



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)

---

## School Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2019-20 educational progress for the 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, building principal, for assistance.

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

For the 2019-20 school year, schools were identified using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has at least one underperforming student subgroup. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or has a graduation rate at or below 67%. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

Our school has not been identified using any of the above mentioned labels.

Sylvester Elementary is committed to continuous improvement. Through our school improvement process and analysis of state assessment data we have recognized areas of need in all core subjects. Presently Sylvester teaching staff have reverted back from departmentalizing to teaching all core subjects. We believe that one classroom teacher providing instruction in all core areas will allow for better cross curricular instruction and scheduling flexibility for remediation and extension as needed. We have also added a What I Need (W.I.N) daily intervention block four days a week for all grade levels. Teachers meet weekly in an extended Professional Learning Community (PLC) 70 minute block to collaborate on curriculum including scope and sequencing, planning differentiation, and common assessment.

### **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 three (3) of our school improvement plan. 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.

## **Special Education Services for Berrien Springs Public Schools**

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

Resident students (along with students accepted through the schools of choice process) may qualify, and also 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 Plan) to help assist the child progress within the general education setting.

Current special education programs include Elementary and Secondary Resource Rooms. Students follow a general education curriculum with the Common Core State Standards. In most Berrien Springs Public Schools, classroom instruction is provided by a general education teacher along with interactive co-teaching from a special education teacher. Students determined to need more direct instruction for needs outlined in their IEP may receive programming/services that pulls a student out of the general education classroom. Should a student at our Discovery Academy or Virtual programs have a need for Secondary Resource Room programming or services, such programs and services will be provided if a student meets the requirements for special education. Instruction at the Discovery Academy and Virtual programs will be done primarily through an online platform. Part of the IEP process includes the determination of appropriate aids, supplementary services, accommodations, and modifications for success in general education. Ancillary services are available for students who qualify. These services may include speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy.

### **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 Plan) process. Transportation to and from Berrien Springs is provided through the local district. These programs include:

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

Berrien Springs Public Schools provides center based programming for students under the eligibility of Deaf/Hard of Hearing. 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 part time in general education classes. Approximately 50 Berrien and Cass County students are served in this program, five (5) students being residents of the Berrien Springs Public Schools.

Many students with DHH eligibility function very well in their home district classrooms while receiving assistance from teacher consultants. Approximately 70 children receive teacher consultant services, 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* and *Early Hearing Detection and Intervention* to diagnose children as soon as possible and get amplification and intervention started. The audiologists work with over 500 students each year.

- **Speech-Language Impaired Pre-school:**

Students in the SLI preschool room receive instruction from a highly qualified teacher having an endorsement in Early Childhood Education and is also a licensed speech and language pathologist. A maximum of 18 students ages 3-6 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 2019-20 school year three (3) Berrien Springs resident students were enrolled in this classroom. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

- **Middle School Mildly Cognitively Impaired Classrooms:**

The district operates two county-wide classrooms at the Berrien Springs Middle School for students functioning with mild cognitive impairments. Teachers are certified in the area of Cognitively Impaired. 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 2019-20, four (4) students considered to be Berrien Springs resident students were 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.

- **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. 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 (5) students from Berrien Springs were in the High School MICI classroom in 2019-20. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

### **C. 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 programs that offer the services necessary to meet their goals and objectives. Transportation is provided for these students. These programs include:

#### **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 mentally 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. Thirteen (13) Berrien Springs Public School District resident students attended this program during the 2019-20 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.

#### **LIGHTHOUSE EDUCATION CENTER, BERRIEN REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY, ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN & JUVENILE CENTER, BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN.**

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. The juvenile center has programming for students with disabilities that are court placed for an amount of time determined by a judge. During the 2019-20 school year, five (5) Berrien Springs Public School District resident(s) attended these programs, with the goal being eventual re-integration into the resident district's educational system if deemed to be the least restrictive environment. Students are placed in the program through an Individual Educational Planning Committee composed of local district and Berrien RESA diagnostic and educational staff.

### **SOUTHSIDE PROGRAM. NILES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. NILES, MI**

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 former school. Classroom programs serve students ages 6 through 26. 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. During the 2019-20 school year, two (2) students from the Berrien Springs Public School District attended 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.

### **Other Programs**

Preschool Special Education Classrooms: In addition, four students from Berrien Springs attended Early Childhood Developmental Delay Classroom in Niles at Northside School. This half day preschool program serves students from ages 3-6.

Build Up Michigan and Project Find: Berrien RESA operates programs to provide information and services to families. Build Up Michigan focuses on children from birth to two years of age. During the 2019-20 school year, four (4) students from Berrien Springs attended 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.

Additionally, Niles School District and Lakeshore Public Schools provide county-based programs for students with cognitive and emotional impairments. 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 2019-20 school year one (1) Berrien Springs resident student was placed in a classroom for students with emotional impairments at Niles (Ballard School), three (3) students with cognitive impairments were placed at Niles (Howard School), and two (2) students with cognitive impairments were placed at Lakeshore (Stewart Elementary School).

### **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, [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov) and are used as the basis for the curriculum at all levels. Curriculum Guides for elementary students are available in the school offices. Middle and High School curriculum is available to parents and students in syllabi and curriculum guides published on the school website and teacher web pages.

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

Refer to the District Data Profile for results of DRA, MAP, NWEA, and other tests.

**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
2019-20 (393)	98%	N/A
2018-19 (404)	98%	N/A
2017-18 (389)	98%	N/A

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 emphasizes 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)

Sincerely,

Amy Williams