



# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DR. AMY M. BURCH



## UPDATES ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025

Every three years, school districts develop comprehensive plans to address critical aspects of education. Our current plan emphasizes academics, school culture/climate, and family engagement. The articles in this edition of InCommunity showcase our initiatives and progress in each of these key areas.

### **Academics**

Our Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles course has been recognized for its efforts in promoting diversity in computer science education. This acknowledgment reflects our dedication to providing equitable opportunities in STEM fields and preparing all students for success in an increasingly digital world.

In our elementary grades, fourth-grade students have embarked on an exciting scientific journey, piloting the new OpenSciEd curriculum. Through hands-on projects, such as building mini-golf courses to explore motion and energy transfer, and engineering functional arcade games from cardboard, students are engaging deeply with scientific principles. These activities not only foster critical thinking and collaboration but also make learning both engaging and relevant.

### **School Culture**

By hosting a dynamic professional learning event, educators engaged in collaborative and innovative practices, fostering a culture of continuous growth and improved educational experiences for students. Additionally, the "Hearts Across America" project at Moore Elementary School expanded students' understanding of geography and culture, highlighting the importance of community and global connections. Welcoming new educators to Brentwood Middle/High School further enriches our learning environment, bringing fresh perspectives and enthusiasm that benefit both students and staff. Collectively, these efforts contribute to a positive and inclusive school climate, promoting academic excellence and personal growth.

### **Community Engagement**

Brentwood High School's partnership with the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum enriches our community by providing students and faculty with access to reproductions of significant historical documents. These mobile exhibits, which are regularly updated to align with our curriculum, cover diverse fields such as literature, science, political history, and art. By integrating these primary sources into classroom instruction, we enhance educational experiences, deepen understanding of historical contexts, and foster a tangible connection to the past. This collaboration not only supports academic growth but also strengthens our community's appreciation for history and culture.

As we reflect on the articles highlighted in this edition, it's evident that our efforts in academics, school climate/culture, and community engagement are assisting us to achieve the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. Collectively, these endeavors contribute to our mission of preparing students to meet the challenges of the 21st century as ethical citizens.

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE RECOGNITION

Brentwood Borough High School's AP Computer Science Principles course, led by Mr. Christopher Pierce, has been recognized by the College Board for its efforts in promoting diversity in computer science education. The school is one of 843 institutions nationwide to receive this honor for increasing the number of female students taking the AP Exam or achieving passing scores.

Mr. Pierce has been instrumental in fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment, encouraging more female students to engage in computer science. His dedication to the program has resulted in consistently strong passing scores since the course was introduced at Brentwood.

"This national recognition is a tremendous achievement for our students, Mr. Pierce, and the entire Brentwood Borough School District," said Dr. Jason Olexa, High School Principal. "It reflects our commitment to providing equitable opportunities in STEM education and preparing students for success in an increasingly digital world."



The College Board's acknowledgment underscores the importance of broadening access to computer science education and ensuring that all students, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to excel in the field. Brentwood Borough High School remains committed to continuing this progress and inspiring future generations of students to explore the world of computer science.

## HEARTS ACROSS AMERICA...AND BEYOND

This is the second year that the 4th graders at Moore Elementary School have proudly participated in Hearts Across America. As part of their studies on the regions of the United States, this activity has become a wonderful way to connect students not only with other parts of the country but with the wider world as well.

The project has been an incredible success! The students have received cards from all 50 states and 11 different countries, showcasing the power of community and global connection. Some of the most exciting moments have come from hearing directly from former Moore students. For example, one card arrived all the way from Belgium, sent by a former Moore student who wanted to share their adventures abroad.



It's heartwarming to see how far-reaching this initiative has become, and it wouldn't have been possible without the amazing reach of social media. Through posts and shares by family and friends, the students'

efforts have caught the attention of people around the globe, making this a truly special learning experience that bridges geography, culture, and friendship.



## BRENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL ENTERS IN A PARTNERSHIP WITH KARPELES MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY MUSEUM

Brentwood High School would like to express their gratitude to Mr. Dominic Woods who is the Pittsburgh Director of the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum located at the building of the is located at 3021 Landis Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15204 (formerly Holy Innocents Church). The museum is open Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

Mr. Woods is a social studies teacher in the Pittsburgh Public School District. He also is a resident of Brentwood Borough. He and his wife Erika are the proud parents of four children who are Brentwood High School Alumni. Mr. Woods contacted school officials about placing a display of artifacts at Brentwood High School. Well, let's just say the rest is history!

The Karpeles Manuscript Library collection preserves more than a million historical documents in the categories of literature, science, religion, political history, exploration, music, and art.

David and Marsha Karpeles founded Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum in 1983 with the mission to share their love of history and learning, to inspire curiosity in others, and to promote education and

literacy (credit Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum website).

By sharing the writings of authors,

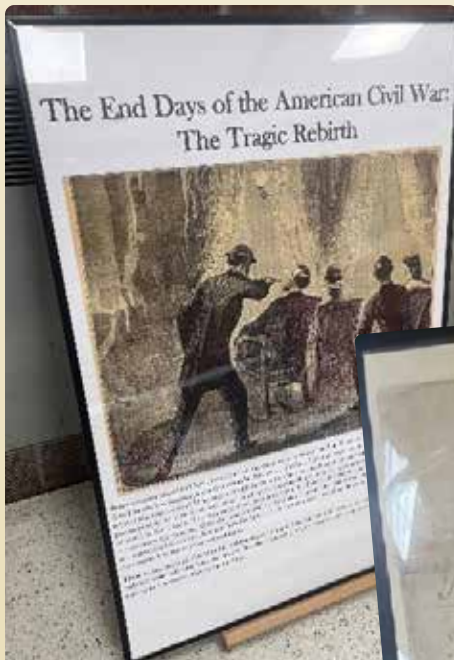


**Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum's Mobile Exhibit Program at Brentwood High School**

scientists, composers, philosophers, artists, sovereigns, leaders, and pioneers from all periods in history with the world, David and Marsha envisioned exposing future generations to the achievements of those who came before them so as to instill a sense of purpose and the courage to pursue their own dreams and goals without fear of failure, but rather with hope, pride, and fulfillment (credit Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum website).

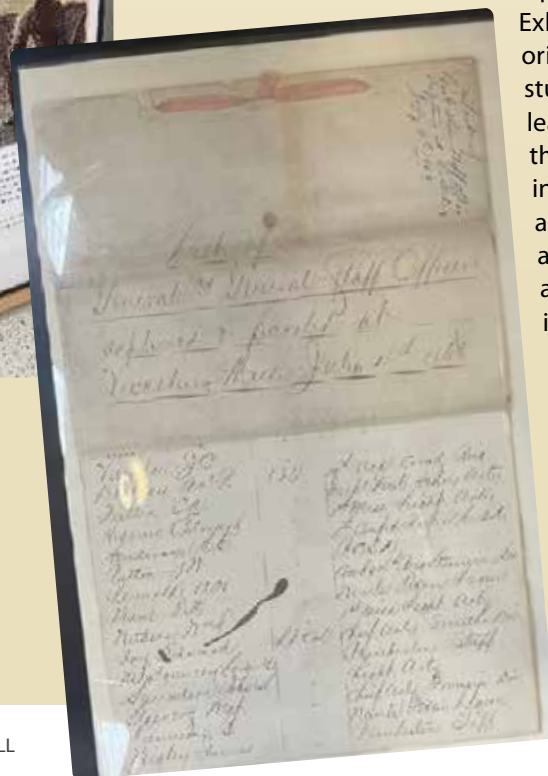
Brentwood High School is now home to a "Mobile Exhibit Program." The mobile display cases are changed out frequently to any of several topics relevant to the school's curriculum. The Mobile Exhibit covers categories such as literature, science, religion, political history,

exploration, music, and art. The Mobile Exhibit provide reproductions of the original manuscripts so that faculty and students can use them as part of their learning experience. Having access to these primary works is beneficial for instruction, establishing time period, and seeing the reproduction of the artifact that is being studied. Having access to these documents enhances instruction and learning. Furthermore, the College Board uses primary sources in many of their exams which give students an opportunity to practice their written responses with replica sources. The current display is themed from the American Civil War. Some items in the display are a telegram to Secretary of War



**Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum's Mobile Exhibit Program at Brentwood High School**

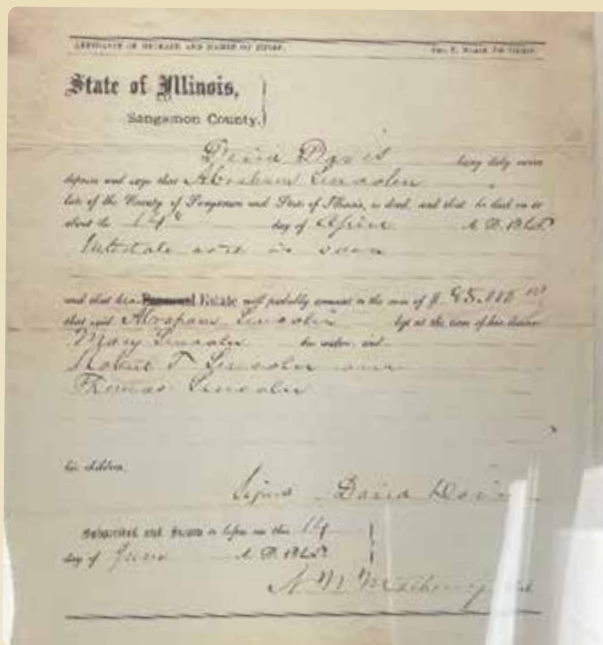
**Correspondence to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton of Grant's victory at Vicksburg. >**



Edwin Stanton of Grant's victory at Vicksburg, President Lincoln's Certificate of Death, the signed surrender from Appomattox Court House in Virginia, and much more. The display is well done and a welcome addition to our teaching and learning at Brentwood High School.

We are very grateful to enter this partnership with Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum. Mr. Woods has been an incredible ambassador of the program and a welcome partner with Brentwood High School. This program is a fantastic resource, and we are very pleased to be a part of this program. Please consider visiting the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum on Landis Street in Pittsburgh.

**Replica of President Abraham Lincoln's Death Certificate >**



## EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: A DAY OF INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION AT BRENTWOOD BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Educators from across the region gathered at Brentwood Borough Middle High School for an invigorating day of professional learning hosted by Agency By Design. The event brought together teachers, administrators, and thought leaders to foster collaboration, inspire creativity, and explore innovative teaching practices.

### A Warm Welcome to Learning

The day began with a warm reception in the school's library. Guests enjoyed a light breakfast and the opportunity to network with peers. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement as educators from diverse backgrounds exchanged ideas and insights.

Following breakfast, Mrs. Stephanie DeLuca, the district's Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development Coordinator, welcomed attendees alongside Middle School Principal Mr. Dave Radcliffe and High School Principal Dr. Jason Olexa. Their opening remarks set the stage for a day dedicated to curiosity, reflection, and community.

### Looking for Learning in the Wild

The morning session, "Looking for Learning in the Wild," led by Dr. Jason Olexa, was a highlight for many participants. This immersive experience took educators on a tour of the Brentwood Middle High School campus to observe and reflect on learning spaces and evidence of the student experience as it naturally unfolded; attendees explored how teaching and learning take shape in real-time.



After the tour, Dr. Peter Wardrip and Dr. Jeff Evancho facilitated a reflective debrief. The session encouraged educators to think critically about their observations and consider how to cultivate environments that support organic, student-centered learning. On this day, the real sense of community that can be felt throughout the campus and Brentwood came up several times throughout the experience.

### Lunch with a Purpose

Lunch was more than just a meal; it was an opportunity to connect with students. Mr. Dave Radcliffe moderated a panel featuring English Learners (EL) from the school, who shared their perspectives and experiences. Their stories offered valuable insights into the diverse needs and aspirations of Brentwood's student body, reminding educators of the power of empathy in teaching.

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### Designing for the Future

The afternoon focused on a design challenge where Mrs. Stephanie DeLuca and Mrs. Jennifer Hughes engaged participants in reimagining the student learning experience in a portion of the library. This group of educators previously participated in a design challenge in redesigning the library classroom and former computer lab space. On this day, they saw how Brentwood staff made those visions come to life and were challenged to generate ideas for the remainder of the library. They considered ideas about how the space could serve as a hub for student innovation and collaboration.

### Sharing and Reflecting

In the final session of the day, attendees participated in a "Lighting Share Out," where they highlighted learning experiences in their classrooms with a small group. Then,



everyone reflected on how the values shared in those experience popped up in unexpected places throughout the rest of the day

### Building a Stronger Community

Hosting events like the Agency By Design exemplifies the Brentwood Borough School District's commitment to fostering a culture of thinking, learning and continuous growth. By investing in their educators, they're ensuring that students receive the engaging, dynamic education they deserve.

As the District continues to embrace creative approaches to learning, the ripple effects will be felt not just in classrooms but throughout the broader community. Together, educators and students are shaping a brighter future, one idea at a time.

## BRENTWOOD MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES NEW FACULTY

The staff and students were excited to welcome two new teachers to Brentwood Middle/High School for the 2024-2025 school year. Abbey Bordone has joined the district as a high school mathematics teacher, while Erin Meckler is teaching 8th grade English/Language Arts. Both Ms. Bordone and Ms. Meckler had experience in other western PA districts before joining the staff at Brentwood. Each shared some of their thoughts as they navigate their first year in the Brentwood Borough School District.

### WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY AND WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

**Ms. Bordone:** I am originally from Pittsburgh, just about 20 minutes away from Brentwood. I've spent most

of my life in this area because of how fond I am of the city. I attended Brashear High School and later graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

**Ms. Meckler:** I attended Cumberland Valley High School in Mechanicsburg, PA, and received my bachelor's and master's degrees from the California University of Pennsylvania (now PennWest California).

### WHEN DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU WANTED TO BE A TEACHER?

**Ms. Bordone:** I've genuinely wanted to be a teacher since I was a child. I always loved learning math in school and would enjoy playing teacher, sharing what I was learning with both my friends and family. This early passion for teaching has stayed with me throughout my life and has guided me towards where I am now.

**Ms. Meckler:** I had many influential teachers who inspired me to be the same positive influence for the next generation.

### WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS DID YOU WORK IN BEFORE YOU CAME TO BRENTWOOD?

**Ms. Bordone:** Before coming to Brentwood, I spent a year teaching at Keystone Oaks High School. It was a fantastic opportunity to begin my teaching career, and I had the pleasure of meeting some wonderful colleagues during my time there.

**Ms. Meckler:** Previously, I worked in the Fox Chapel Area School District at Dorseyville Middle School for two years as a building substitute and one year as a long-term substitute.

### WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF TEACHING IN YOUR FIRST YEAR IN A NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT?

**Ms. Bordone:** The most challenging part of teaching in a new school district was quickly getting acquainted with the students and faculty. I started teaching after the school year had already begun and feared I might not be easily accepted. Although this was initially a challenge, both the staff and students were very welcoming upon my arrival, and I now feel like an official part of the district.

**Ms. Meckler:** The word "challenge" often has a negative connotation, but I have accepted it as a positive one. My challenge is managing diverse learners. While Brentwood is a close community, it represents over twenty countries. I strive to build rapport and differentiate learning for each individual.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PART OF TEACHING AT BRENTWOOD?

**Ms. Bordone:** So far, my favorite part about teaching at Brentwood has to be the relationships I'm building with the students and staff. This community is supportive, welcoming, and vibrant, making it a joy to come to work every day. The students bring lots of energy to the classroom and staff members are collaborative and always willing to lend a helping hand.

**Ms. Meckler:** The best thing about Brentwood is, hands down, the sense of community. It has been such a warm welcome.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

**Ms. Bordone:** Outside of school, I've been diving into some exciting home renovation projects and exploring the world of interior design. It's a creative outlet where I get to transform spaces into something amazing. Plus,



it's a great way to unwind and see the results of my hard work come to life!

**Ms. Meckler:** I am very close to my family, who live in the Pittsburgh area. I am also an avid reader and interested in hobbies like puzzles, music, and exercise.

### IF YOU WEREN'T A TEACHER, WHAT PROFESSION WOULD YOU CHOOSE AND WHY?

**Ms. Bordone:** I've been asked occasionally what career I would choose if I weren't a teacher. I've spent some time considering this question, but I always come back to the same conclusion: no other profession would be as fulfilling as teaching. The joy and satisfaction I get from inspiring and educating students is unmatched by any other career.

**Ms. Meckler:** Before deciding to become a teacher, I considered becoming a librarian. This profession involves being immersed in reading and being part of a community, both of which I knew I would want in my career.



## MOORE SCIENCE CHANGES, THE THIRD PART IN A SERIES

Since the fall issue we have been following the transition to the new science standards in our elementary schools. In this issue, our fourth-grade teacher describes her learning journey including working with Penn State University professors to represent our district at a national conference and bringing back a new resource to use with her students.

The 4th graders have embarked on an exciting scientific journey over the past few months, combining hands-on exploration, innovative problem-solving, and creativity. Their recent efforts focused on piloting the new OpenSciEd curriculum, designed to align with updated science standards and emphasize deeper understanding through real-world applications.

In November, Miss Downey attended the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) Conference in New Orleans alongside representatives from Penn State University. The conference was full of inspiration, and Miss Downey returned brimming with new ideas. One standout session demonstrated how LEGOs could be seamlessly integrated into science instruction, sparking her enthusiasm to bring this approach into her classroom.

The students explored motion and energy transfer as part of their science curriculum. With LEGOs as their tools, they demonstrated energy transfer in creative and meaningful ways. They built a mini-golf course to visualize the effects of motion and collision and engineered a ramp to show how energy transfer could enable someone in a wheelchair to bowl. This hands-

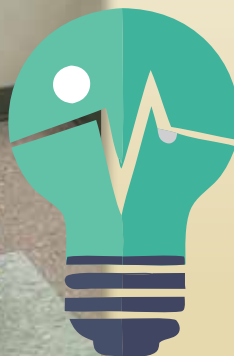


on approach helped solidify key concepts while fostering critical thinking and collaboration.

December brought an exciting engineering challenge: creating a fully functional arcade out of cardboard, dubbed the "Reindeer Games." The students applied the engineering design process to brainstorm, prototype, and refine their games, transforming simple materials into interactive experiences. The arcade featured a wide variety of games, including basketball, bowling, football, foosball, skeeball, and many others. Each design reflected the students' creativity and problem-solving skills, and the 1st graders were thrilled to test out the finished products.

These projects highlighted the integration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in ways that made learning both engaging and relevant. By blending inquiry-based learning with practical application, the 4th graders not only deepened their understanding of scientific principles but also discovered the joy of innovation.

It has truly been an adventurous and inspiring season of science learning in the classroom, filled with exploration, discovery, and a shared sense of accomplishment.





**We are so proud of our  
Winter Senior Athletes!  
Best wishes for the future.**

Photo Credit Mr. Jeff Healy

## Basketball

**Boys:** Joe Klemm, Colton Rosing, Forrest Betz,  
Aidne Barker and Brett Barker

**Girls:** Paige Boehm, Ay'Mary Herny and Jessi Yee



**Girls:** Left to Right

**Olivia Witt  
Dakota Billy  
Karina Pfeil  
Sarah Schruben  
Makenzie Huber**



**Boys:** Left to Right

**Donato Zarra  
Evan Ford  
Zachary Vickless  
Elliot Cramer  
Ashton Petitt- Not shown**

## Senior Swimmers