrilled that students are taking full advantage of the new facility by coming in during and after school to use the practice rooms, learning to really

listen to each other thanks to the amazing acoustics, experimenting with mics and other technology, and honing new skills that were not possible before.

2 PARTNERING WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY Leadership Transition Plan will promote district's vision and mission while providing a seamless transition for learning and operations

By Dr. Thomas Bruce Deputy Superintendent

It was Desmond Tutu that stated, "There is only one way to eat an elephant: a bite at a time." This was, and still is great advice when one encounters large or complex change. Often that change is too big to engage and conquer. Such is the transition plan for the superintendent of schools here in Berrien Springs.

We started the idea of this transition plan two years ago. The idea was to develop a process to identify the skillset of a person to become superintendent, interview candidates, hire, and employ them so over time they could lead our district without a loss in consistency or drastic change in direction.

Today we are nearing the final six months of a formal 18 month transition plan. In broad strokes, Dr. Thomas Bruce was hired as the assistant superintendent during the summer of 2021. Board of Education The appointed him as the incoming superintendent last spring. Mr. Dave Eichberg will retire this summer, on June 30, and Dr. Bruce will step in as the new superintendent on July 1, 2023. So far, we are making significant progress on our elephant meal plan.

To keep our school district on a footing for the future, we have reorganized and made changes in leadership. Mr. Steve Spenner is now the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Student Services.

He and his team are solely focused on enhancing the instruction and student learning here on campus.

Our school district has three

BERRIEN SPRINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TOGETHER, INSPIRING STUDENTS TO THINK, LEARN, ACHIEVE AND CARE IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

important strategies to help us meet district goals. First is attendance, then achievement, and finally, student engagement. We cannot teach students if they do not attend class. We must improve our attendance at every level. To address the attendance topic, we have added a new coordinator position. Mrs. Dee Voss is working with principals, parent groups, and the Regional Education Service Agency to formulate new and improved practices. We believe that if attendance improves, our amazing teachers will have more opportunities to improve student learning, and achievement will increase.

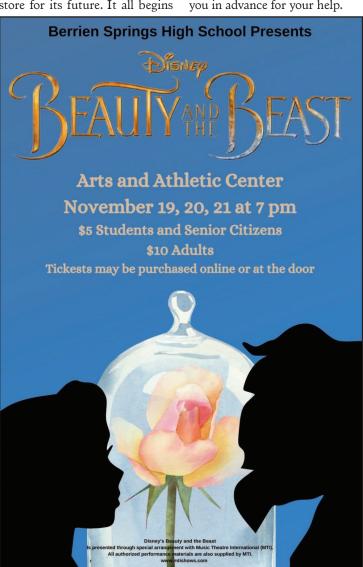
Many people may be unaware that Berrien Springs Public Schools is a leader in the state of Michigan. We are one of the state's largest providers of remote learning and have been part of this work for more than ten years. In fact, two-thirds of our total student population resides outside Berrien Springs, in cities and rural areas across the state. Utilizing 28 learning centers and home-school partnerships, these students and their families are part of the Berrien Springs family. These families have chosen alternative education as their pathway to graduation. This year, Dr. Bruce is managing this segment of the district and reporting to Mr. Eichberg. To prepare for Dr. Bruce's new role as superintendent, we have started the process of filling the position of Assistant Superintendent of Innovation and Alternative Education.

and Alternative Education. Mrs. Ellen Hasse is a true Shamrock. She is our current Business Manager and oversees

our entire organization as it continues to grow. She has fiscal responsibilities for our \$80 million dollar budget, which includes over 600 employees, 28 centers, and six schools. Her business office oversees all maintenance, operations, renovation, and construction projects. Mrs. Hasse will retire next fall, 2023. To continue our path of seamless transition, we have posted this position and added a supporting role to the business office.

Berrien Springs Public Schools has many great things in store for its future. It all begins

with partnering with parents and the community. As we go through these leadership changes, our goal via the transition plan is to continue to promote the district's vision and mission while providing a seamless transition for learning and operations. A vital part of our transition plan is to hear from our community. Through parent meetings, board meetings, surveys, and informal conversations, it is important to hear feedback on how the plan is progressing. We are not able to eat this elephant alone. Your support is required, and thank you in advance for your help.



MARS ELEMENTARY

Mars' students are inspired when they are challenged and encouraged by parents and teachers

By Ryan Pesce Principal Mars Elementary

Mars Elementary has been working on our school culture. We are spending time building relationships with students and providing examples of school expectations. Although our students are the youngest in the district, they are still inspired when challenged to do their best.

The best part of the day is when students enter the

building. Each day students come into the building and share their thoughts about being excited and ready for school. The staff has been building relationships and listening to the students' excitement. It is one of the most inspiring things we do with our littlest students. Taking the time to listen and be genuinely excited about what is going on in students' lives excites them about school and creates an environment where students want to do their best. There is a saying that students do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

We are excited to see our students so engaged in learning and are looking forward to having a strong focus on reading, writing, and math. The staff is currently working with training consultants to implement research-based reading, writing, and math instruction. The combination of relationship building and a solid foundation in research-based teaching will help inspire students to think about what possibilities are available to them.

Students at Mars might be the youngest in the district, but they are just as inspired when they are challenged and encouraged by parents and teachers. We look forward to the rest of the school year and the opportunity to inspire students. **Go Shamrocks!**

SYLVESTER ELEMENTARY Sylvester Elementary scholars can make sense of and solve problems with newly adopted math curriculum

By Amy Williams Principal Sylvester Elementary

At the beginning of the school year, the students and teachers at Sylvester Elementary began engaging in mathematics instruction using our new math curriculum *"Illustrative Mathematics."* The *Illustrative Mathematics* curriculum is the district's curriculum for math in grades 6-12 as well.

The *Illustrative Mathematics* curriculum is built on several core philosophies;

All students have brilliant mathematical ideas.

♣ All students can learn gradelevel math.

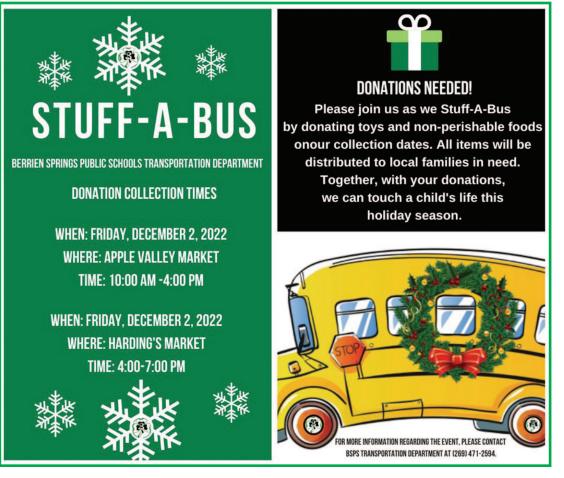
All students can make sense of and solve problems.

All students have experiences and ideas that are valuable.

The Illustrative Mathematics curriculum relies on the teacher acting as a facilitator, monitor, and observer. Math is not a spectator sport, and Illustrative Mathematics the curriculum keeps students working hard throughout the 80-90 minute Math Block. The teachers support students to ensure a high level of engagement, ownership and understanding of daily learning targets, and participation in math discourse.

Each *Illustrative Mathematics* lesson provides students with a familiar lesson structure beginning with an invitation to mathematics moving to a deep study of concepts and procedures and culminating in an opportunity to consolidate and apply new knowledge. Students take a daily"cool down"

that functions as a formative assessment providing the teacher with guidance for where to begin the following day's math lesson. **Go Shamrocks!**



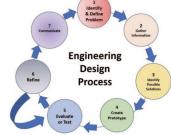
PROJECT LEAD THE WAY

Innovators, designers, and inventors are created through Project Lead the Way engineering program

By Brian Terry **BSHS PLTW** Engineering Teacher

Berrien Springs High School Students enrolled in our PLTW engineering program are truly innovators, designers and inventors! As you know, our kiddos are naturally curious, artistic and verv creative individuals that often just need an opportunity to express themselves in their own way. One way we try to cultivate this is through the use of student driven projects and activities which we "the teachers" use to assess them on standards and competencies they complete along the way. One of the essential standards that all engineering students not only learn about but apply is the engineering design process. It is this process which designers and engineers alike use to address and solve problems, by innovating current products or inventing new products. Our students are currently utilizing the design process to solve real world problems, whether big or small. The important thing is that they are actively engaged and tapping into their natural creative nature and abilities.

Engineering Design Process



Current Engineering Project Status

We are currently at the beginning stages of our design processes this year and are generating concepts and ideas before moving forward to having an actual prototype. Some topics students are considering this year include but are not limited to a rain producing rocket, shoe storage cabinet, laptop cooling table, self charging electric bike. cooling headbands, baseball/ softball automatic soft toss device and many more. If your student is enrolled in an engineering course ask them what they are working on and feel free to share your thoughts and ideas with them moving forward.

A Few Past Engineering **Project Examples**

Project: The Trapped In Napkins

Students: Hudson Baker and Kyler Constable

Problem Statement: When Kyler and I work, we wipe our hands on our pants and it leaves stains and the problem is when your pants are dirty, Mary our boss, gets mad at us and there is no solution to this problem, so Kyler and I have had to make our own product to fix this problem.

Solution: Innovate existing pants to accommodate а removable cloth/towel that would be used to wipe dirty hands on while working that can be removed "velcro" and replaced with a clean cloth/towel.



Project: Bar Build Student: Charlie Ewalt Problem Statement: Pole barn garage didn't have seating Parents: Make attendance a top priority for your children!

or a gathering space for family and friends.

Solution: Design, create, and build a countertop composed of pallet wood, cast iron pipe, and a planned live edge maple slab.



Project: Swimtail Student: Ethan Marschner **PLTW Problem Statement:** Modern crankbaits are focused on having good action, which they do well most of the time but are often missing the tail "caudal peduncle" reducing the realistic look of the fish.

Solution: Design, create and 3D print the tailfin of a fish and attach it to an existing crankbait.



Failure Is Necessary!

The design process can at times be painful as students generally fail with their first design iteration and prototype attempts. It is then that students often realize that it is failure that is necessary to drive innovation as well as the learning process! We stress the importance and necessity of failure as it helps to identify weaknesses which in turn sharpens the edge of the learning curve. Through creative design and innovation using project-based learning we will continue to inspire, and cultivate the future artists, designers, engineers, innovators and selfthinkers of tomorrow.

By Dee Voss **Parent Engagement** & Attendance Coordinator

Berrien Springs Public Schools (BSPS) has identified "Improving Student Attendance" as one of their main district goals for the 2022-2023 school year. As we are in postpandemic times, the commitment to supporting students and families in attending school every day has not wavered.

In Michigan, the law requires every child (from ages 6 to 18) to attend school--on time every day. Attendance data in our school district for 2020-2021 shows an attendance rate of 96.02%, while

attendance rates in 2021-2022 decreased to 95.73%. Although we continue to be above the state average of 88.82%, we monitor each student's attendance daily.

Daily school attendance is necessary for your child to support their academic progress; it prevents them from missing out on fundamental content learning and gives them the habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and their careers. Some strategies you can do at home to support your student are: Establish daily routines, Monitor your child's academic progress, Monitor your child's daily attendance, Communicate with the school, Make **ATTENDANCE** a priority!

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% of days in a school year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences. Satisfactory attendance is missing nine or fewer days of a school year. While chronic absence presents academic challenges for students not in class, it reaches high levels of lost instructional time in a classroom or school. The primary rationale for high-quality attendance is the relationship between student attendance and student achievement.

DISCOVERY ACADEMY



Instructor Afiya Latham, who is the co-owner of Express Employment Professionals, and Discovery Academy Workforce Coordinator DeVonte Jones work on the Job Genius program with students Hosanna Thiele and Kyndall Garrison.

Express Employment Professionals use "Job Genius" to assist Discovery students in entering the workforce

By Bill Bergan Discovery Academy Director

Express Employment Professionals of Saint Joseph, Michigan, is a staffing agency franchise that provides Human Resources support to local businesses and job seekers. Their vision is to "Respect People and Impact Business." Over the past several years, Express has identified the need to educate, support, and train the next generation of our workforce on how to succeed in whatever they decide to do after high school. They have developed a Career Readiness program called *Job Genius*. The program consists of nine competencies identified as the most impactful skills and traits young professionals should have before entering the workforce post high school.

Job Genius Certificate

Express Employment Professionals partnered with the Discovery Academy at the Berrien Springs Public Schools this past semester to deliver this curriculum to our students. The program focused on career readiness, soft skills and personal development training, and community relations, and it introduced them to different career opportunities at local companies here in Southwest Michigan. Students will earn a credit towards graduation after completing the program and a *Job Genius* Certificate. With this certificate, students can share with future employers that they have acquired critical tools to help them succeed in their jobs.

Led by 21 seniors, the BSHS Marching Band earned a Division 1 rating

By Kelly Rosselit Band Director

The Berrien Springs High School Marching Band finished off their season with a flurry of successes. The hard work they put into their show was rewarded with trophies and well-deserved accolades. The Shamrock Marching Band hosted the Michigan State Band & Orchestra Association (MSBOA) District 6 Marching Festival on October 11th. Even though rain and bad



weather pushed the event inside to the new AAC Gymnasium, the Shamrocks earned a Division One and all "A" grades from the judges. The students received blue medals for their achievements. A few days (and a homecoming parade/football game) later, the band performed at the Lakeshore Marching Band Invitational on October 15th. The Shamrocks walked away with a first place trophy, Best Marching, Best Percussion, and Best Auxiliary Color Guard awards rounding out a busy but satisfying week for the Band,

This year, the Shamrock Marching Band's show was *Hiraeth* - a Welsh word that means "the nostalgia of a childhood home that cannot be recreated." The band used that feeling to give life to "Fool for the City" by Foghat, "Rhapsody in Blue" by Gershwin, "Largo" from New World Symphony by Dvorak, and "Home" by American Idol alum Phillip Phillips. Led by 21 phenomenal seniors, the band made great strides and played with intensity, gusto, and heart. The Berrien Springs High School Marching Band will return in the spring for the annual Blossomtime Parade.

Go Shamrocks!

#shamrockpride#inspire#think



"I am inspired by the people around me and the things they do. I enjoyed the time during Homecoming since it gave the school a sense of not only pride, but community. And it wouldn't have felt that way if it wasn't for the students helping set it up."

--Delilah Grubb, Ninth Grader



"I am inspired by how hard our teachers work each and every day so we have the ability to thrive and succeed. When I come into school every day and see each and every teacher with a smile, it makes me want to pass on that joy so it inspires me to smile more."

> --Zachary Hance, Eleventh Grader





"I feel the most intellectually challenged and supported when my teacher is giving me the opportunity to get a four on a test or quiz, but if I get the quiz wrong it won't affect my grade. I feel it's okay to make mistakes when I am given a second chance to do whatever I'm doing over until I get it right."

> --Alexus Ory, Ninth Grader



"I am inspired by everyone coming together to make this a fun and educational school setting. Here at BSHS no one is left out, everyone is included. The fun teachers and students make this a great school. At Berrien Springs High School, I see inspiration in the future kids of the new generation."

> --Jaritza Rangel, Twelfth Grader

VIRTUAL ACADEMY

Student Council uses "Buddies" to serve as role models for elementary students

By Valerie Carr

Virtual Academy Director The Berrien Springs Virtual Academy has an active Student Council that plans events and incentives for the student body as a whole. Under the tenets of the group, this student organization has planned opportunities to serve as role models for younger students, events to create community in a virtual environment, and build traditions for students to look forward to within our school.

Within the *Buddies* program, Student Council members have the opportunity to build relationships and serve as positive role models to elementary students. Volunteers have read to elementary students during their scheduled Zoom meetings and at the Virtual building. When events are being held at the Virtual building, secondary students can volunteer. Some secondary students have gone on field trips including most recently to Fernwood Botanical Gardens. When elementary students come into the building, they will often ask if their favorite *Buddy* is in the building or available to spend time at the Maker Space with them.

This school offers numerous social opportunities for any student interested in partaking in Student Council events. Besides holidays and incentive based celebrations, Student Council determines future events by surveying students to gauge interest. In particular, the group is looking to establish consistent traditions for students to look forward to attending.

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BERRIEN SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Book Fair is used to not only raise money for books for the school, but to promote community outreach

By Jake Skelly BSMS Principal

The Berrien Springs Middle School library is always trying to promote the love of reading with many outreach activities. This year we kicked off the year by hosting a Roald Dahl (author of "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory") birthday party in September. We have plans for other after school activities throughout the year that will promote the love of reading and learning something new. The middle school hosted a **Scholastic Bookfair** from October 31-November 4, where they earned Scholastic Dollars to add books to the library. Our goal this year is to sell 375 books which is a lofty goal, but I know we are able to achieve BIG things. One thing that sets our book fair apart is that in addition to raising money to buy books for the school, we promote community outreach by supporting the *Christmas Care* program. This local organization helps students and families throughout the year, especially during the holidays! This year we hope to raise more than \$300! If we are able to reach the goal of supporting *Christmas Care*, both myself and Assistant Principal Micah Lambert will take a pie to the face; nothing motivates kids more than the opportunity to do something kooky to their principals!

If you are looking for a local place to make a difference, *Christmas Care* is a perfect way to support the community in ways

that make a difference for the students and families of Berrien Springs. The *Christmas Care* program accepts money, nonperishable food, and unwrapped gifts that you can drop off at any school for this program. Backpacks for Berrien is also always happy to accept donations of food or money. They support the families of Berrien by providing weekend food for kids who need it. Berrien Springs is incredible at caring for each other when times are tough.

Fall Sports Review Rock athletes earn multiple Lakeland Conference honors

By Joe Stephens Athletic Director

This has been an event filled and successful fall season of 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 students have played with on and off the field. More importantly, their sportsmanship has been exemplary! These programs and the individual players have had an array of accomplishments this fall. Many of these teams are still completing their season or still in the voting process in their postseason awards.

FOOTBALL: The team finished its 6-2 regular season as runners-up in the Lakeland Conference. They finished the season 7-3. Lakeland Conference Honorees are as follows: Ben Eising 1st Team RB, Trevion Porter 1st Team DL, CJ Gordon 1st Team RB/LB, Garrett Brewer 1st Team S, Allan Chole 1st Team OL, Quimari Haskins 1st Team DB, Owen Kerlikowski HM OL, Kole Blasko HM DL, and Micah McFarland HM LB.

SOCCER: The team improved to 5-12 this year from 3-10-3 last year; finished in last

place in a tough Lakeland Conference. The team lost to Niles in the first round of districts. Lakeland Conference Honorees: Josiah Pittman, 1st Team; Daniel Ramirez, 1st Team; Anthony Ibanez, Honorable Mention; Joel Quao, Honorable Mention; and Peyton Eckerly, Honorable Mention.

VOLLEYBALL: The team finished with a 6-26-6 record and finished 4th in the Lakeland. The Lady Shamrocks won in the Dig Pink for Breast Cancer benefit game vs South Haven which was played at home in front of the entire student body. The team lost to Niles in the first round of districts. Lakeland Conference Honorees: Sarah Davey, 1st Team Lakeland Conference; Kirsten Krause. Honorable Mention Lakeland Conference: and Endvia Kirtdoll, Honorable Mention Lakeland Conference.

TENNIS: SAC 3rd place, finishing behind state ranked Allegan and Kalamazoo Hackett. Regional Champions as a team and in 5 out of 8 flights. Advanced to the state finals and finished in 11th place for the second year in a row. They won several matches in the finals at Kalamazoo College. Jack Elliott survived to play on day two of the

tournament when he made it to the Final Four in 3 singles. Regional Champions and State Qualifiers: 1st Singles, Paul Cho (1st); 1st Doubles, James Andersen/Jeremy Kwon (2nd); 2nd Singles, Yeonwoo Seo (1st); 2nd Doubles., Ben Cook/Ethan Tripp (1st); 3rd Singles, Jack Elliott (1st): 3rd Doubles. Jonathan Kertawidjaja/Eugene Ha (2nd); 4th Singles, Phil Seo (1st): 4th Doubles, Logan Jang and Collin Craig (2nd). 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 the Berrien County Fairgrounds this season. They were able to host a conference jamboree and an invitational. The girls' team was in a rebuilding year, and improved significantly as the year went on. They finished 3rd in the Lakeland and received some all conference awards. Lakeland Conference Honorees: Allison Ott: 1st Team Lakeland Conference; and Esme James: Honorable Mention Lakeland Conference. The boys' team won two major races on their schedule. They were Berrien County champions for the 5th straight year, upsetting rival St. Joe. They were also the Lakeland Conference Champions. They finished only seven points from qualifying as a team for state. Lakeland Conference Honorees: Luke Morrison: Lakeland Champion, Qualified for State at MIS; Noah Jarvis: 1st Team Lakeland Conference, Qualified for State at MIS; and Sam Markle: Honorable Mention Lakeland Conference.

GIRLS SWIMMING AND DIVING: We had two girls participate in this year's swimming and diving co-op out of Bridgman, Madison Spenner and Addison Zizkovsky. The team is made up of six Berrien County high schools. They compete at the Division 1 level in the MH-SAA. This team has competed with the largest schools in the state this season. They are preparing for their two day long conference meet at Portage as of the press time of this newsletter.

Winter Programs

We have had a great fall! Two cross country runners are still in postseason play. Meanwhile, our winter programs are on deck and looking forward to picking up right where our fall programs have left off. **It is a great time to be a Shamrock!** Berrien Springs Public Schools One Sylvester Avenue Post Office Box 130 Berrien Springs, MI 49103

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SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

District's strategic plan focuses on proficiency goals in reading, math, social studies & science ---Attendance, achievement, and engagement in learning are the focus of achieving those goals---

By David Eichberg Superintendent

All great schools have a long-term strategic plan. The primary purpose for creating a school strategic plan is to ensure that student learning and student achievement are the priority. Berrien Springs Public Schools developed a three-year strategic plan that is highlighted by multiple goals and specific strategies designed make progress toward achieving each goal. The current threeyear goals are the following:

<u>Goal #1</u>

62% of all students will be proficient in Reading as measured by state testing.



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<u>Goal #2</u>

52% of all students will be proficient in Math as measured by state testing.

<u>Goal #3</u>

All students will score in the top 25% of Berrien County school districts in Social Studies and Science as measured by state testing.

<u>Goal #4</u>

The number of all repeat student offenders with three or more discipline referrals will be less than 10% for each of the three years.

site site site

The following strategies were created to provide focus on achieving the district goals:

- 1. Student attendance
- 2. Student achievement
- 3. Student engagement in learning

Our staff is committed to meeting the learning needs of



David Eichberg

every student. We are confident that successful implementation of the current three-year strategic plan will move our district to a place of improvement, specifically in our ability to assist students with their learning. Thank you for your continued positive and encouraging support of our district. **Go Shamrocks!**