



Brentwood Borough School District



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DR. AMY M. BURCH

In this edition of In Brentwood-Baldwin-Whitehall, we are focused on recommitting to in-person instruction, updating the district Comprehensive Plan, and planning for a new elementary school.

Students in grades K-12 returned to in-person instruction for the 2022-2023 school year. All activities and athletics resumed a traditional schedule. Our Health and Safety plan which is located on the COVID-19 page of the district website remains in effect and will be updated at least every six months.

During the months of November and December, opportunities to engage in our Comprehensive Planning process will be advertised through email and Skylert notifications. A draft of the plan will also be posted on the district website in late January or early February of 2023 for

a minimum of 28 days. The public is invited to provide feedback on the plan during this time.

The Board of School Directors and the administration continue to meet with Brentwood Borough Council, Brentwood Borough officials, and architects from HHSDR to design a new elementary school. The school will house students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade and will be located on the at the former St. Sylvester school and convent properties. The Brentwood Borough Council passed the necessary ordinance changes to permit the new elementary building and the district is working with the Diocese to subdivide the land. After these steps are completed, the district will move to purchase the land for development.

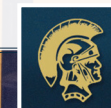


BACK, AND BETTER THAN EVER



The 2022-2023 school year has been off to a strong start in the Brentwood Borough School District. Coming out the COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge where many student activities did not look the same as, shall we say "normal." During the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school year there were gathering restrictions, mask requirements, and ticket restrictions to events. Fortunately, this school year was met with many of these restrictions being reduced or eliminated altogether. The students and teachers were excited for an opportunity to "get back to normal."

In this month's, cover story we celebrate our students who have endured a host of changes throughout their school experience. For the first time in two years, our students are back and engaged in the activities that they love without any restrictions or limitations. Our school year returned with masks being completely optional. We have no abbreviated or modified schedule for classes. Our fall sports teams have fully resumed, our clubs and activities are underway, internships and job shadowing have restarted, and field and educational trips have been reinstated. This year, finally feels like a "normal" school year. We are so happy to celebrate our students at Brentwood Middle-High School who have been able to return to the sports, clubs, activities and student life that they enjoy so much.



BRENTWOOD MEASURES CLIMATE CHANGE

The Brentwood Borough School District is currently in the process of developing its Comprehensive Plan addressing strengths, accomplishments, and areas in need of improvement over the next few years. As part of this process, the district is taking advantage of a tool developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education- The PA School Climate Survey.

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life, and is based on patterns of student, parent, and staff experiences and perceptions of school life. It also reflects norms, goals, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. Every district strives to promote safe, supportive learning environments that nurture social and emotional, civic, and academic growth for all students.

School Climate surveys are intended to provide school teams with data to support improvement efforts. The surveys yield an overall school climate score and scores in



three domains which have been shown to play a role in student learning and development. There are three different school climate surveys that the district will be administering over the next few months: a survey for students, a survey for staff, and a survey for families/caregivers. The student survey has three versions: elementary, middle, and high school. Although the surveys remain anonymous and cannot be linked back to individuals, it has been designed to allow schools to look at how different subgroups of students are experiencing the school learning environment.

This information can be useful for educators who are using multiple data sources to identify and address inequities in their schools. We are hoping that as many students, staff, and families take this opportunity to answer these surveys so we can make sure that all stakeholders are represented and all strengths and areas of improvement are identified so the district's future path to a safe and supportive environment is established.

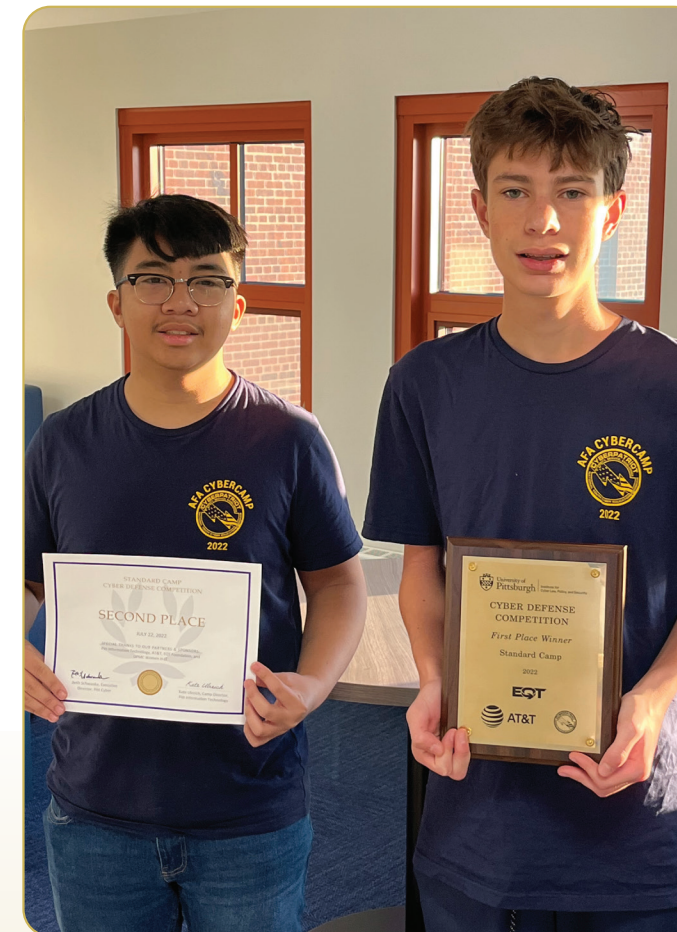


DISTRICT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY

The Brentwood Borough School District has applied for a \$235,862.00 grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). The primary purpose of 2022-23 School Mental Health & Safety and Security grant is to provide support for mental health initiatives and physical school security enhancements. The district completed rubrics which were designed to measure the district's current levels of safety and security-related equipment, trainings, policies, programs and activities into a tiered system. These tiered guides served as a resource for the district to determine the level of need and identify areas for further improvement. The overarching goal of the School Safety and Security Grant Program is to improve the safety and well-being of Pennsylvania's students through investments in physical security, behavioral and mental health, and school climate approaches.

The district will utilize these funds to increase internal capacity to address student issues involving mental and behavioral health as well as to enhance the physical safety of all school properties by competitively recruiting school police/security officers and enhancing safety equipment. Other grant funds will be utilized to increase mental health and counseling services for students, including costs associated with the training and compensation of mental health staff or expanding contracts with mental health providers that provide support to students in a school setting.

BRENTWOOD STUDENTS EARN TOP HONORS AT CYBER SECURITY CAMP



Annually, the University of Pittsburgh partners with Air Force Association and other companies and organizations across the country to host the Air Force Association Cyber Camp. High school students from the Greater Pittsburgh area are welcome to learn skills, cyber security principles, skills and explore possible future career opportunities.

Two Brentwood students Brett Barker and Juzhar Harry were attendees at this year's camp. Both students spent five days at the University of Pittsburgh where they were taught a range of technical skill levels, including introductory digital literacy, systems security, and cyber ethics.

Brett and Juzhar learned skills like cyber hygiene in the systems of Windows, Ubuntu, and Linux. The camp concludes with a coemption, based on the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, where students reviewed, monitored, and corrected network errors that exposed the fictional organization to cyber threats. Both young men worked in Windows and in Linux systems as part of the competition. For every threat that was addressed the students earned points toward their total.

Brentwood High School student Brett Barker finished in first place in the competition. Juzhar Harry, a fellow Brentwood High School student, finished in second place. We are very proud of both young men for taking advantage of the camp. They learned skills and made connections with cyber professionals that will assist them in their future.

REIMAGINING HIGH SCHOOL

What can we do to make the high school experience more meaningful for our students? What should the portrait of a graduate look like? These are the questions that were asked by The School Superintendents Association. School and educational reform is not a new topic, but COVID made it possible to push past asking the question to actionable steps.

Brentwood Borough School District Superintendent, Dr. Amy Burch in cooperation with colleagues from Baldwin-Whitehall, Butler, Crawford County, Deer Lakes, Hampton, Keystone Oaks, Northgate, and South Fayette are Reimagining High School. In collaboration with Dr. Thomas Ralston, former superintendent in the Avonworth School District, and a professor at the University of Pittsburgh are asking what can be changed to make high school more meaningful and engaging for our students while making sure students are being prepared for life beyond high school.

While the superintendents were the ones to pose the questions, it remains the role of the high school principal and staff to implement programming that answers the questions. Meetings began in September at South Fayette High School and will continue monthly with each school district hosting a session. The cohort will also interact with school districts across the country who are also engaging in the idea of reimagining high school. The meeting was met with enthusiasm and a commitment for the schools to work together, share ideas, and plan meaningful steps that can be taken back to each school respectively to make improvements. A field trip to the Hawkin School in Ohio and a meeting with the Head of School, Scott Looney will add to the conversation of what the portrait of a graduate looks like.

TEAM BUILDING AT LUTHERLYN

The 8th grade students at Brentwood Middle School participated in a team building field trip at Camp Lutherlyn in Butler, PA. The 8th grade teachers have taken the students on this trip for almost 10 years. The program consists of physical and mental challenges that force the students to work collaboratively, problem solve, and consider multiple perspectives before making decisions. Students are broken into groups of 15-20 and each group works alongside one of the 8th grade teachers to tackle a set of challenges, which this year included activities such as a transporting a bucket of water and the entire team across a canyon and finding a way to balance the entire group on a platform with a fulcrum. For each challenge, the students must follow the camp's four expectations: Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Focused.

Each year, the Lutherlyn trip serves as great way for the students to get to know each other better and provides an opportunity for students to work with others with whom they usually may not interact. This is especially true with this year's group of 8th grade students. Almost one-third of the current 8th grade class joined the Brentwood School District from other places at some point after 5th grade. By learning to work together to solve challenges and relying on each other's ideas, the students gained a respect for the talents that each of their peers demonstrated. The Lutherlyn trip is always a great way to kick-off the new school year!



ELROY KINDERGARTEN CLASS PET

This year, the kindergarten classes at Elroy are participating in the Adopt-A-Cow Program. Talk about an exciting class pet! No worries though, our cow will remain at the host farm, which is Walmoore Holsteins in Cochranville, PA. Students and staff were introduced to our calf in October. The cow will continue to live on the farm with the host farmer, but Elroy will receive monthly updates in the form of reports, pictures, and videos. Also, included will be lessons and activities related to her growth and how she is cared for on the farm. We are excited to follow her journey while learning more about dairy farming.



SAVE THE DATE!

Miss Douglas, Mr. McKinney, and Mrs. Graff are preparing students for the up-coming holiday concert. Music has been selected and students will soon be singing songs to prepare for the first school concert of the year. Mrs. Graff is selecting art projects that will coordinate with the wintery theme of the show. Families are invited to attend on Moore's holiday concert on Monday, December 19, 2022 and Elroy's show on Tuesday, December 20, 2022. As we approach the concert dates, more information will be shared with families.



RESHAPING MATH INSTRUCTION IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH FIFTH GRADES

This year, the Brentwood Borough School District is implementing the Illustrative Mathematics program at the K-5 level. This problem-based curriculum provides elementary students the opportunity to engage in rigorous math challenges. We are very excited about the opportunity to implement a math program that is more closely aligned with the math practices in the PA Core and the training in mathematics that teachers at the district have been receiving for the past several years.

What does this change mean for students and families?

Students will spend more time in class talking about math problems and engaging in productive struggle to solve those problems, where they can bring their ideas to the table about math concepts. Students learn math by engaging with math. This means they are learning concepts and procedures while engaging in the mathematical practices. These math practices include:

- Making sense of problems
- Reasoning abstractly and quantitatively
- Making arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others
- Modeling with mathematics
- Making appropriate use of tools
- Attending to precision in their use of language
- Looking for and making use of structure
- Expressing regularity in repeated reasoning

Through this process, teachers act as facilitators, to help push student thinking and craft discussions to help students understand the math concepts they are working with. This allows learners to internalize solutions and develop a conceptual understanding. Additionally, through frequent collaboration with their peers, students grow in their ability to communicate their thinking.

This type of math instruction may look different than what parents and caregivers experienced in school and it may be frustrating at times, especially as students are getting started. Over time, students will gain the skills and confidence they need and will be able to depend on these things in their futures.

Here are some ideas for encouraging your student from the Illustrative Mathematics program:

- If you're not sure how to get started on a problem, that's okay! What can you try? Could you draw a picture or diagram? Could you make a guess? Could you describe an answer that's definitely wrong?
- If you're feeling stuck, write down what you notice and what you wonder, or a question you have, and then share that when it's time to work with others or discuss.
- Your job when working on problems in this class is to come up with ideas and share them. You don't have to be right or confident at first but sharing your thinking will help everyone learn. If that feels hard or scary, it's okay to say, "This is just an idea . . ." or "I'm not really sure but I think . . ."
- Whether you're feeling stuck or feeling confident with the material, listen to your classmates and ask them about their ideas. One way that learning happens is by comparing your ideas to other people's ideas.



SCHOOL-WIDE POSTIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM AT ELROY ELEMENTARY

At Elroy Elementary we are Safe, Respectful and Responsible. We are excited about the implementation of our school-wide positive behavior intervention and support system (PBIS). PBIS is an evidenced-based practice that is used by schools to improve school culture and student behavior, while fostering a safe environment for learning. A vital piece of PBIS is focusing more positive behaviors and less on negative behaviors.

The entire Elroy staff is participating in student recognition which provides consistency throughout the school. With our school-wide positive behavior support system all teachers, administrators, and staff can support the growth and development of our students through acknowledgement of successes.

PBIS creates schools where ALL students are successful.

Why a School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System?

PBIS Establishes a Positive School Culture and Climate

With the implementation of PBIS, we will engage our school-wide community to work together to create a positive school culture and establish a climate where EVERYONE feels welcome and seen. Research shows that when schools implement PBIS, all staff, students and

families see the school's climate in a more positive manner.

PBIS Increases Student Engagement and Instructional Time

By setting our school's clear expectations of Being Safe, Being Responsible and Being Respectful and consistently acknowledging students for doing well, research has shown that students are more likely to spend time in the classroom learning and are more engaged in their instruction.

PBIS Encourages Students to Play an Important Role in their Education

By implementing PBIS into our school we are teaching students the skills that help create the environment that they want to see. Research has shown that schools that utilize PBIS have less unwanted behaviors and increased levels of positive, prosocial behaviors and emotion regulation.

PBIS Reduces Racial Inequities in Discipline

Equitable outcomes for all students are embedded into the foundation of PBIS implementation. By ensuring that equity is built into the framework of PBIS, research shows that there is significant decrease in racial disparities when it comes to discipline practices and office referrals.

PBIS Reduces Teacher Burnout

During a time when teacher shortage and burn out is on the forefront, having safe, predictable, and consistent schools are good for everyone. Teachers that work in schools where PBIS is implemented are shown to feel less emotionally exhausted, more connected to their students, an increased sense of accomplishment and feel more capable in their abilities.

PBIS Makes All Other Practices Better

PBIS allows for a system of selecting, implementing, and sustaining research-based practices. Using data and answering questions become natural. The commitment from all staff in implementing PBIS will allow us to sustain our school-based practices and ensure that all students are receiving the education they need and deserve,

Reference:
Center on PBIS. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.pbis.org/>



REESTABLISHING LEARNING ROUTINES

After the excitement of back to school settles down, families begin to reestablish learning routines. In order to ensure that you are supporting your child in their education you can, check their folders, connect with their teachers, and monitor their classes in Canvas.

In the evenings make it a habit to clean out your student's folder. Not only does the folder contain school work but you will also find notes from the teacher, PTA information, and most teachers also include a study guide for the week. Going through the folders also helps to keep the child organized and you can discuss their performance. If you need to communicate with the teacher or submit an excuse, you can put it in the folder and ask your child to give it to their teacher the next day.

Another great way to communicate with the teachers is through ClassDojo. ClassDojo is an app that you can download to your phone or a website that you can access through your preferred browser. Teachers will share classroom information such as up-coming tests, special events, and school reminders. Dojo also has a messaging section which is a great way to send a quick communication to the

teacher if you have a question or need to let them know important information.

If you want to check on what your student is learning or to monitor their progress, you can create a Canvas Observer account. An observer account allows families to see students' assignments, projects, grades, and instructional topics. Creating an account is easy; step-by-step directions can be found on the district's website under the "parents" tab. The parents tab also contains a quick guide to get you started in canvas. This will help you navigate canvas so you can keep tabs on what your students are learning and the progress they are making in school.

Some important steps to supporting your child's learning include checking folders, using Class Dojo, and creating Canvas observer accounts. Those tools will help you communicate with the school and track the progress of your learners. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the teacher or the office if you need additional information or support. We want to support our families as well as our students to make the elementary experience positive and productive for everyone.

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE TEACHERS ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TOWARDS NEW SCIENCE STANDARDS

A group of elementary teachers from Brentwood Borough School District is participating in a long-term professional learning opportunity called CACESS: the Collaborative for Advancing Children's Equitable Sensemaking in Science K-5. Through a collaboration across Brentwood Borough School District, South Fayette Township School District, Penn State University's department for science teaching and learning, and the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Math Science Collaborative, eighteen local elementary teachers and administrators are working together to begin to understand new science standards and instructional practices for the future.

In July 2022, the state of Pennsylvania formally adopted new Science, Technology and Engineering standards that closely align with the national Next Generation Science Standards. These new Pennsylvania standards will go into effect for all K-12 students in the 2025-2026 school year. The shift to these standards requires a shift in focus from students just learning about science content to students figuring out how science works in the world around them.

Our teachers engaged in a three-day professional learning experience where they explored the structure and expectations



of the new standards and experienced what this type of science learning feels like as a learner through explorations of sound and light waves as well as through the understanding of life-cycles by investigating mealworms. Then, teachers worked collaboratively across the two districts to design learning experiences that they could begin to try in their

classrooms this school year. As this group of teachers begins to try out these new practices, students will begin investigating content as scientists through a phenomenon-based approach. Our group will continue to come back together throughout the school year in order to support teachers in the development of these practices and the shifts to the new standards. In the future, the district will begin to train other elementary teachers as we continue to prepare for the upcoming changes at the state level.

This exciting partnership brings us the expertise of the elementary science educators at Penn State University, leaders in this area in the state of Pennsylvania. The goal of this project is not only to develop these skills to use in the classroom with our own students, but to help our teachers' become models for other elementary teachers across the state. We are excited by this opportunity to emerge as leaders in the field as Pennsylvania makes a significant shift in science teaching and learning.

#MOOREJOY

At the start of the 2022 – 2023 school year Dr. Burch reminded all of the teachers and staff members to see the joy in our jobs. If you ask teachers, why they went into education most will reply that it is because they love seeing the "joy on the faces" of children when they learn something. That moment or "spark" when a connection is made in someone's brain is often seen as a bright, beaming smile. It's the type of smile that comes after hard work and determination, the type of smile that conveys a level of pride and self-satisfaction, a smile that says, "I can do great things." This year at Moore, the staff is digging into the finding the joy in seeing students learn. Mrs. Dawn Ziegler worked with InkDivision to create #Moorejoy shirts to help the staff members celebrate teaching and learning. The staff may wear the t-shirts, but the smiles on the children's faces from learning will last a lifetime!



We wish all of our Fall Sports Seniors the best as they conclude their high school careers!



Band Seniors (pictured left to right) are as follows:

Front row: Rylee Sell, Jamie Kurtz, Bella Brunsell, Dakota Petrone, Candler Smith, Amara Kelly, Isabelle Tolchin
Back row: Makayla Freund, Tyler White, Xander Witt, Rachel Levandowski, Kenny Pfeil, Myranda Mackoff, Vanessa Wolfe, Aiden Sayre, Elle Tinker, Connor Tkacs

Cheerleading Seniors

(pictured left to right) are as follows:

Netanya Mulenga, Dakota Petrone, Jaden Pawloski, Karissa Palmer, Leyna Ho, Paige Wells, Donna Ramirez, Emily Johnson



Football Seniors (pictured left to right) are as follows:

Front row (kneeling): Tyrin Bowie, Jason Redlinger, Logan Kuehner, Jeff Beck, C.J. Fox
Back row (standing): Rob Lewandowski, A'vyair Johnson, Tavian Miller, Athan Patterson, Stephen Htoo, Anthony Herisko

Golf Seniors (pictured left to right) are as follows:

Ethan Wolf, Cody Schmitt, Kenny Pfeil



Soccer Seniors (pictured left to right) are as follows:

Front row (kneeling): Sangay Gurung, Stephen Htoo, Kareem Chater, Jefferson Lopez, Nathan Barker
Back row (standing): Aiden Sayre, Colin Hull, Talan Kammermeier, Carter Betz, Tyler White, Ring Noi
Missing from photo: Jimmy Lopez

Volleyball (pictured left to right) are as follows:

Donna Ramirez, Leyna Ho, Alivia Starek, Olivia Trent, Jenna Yee, Brianna Folino, Mackenzie Castiglione



Cross Country Seniors (pictured left to right) are as follows:

Mike Umbel, Nathan Tresatti, Tyler White, Colin Covey