



Public Schools / One Sylvester Avenue / P.O. Box 130 / Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103  
Phone (269) 471-2891 Fax (269) 471-2590 Website [www.homeoftheshamrocks.org](http://www.homeoftheshamrocks.org)

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January 9, 2023

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER), which provides key information on the 2021-22 educational progress for Berrien Springs Sylvester Elementary. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Amy Williams for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website <https://bit.ly/3rtvAJh>, or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2021-22 school year, schools were identified based on previous years' performance using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that had at least one underperforming student subgroup in 2021-22. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that had a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state in 2021-22. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance was in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or had a graduation rate at or below 67% in 2021-22. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

Our school was not identified by one of these labels.

In response to the Read by Grade 3 legislation, the Sylvester Elementary school improvement team has committed to proactively studying data and putting plans in place to reduce the number of students at Sylvester who might meet the Read by Grade 3 retention criteria. In 20-21 at Sylvester Elementary, 3rd Grade Literacy was only at 30.3% proficient as measured by the M-STEP assessment. This represented a percentage of proficiency that was 12.5% below the state average. In 21-22 at



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Sylvester Elementary, 3rd Grade Literacy was at 41.2% proficient as measured by the M-STEP assessment. This represents a percentage of proficiency that is only .4% below the state average. At the start of the 21-22 school year, Sylvester Elementary reduced the student to teacher ratio in Third Grade from approximately 1:25 to 1:18 by opening two additional sections of Third Grade. Early data collection indicates that this school improvement strategy has had a positive impact on student achievement.

### **PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL**

The enrollment process for residential students at Sylvester Elementary requires each parent/guardian to complete an enrollment packet, meet with the building principal, and results in a classroom assignment. Non-resident students wishing to attend Sylvester Elementary are required to complete enrollment information provided by central office personnel. Acceptance for non-resident students is based upon guidelines set forth by the State of Michigan Department of Education.

### **THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Sylvester Elementary is currently in year one (1) of contributing to our most recent district continuous improvement plan. The current district focus strategy identified through the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP) is the district-wide implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Sylvester Elementary has committed to refining our Title One identification procedures, instituting a "What I Need" intervention block focused on reading, and refining differentiated/ small group instruction practices within our classrooms. Our school improvement team is made up parents, teachers, support staff, and administration. The team holds monthly meetings to review progress of goals and report back to entire school staff.



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## **Special Education AER 2022-2023**

### **School Year**

Resident students (along with students accepted through the schools of choice process) may qualify and have a need for special education programs and/or services. The district is continuing to develop their Multi-Tier Systems of Supports (MTSS) model, providing general education options for struggling students and monitoring their progress over time. For those students who are unable to demonstrate progress with significant interventions, students being referred for special education programming/services may begin this process through a request for an evaluation or Child Study Team (CST) meeting. Should a student qualify for special education programs and/or services, a team of individuals will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to help assist the child progress within the general education setting.

### **A. Resource Room Services for Local Special Education Students**

Current special education programs within the district include Elementary and Secondary Resource Rooms. Students follow a general education curriculum with the Common Core State Standards. There are two models utilized within Berrien Springs Public Schools, one in which classroom instruction is provided by a general education teacher along with interactive co-teaching from a special education teacher; the second model is for students determined to need more direct instruction for needs outlined in their IEP. These students may receive programming/services that pulls them out of the general education classroom. Should a student at our Discovery Academy or Virtual Academy programs have a need for Resource Room programming or services, such programs and services will be provided if a student meets the requirements for special education. Specialized instruction at the Discovery Academy and Virtual Academy programs will be done in-person at either our middle or high school buildings. Part of the IEP process includes the determination of appropriate aids, supplementary services, accommodations, and modifications for success in general education. At the elementary level approximately 54 students receive Elementary Resource Room programming; fifty-eight secondary students receive Secondary Resource Room programming.

Ancillary services are available for students who qualify, these services may include speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Approximately



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148 students receive speech and language services from Berrien Springs speech and language pathologists. Fifty-five students receive OT and/or PT services from Berrien RESA OT/PTs.

### **B. Center-Based Special Education Programs**

Berrien Springs hosts several center-based programs for Berrien County RESA. These programs are housed in Berrien Springs and operated by Berrien Springs Public Schools. The funding comes through federal, state and Berrien RESA sources. Many of the students in these programs are not residents of Berrien Springs, but are able to take advantage of these center programs through the IEP (Individual Educational Program) process. Transportation to and from Berrien Springs is provided through the local district. These programs include:

#### **1. Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) Classrooms, Teacher Consultant Services, Audiological Services:**

Students with hearing impairments have been part of Berrien Springs Public Schools for approximately 50 years. Cass County contracts services through Berrien RESA allowing students to enroll from both Cass and Berrien counties. Babies are frequently identified at birth and start receiving intervention services at a very early age with teachers seeing families in their homes. Classroom services are available for pre-school through high school. These students may also participate in general education classes. Approximately 25 Berrien and Cass County students receive direct services in this program, five (5) students being residents of Berrien Springs.

Many students who are Deaf or hard of hearing function very well in their home district classrooms while receiving indirect assistance from a teacher consultant and/or audiologist for equipment purposes. Approximately 80 children receive equipment services (IEP and 504), including four (4) students from Berrien Springs.

Two audiologists provide audiological services and equipment management for students with identified hearing losses. They also provide diagnostic information for children with diagnosed, fluctuating, suspected or possible hearing losses. They work with physicians, the Health Department, families, Build up Michigan, Early On, and Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) to diagnose children as soon as possible and get amplification and intervention started. The audiologists work with over 500 students each year.



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## **2. Speech-Language Impaired Pre-school:**

Students in the SLI preschool room receive instruction from a highly qualified teacher having endorsements in Elementary Education, speech and language impairments, and who is also a licensed speech and language pathologist. A maximum of 18 students ages three to six years of age must meet specific requirements to be considered for this county-based program. To qualify, students must demonstrate severe or moderate-to-severe delays in at least two areas of speech and language. During the 2022-23 school year, four (4) Berrien Springs resident students are enrolled in this classroom. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of their local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

## **3. Middle School Mildly Cognitively Impaired Classrooms:**

The district operates two county-wide classrooms at Berrien Springs Middle School for students functioning with mild cognitive impairments. The program is run on a thematic basis, incorporating reading, writing, vocabulary with social studies and science topics, following the Extended Grade Level Content Expectations from Michigan Department of Education. Up to 36 students (from throughout the county) can be provided special education programming in these MICI rooms. In 2022-23, eight (8) students considered to be Berrien Springs resident students are IEP placed in these rooms. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

## **4. High School Mildly Cognitively Impaired Classroom:**

A county-wide classroom for students functioning with a mild cognitive impairment is housed within the high school and taught by a teacher of the cognitively impaired. The students work through a series of objectives that are linked to the Extended Grade Level Content Expectations and daily living skills for transition to post-secondary goals. Students also receive instruction through the use of the Life Centered Curriculum and earn a Seal of Employability. This program includes some pre-vocational and vocational experiences. Since the focus is not on the Michigan Merit Curriculum required for a high school diploma in Michigan, the students receive a certificate of completion. They participate in the high school graduation ceremony. Six (6) students from Berrien Springs are in the High School MICI



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classroom in 2022-23. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

### **C. Ancillary Services:**

Ancillary services are available for students who qualify. These services may include speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or consultation from service providers such as vision, orientation & mobility, or assistive technology consultants.

### **D. Other Programs:**

Build Up Michigan: Berrien Springs provides both evaluations and services for students ages three-five through the Build Up Michigan program. Evaluation plans determined for children through Build Up Michigan referrals are considered full and individual evaluations. Any programs/services offered are developed with the IEP planning team and evaluation team to meet the unique needs of each student.

### **E. Specialized Programs for Students Available Outside of Berrien Springs:**

Some students need programs that are not offered within the district. The IEP process is used to make this determination and to place these students in appropriate programs that offer the services necessary to meet their goals and objectives. Transportation is provided for these students.

These programs include:

#### **1. Blossomland Learning Center, Berrien Regional Education Service Agency, Berrien Springs, Michigan**

The purpose of Blossomland Learning Center is to provide services to students who have been diagnosed as moderately to severely cognitively impaired, up through age 26, who reside within the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency. The school assists students in preparing for entry into their respective communities. Eleven (11) Berrien Springs resident students are attending this program during the 2022-23 school year. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.





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## **2. Lighthouse Education Center, Berrien Regional Education Service Agency, St. Joseph, Michigan (including satellite locations)**

The Lighthouse Education Center program is operated as a therapeutic and educational program for students diagnosed as having an Emotional Impairment or Autism Spectrum Disorder up to age 26 and residing within the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency. These students may exhibit severe emotional difficulties or be students with significant challenges presented by autism spectrum disorder and require a specialized educational setting. During the 2022-23 school year, seven (7) Berrien Springs Public School District resident(s) attend these programs at Lighthouse and in their satellite classrooms throughout the county. These satellite classrooms include locations at Saint Joseph High School, The Center for Growth and Independence, and Howard Ellis Elementary.

## **3. Southside Program, Niles Community Schools, Niles, Michigan**

Niles operates center-based programs for low incidence special education students needing a full-time placement.

The program for the Emotionally Impaired includes students with severe emotional or behavioral problems. These students receive a very strict, highly structured program designed to change inappropriate behavior patterns and allow learning to take place. Expectations for performance are high with the goal being the student's successful readmission to their resident district. Classroom programs serve students ages 6 through 26. In the 2022-2023 school year there are two (2) students from Berrien Springs that attend this program. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

Students in the Pre-Vocational program or Cognitively Impaired programs have below average ability levels, making success in their local high schools extremely difficult. Often their low ability is compounded by a weak self-concept and inadequate social skills. Once at Southside, a few may pursue a diploma, but most will follow a curriculum designed to promote independent living. Classrooms are available to serve ages 16 through 25. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.



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#### **4. Elementary Mild Cognitively Impaired Classroom, Lakeshore Public Schools, Stevensville, Michigan**

Lakeshore Public Schools provide county-based programs for students with cognitive impairments in grades K-5. Students are placed in these programs through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff. In the 2022-23 school year, three (3) Berrien Springs resident students were placed in a classroom for students with mild cognitive impairments in Lakeshore (Stewart Elementary School).

Niles Community Schools also has an elementary program for cognitive impairments (K-2). There were no resident students placed in the classroom for students at Ballard Elementary in Niles in the 2022-23 school year.

#### **5. Juvenile Center, Berrien Springs, Michigan**

The juvenile center has programming for students with disabilities that are court placed, for an amount of time determined by a judge, with the goal being eventual re-integration into the resident district's educational system if deemed to be the least restrictive environment. Any students currently placed at the juvenile center are considered Berrien Springs residents during their placement.

#### **6. Early Childhood Special Education Program, Niles Community Schools, Niles, MI**

During the 2022-23 school year, seven (7) students from Berrien Springs attend Early Childhood Special Education programs at Northside in Niles, Michigan. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff. This half day preschool program serves students ages 3-6 and includes ancillary services such as speech/language, occupation, and physical therapy.





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## **IDENTIFY HOW TO ACCESS A COPY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM, A DESCRIPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCES FROM THE STATE'S MODEL.**

Berrien Springs has completely aligned their curriculum with the state's model curriculum, with no known variances. Common Core State Standards have been implemented, built on National Standards and adopted by the Michigan Department of Education, are available on the MDE website, <https://www.michigan.gov/mde> and are used as the basis for the curriculum at all levels. Curriculum Guides for elementary students are available upon request from the building principal. Middle and High School curriculum is available to parents and students in syllabi and curriculum guides published on the school website, school learning management system (LMS) and/or teacher web pages.

## **THE AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR ANY LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS**



### Grade Report

Grade 3

Term: Spring 2021-2022  
 District: Berrien Springs Public SD  
 School: Sylvester Elementary

Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms  
 Weeks of Instruction: 32 (Spring 2022)  
 Grouping: None  
 Small Group Display: No

Math: Math K-12

Summary	
Total Number of Students With Valid Growth Scores	107
Mean RIT Score	198.7
Standard Deviation	14.3
District Grade-Level Mean RIT	199.2
Students At or Above District Grade-Level Mean RIT	52
Grade-Level Mean RIT	201.1
Students At or Above Grade-Level Mean RIT	47

		Lo %ile < 21		LoAvg %ile 21-40		Avg %ile 41-60		HiAvg %ile 61-80		Hi %ile > 80		Mean RIT Score (+/- Smp Err)	Std Dev
Overall Performance		count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%		
Math: Math K-12		31	29%	17	16%	20	19%	26	24%	13	12%	197-199-200	14.3



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## Grade Report

### Grade 3

Term: Spring 2021-2022  
 District: Berrien Springs Public SD  
 School: Sylvester Elementary

Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
 Weeks of Instruction: 32 (Spring 2022)  
 Grouping: None  
 Small Group Display: No

#### Language Arts: Reading

Summary	
Total Number of Students With Valid Growth Scores	107
Mean RIT Score	197.3
Standard Deviation	16.4
District Grade-Level Mean RIT	198.2
Students At or Above District Grade-Level Mean RIT	56
Grade-Level Mean RIT	197.1
Students At or Above Grade-Level Mean RIT	57

	Lo %ile < 21		LoAvg %ile 21-40		Avg %ile 41-60		HiAvg %ile 61-80		Hi %ile > 80		Mean RIT Score (+/- Smp Err)	Std Dev
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%		
Overall Performance												
Language Arts: Reading	19	18%	19	18%	25	23%	20	19%	24	22%	196-197-199	16.4



## Grade Report

### Grade 4

Term: Spring 2021-2022  
 District: Berrien Springs Public SD  
 School: Sylvester Elementary

Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
 Weeks of Instruction: 32 (Spring 2022)  
 Grouping: None  
 Small Group Display: No

#### Math: Math K-12

Summary	
Total Number of Students With Valid Growth Scores	112
Mean RIT Score	204.7
Standard Deviation	15.8
District Grade-Level Mean RIT	205.3
Students At or Above District Grade-Level Mean RIT	60
Grade-Level Mean RIT	210.5
Students At or Above Grade-Level Mean RIT	47

	Lo %ile < 21		LoAvg %ile 21-40		Avg %ile 41-60		HiAvg %ile 61-80		Hi %ile > 80		Mean RIT Score (+/- Smp Err)	Std Dev
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%		
Overall Performance												
Math: Math K-12	31	28%	23	21%	26	23%	22	20%	10	9%	203-205-206	15.8



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## Grade Report

Grade 4

Term: Spring 2021-2022  
 District: Berrien Springs Public SD  
 School: Sylvester Elementary

Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
 Weeks of Instruction: 32 (Spring 2022)  
 Grouping: None  
 Small Group Display: No

### Language Arts: Reading

Summary	
Total Number of Students With Valid Growth Scores	111
Mean RIT Score	202.6
Standard Deviation	16.2
District Grade-Level Mean RIT	203.2
Students At or Above District Grade-Level Mean RIT	61
Grade-Level Mean RIT	204.8
Students At or Above Grade-Level Mean RIT	57

Overall Performance	Lo %ile < 21		LoAvg %ile 21-40		Avg %ile 41-60		HiAvg %ile 61-80		Hi %ile > 80		Mean RIT Score (+/- Smp Err)	Std Dev
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%		
Language Arts: Reading	24	22%	19	17%	28	25%	25	23%	15	14%	201-203-204	16.2



## Grade Report

Grade 5

Term: Spring 2021-2022  
 District: Berrien Springs Public SD  
 School: Sylvester Elementary

Norms Reference Data: 2020 Norms.  
 Weeks of Instruction: 32 (Spring 2022)  
 Grouping: None  
 Small Group Display: No

### Math: Math K-12

Summary	
Total Number of Students With Valid Growth Scores	110
Mean RIT Score	214.6
Standard Deviation	15.7
District Grade-Level Mean RIT	215.1
Students At or Above District Grade-Level Mean RIT	51
Grade-Level Mean RIT	218.7
Students At or Above Grade-Level Mean RIT	40

Overall Performance	Lo %ile < 21		LoAvg %ile 21-40		Avg %ile 41-60		HiAvg %ile 61-80		Hi %ile > 80		Mean RIT Score (+/- Smp Err)	Std Dev
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%		
Math: Math K-12	27	25%	28	25%	23	21%	24	22%	8	7%	213-215-216	15.7



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## **THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT- TEACHER CONFERENCES**

### Sylvester Elementary (Grades 3-5)

Year/# of Students	Fall Conf % of Attendance	Spring Conf % of Attendance
2021-22 (365)	79%	N/A
2020-21 (340)	83%*	N/A
2019-20 (397)	98%	N/A

*\* Due to the pandemic and mitigation measures all fall conferences were held remotely. Teachers made follow-up phone calls to all families who were unable to attend virtual conferences.*

Sylvester Elementary administration and staff believe that our school and district are both on the right track to providing 21<sup>st</sup> century programming and academic opportunities that will allow for all of our students to achieve success through various career pathways. As represented in our district profile, Berrien Springs is a district of choice because we are a district with choices. We will continue to ensure that our highly qualified staff emphasize teaching strategies that implement up-to-date technology as well as research based curriculum materials. If you require any additional information regarding Sylvester Elementary please feel free to contact me at [awilliams@homeoftheshamrocks.org](mailto:awilliams@homeoftheshamrocks.org).

Educationally Yours,

Mrs. Amy Flavin-Williams  
Sylvester Elementary Principal