



**Brentwood  
Borough  
School  
District**

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DR. AMY M. BURCH



In early February, Governor Wolf delivered his budget message to the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

The proposed \$32.9 billion budget plan includes a \$1 billion spending increase, or 3.1 percent, including increases for education as follows:

- \$100 million increase in Basic Education;
- \$40 million increase in Pre-K Counts and Head Start;
- \$20 million increase for Special Education;
- \$15 million increase for the State System of Higher Education; and
- \$10 million for Career and Technical Education

Governor Wolf has remained supportive of public education by his commitment to restore the billion dollar cut from public education budget, enacting a fair funding formula, supporting a 20% decrease in standardized testing, and establishing computer science standards.

These actions have led to:

- Increasing the number of children able to attend pre-kindergarten by nearly 50 percent.
- Increasing high school graduation rate to 86.1 percent, placing Pennsylvania above the national average.
- Increasing the number of career and technical education (CTE) students earning industry-recognized credentials by 32.2 percent and increased the number of credentials earned by students enrolled in CTE programs by 28.4 percent.

- Advancing Pennsylvania to third in the nation in the number of nationally-recognized STEM ecosystems and made the commonwealth the fifth largest producer of STEM graduates.
- Expanding enrollment in AP courses by 10 percent.

While we applaud Governor Wolf for his commitment to Pennsylvania's future, our schools continue to suffer from years of inadequate and inequitable state funding. The Campaign for Fair Funding has shared that "the state is simply not paying its fair share: states fund 47 percent of public school costs, on average, but Pennsylvania contributes just 37 percent, among the lowest shares in the country."

Because Pennsylvania's share is so low it has produced a significant shortfall in basic education funding and created a wide divide between rich and poor districts. The Campaign for Fair Funding continues by saying that "about \$3 billion in additional investment through the state's fair funding formula is needed to give schools the resources they need to educate all students to meet academic standards".

Sources: <http://fairfundingpa.org/2018/02/campaign-fair-education-funding-supports-governor-wolfs-k-12-education-budget-increase/>  
<https://www.governor.pa.gov/action-plan-for-pennsylvania/#schools>

## BRENTWOOD BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MESSAGE



Your school board has the privilege of governing our school district, responsible both for the children and to the residents. The board has to make important decisions in the next few years about the facilities and educational direction of our district. This process will require public discussions and consideration of many proposals, making choices for the citizens of our borough.

Our choices will be determined by fiscal restraints (we've already seen proposals that are clearly off the table), and the best uses of our resources. We have safety concerns that must be addressed; improvements that have a relatively quick payback for the investment; stabilization of the building's envelope (roofs, windows); improvements of the facilities for educational purposes; and updating the facilities for a 21st century learning environment. Our infrastructure is used by over 10% of the community, our children, and they need facilities that help them in their growth as future citizens and leaders of this and other communities.

Our schools have many amazing teachers; students involved in state, national, and world-wide competitions; a high percentage involved in extra-curricular activities; and all this in a small district. We have an outsized presence in the

educational community, and that is worth celebrating and spreading the word to the region.

We believe as citizens, we want a better future for our children and for them to succeed in our community and beyond. That has dividends for society, and a responsibility we all bear. Our choices will also have repercussions on the value of our properties, and whether our community is attractive to new residents. All citizens care about this, and understand the importance of investing in the future generations of Brentwood's children.

Brentwood has people from all walks of life, occupations, and backgrounds, and that's an advantage to our small borough. We know people care about each other and maintaining what is special about our little corner of Allegheny County.

We will keep all Brentwood residents informed of the options we are considering and concerns we are trying to address, and we invite you to participate by attending our monthly meetings and spreading the word about our school district. Let us know your thoughts and perceptions of what's going on in our schools.



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## Getting Ready for PSSA and Keystone Exams

Mrs. Klousnitzer

As we move toward spring, teachers and students across the state are preparing for the upcoming PSSA Assessments and Keystone Exams. The PSSA testing window will begin April 9, 2018 and conclude April 27, 2018. The Keystone Exam testing window will begin May 14, 2018 and conclude May 25, 2018.

Students will notice a bit of a difference this year in regard to the PSSA test design. The mathematics assessments in grades 3-8 have been reduced from 72 multiple choice questions to 52 multiple choice questions. By reducing the number of multiple choice questions, the open-ended tasks will now account for 23% of the test design which is an increase from the previous 17%. The English Language Arts assessments have also been redesigned. The ELA PSSA will no longer include a mode-specific writing prompt; however, students in grade 3 will still encounter two short answer questions, while students in grades 4-8 will complete a Text Dependent Analysis (TDA). The Text Dependent Analysis will account for 25% of the overall assessment. In addition, stand-alone multiple-choice questions have been reduced from 18 to 9 in grades 3-8. Like mathematics and English Language Arts, the science assessments in grades 4 and 8 have been reduced from 68 to 48 questions. Noted below are the specific exam dates set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

As we know, students who approach the PSSAs and Keystone Exams with confidence tend to perform better; therefore, having discussions with students about giving their best effort and persevering through the exam by rereading passages or checking answers will help them gain a positive and poised mindset.

Keystone Exams		Dates
Spring		May 14 – 25, 2018

  

PSSA Exams	Dates	Grades
English Language Arts	April 9 – 13, 2018	3 – 8
Mathematics	April 16 – 20, 2018	3 – 8
Science	April 23 – 27, 2018	4, 8

**BRENTWOOD CONTINUES TO FOCUS ON  
COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS**

## Steel Center Spotlight, Medium/Heavy Truck (Diesel Mechanics)

Mr. Olexa

One of the courses that is growing and is in high demand for jobs in Western Pennsylvania is the Medium/Heavy Truck (Diesel Mechanics) program of studies offered at Steel Center for Career and Technical Education. There has been an increase in the demand for diesel mechanics in the area with the increase in the drilling industry. There are also endless career options in the trucking/bussing industry and working with heavy equipment. Steel Center for Career and Technical Education describes this program as, "A program that prepares individuals to apply technical knowledge and skills to the specialized maintenance and repair of trucks, buses, and other commercial and industrial vehicles. This includes instruction in diesel engine mechanics, suspension and steering, brake systems, electrical and electronic systems, preventive maintenance inspections, drive trains, HVAC systems, and auxiliary equipment installation and repair." It is a very comprehensive program that gives students skills that transfer to jobs in the area.

One Brentwood High School senior, **Jared Lukens** has proved how this program can help to form career options and open doors for opportunities. Jared has been enrolled in the Medium/Heavy Truck (Diesel Mechanics) program for three years. He has a passion for diesel mechanics and he is very good at what he does, especially for being a high school senior. Jared just finished in first place in the Skills USA District Competition for Diesel Equipment Technology. He had to complete a compression test on a 4BT diesel engine, do a driveline axle repair, implement an engine diagnostic test and do a brake check. His performance was timed in all of these tests and evaluated by judges. His first place finish has earned him the right to compete in the state competition in Hershey, PA this spring.

Jared really enjoys the program at Steel Center for Career and Technical Education and feels that it has prepared him for his future career. He enjoys the custom projects that he has worked on like building a twelve valve Cummins motor, building a pulling truck and rock crawling motor. Jared stated that the Cummins 4BT motor that he has been working on is rated to push 500 horsepower. Jared strongly believes that the program



Photos by Scott Kane, Advertising and Design, Steel Center



curriculum and the hands on experience has prepared him for his career.

Jared also enlisted in the United States Army with the ambition of being a diesel mechanic in the military. He completed his basic training at the end of his junior year in the summer of 2017, and is currently serving in the reserves while he finishes high school. He has been accepted to the University of Northwestern Ohio for diesel mechanics. Jared said that the combination of Steel Center for Career and Technical Education, his enlistment in the US Army and his college option have opened doors for him as far as where and how he will use his education. He has the options of going into private industry or pursuing career options within the military. Either way Jared has a plan in place that will secure him employment and stability for his future. Jared is just one exemplary example of what career options are available at Steel Center for Career and Technical Education.



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HIGH SCHOOL



## Brentwood High School Musical Theatre to present “Willy Wonka” April 12-14, 2018

This year, Brentwood has chosen to present “Willy Wonka” as the annual spring musical. The year’s production involves over 60 students from the district, the largest production in the last decade. The cast is comprised of High School, Middle School, and this year, Elementary students as well.

The version of “Willy Wonka” that Brentwood will be performing is closely related to the movie version from 1971 starring Gene Wilder in the title role. Brentwood’s version strays from the original casting though, by having the roles of Charlie Bucket & Augustus Gloop played by girls, and the roles have been changed to females. The roll of Charlie Bucket will be played by **Zana Daghles**, who is representing Brentwood at the Region 1 PMEA Choral Festival in March, after successfully placing in the top 12 at District Chorus.

Willy Wonka is often a difficult production for smaller high schools to perform, since it requires a larger number of boys to fill the rolls. The Brentwood Musical program is fortunate that this year has seen a spike in males to be able to fill these roles. The show this year also includes 30 Oompa Loompa’s, comprised of Brentwood Middle and Elementary Students.

The other leads in this year’s production are: **Paul Schaap as Willy Wonka, Thomas Hayden as Grandpa Joe, Brianna Leddy as Grandma Josephine, Cassandra Rodriguez as Grandpa George, Madeline McBride as Grandma Georgina, Vanessa Kocher as Violet Beauregarde, Camryn Niespodzianski as Mrs. Beauregarde, Hannah Sayre as Veruca Salt, Gabe Schwerer as Mr. Salt, Hannah Zak as Augusta Gloop, Amanda Blazeyewski as Mrs. Gloop, David Keller as Mike Teavee, and Estrella Segura as Mrs. Teavee.**

**Tickets for “Willy Wonka” will go on sale to the public on March 13th. Ticket prices are \$9 for adults and \$6 for children, students, and seniors. Tickets may be purchased at [www.brentwoodmusical.org](http://www.brentwoodmusical.org)**

## High School Students explore college options at CCAC

By Mrs. Linda Capozzoli

Seniors from Brentwood High School attended the Mon Valley Diversity College Fair at CCAC South Campus. Students met with over 100 colleges and career related organizations from Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Seniors were also able to participate in seminars on financial aid and how to transition into college life.



## Interact Club

By Mr. Weaver

The Interact Club collected shoes and glasses for the people of Nicaragua. Shoes for Nicaragua is a project that collects slightly used shoes for school aged children. Hopeful Ways is an organization that collects glasses for the people of Nicaragua. Students collected 65 pairs of shoes and 141 pairs of glasses.

## TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

### Middle School Computer Club Visits the Apple Store

By Mrs. Fulmer and Mr. Pierce

The Apple Store in the South Hills Village Mall opened its doors to 18 Computer Club students ranging from 6-8 grades to explore two coding apps. The Computer Club led by Mr. Chris Pierce explored the apps Swift Playgrounds and Sphero Edu. The first activity the students completed was using the Swift Playgrounds App. In this app students used Swift commands to tell Byte, the character, to move and collect gems along the puzzles path. The students wrote commands and moved Byte across the puzzle world to collect the gems. Swift Playgrounds is an introductory app that teaches kids coding language in a fun and interactive way. The app requires no coding knowledge or experience and is free in the App Store. This app is available for iPad only. The second activity was using the Sphero Edu app where students had to take their coding skills to move



the robot around a predefined diagram on the store’s floor. Students had to calculate the distance, direction, and time before running their code to stay on the lines of the diagram. Sphero Edu is a toolset that includes coding with 21st century skills as well as incorporating STEAM activities while using a robot. This app is available in the Google Play and Apple Stores. This was a great opportunity for the Computer Club to have the exposure in coding and was enjoyed by all students.



## Brentwood Music Department to celebrate “Music In Our Schools Month”

By Mrs. Schneider

Music In Our Schools Month or “MIOSM” is the National Association for Music Educators (or NAfME)’s annual celebration during March which engages music educators, students, and communities from around the country in promoting the benefits of high quality music education programs in schools. Music teachers around the country celebrate MIOSM in many ways by offering special performances, lessons in music class, community sing-alongs and other activities to bring their music programs to the attention of administrators, parents, colleagues, and communities to display the positive benefits that school music brings to students of all ages.

This year, Brentwood music teachers Brittanie Schneider, Caitlyn Stratman, and Darren White are joining the celebration!

The Brentwood Music Department will be holding a “Music In Our Schools Month” Showcase at 7:00PM on March 22, 2018 in the High School Auditorium. The showcase will feature elementary, middle school, and high school performing groups, as well as student soloists, and a special presentation of student work being achieved with the Quaver Music Curriculum this year

The Brentwood School District has several students performing in various festivals hosted by the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA). PMEA District 1 offers several festivals at all levels for the best student musicians throughout southwestern Pennsylvania including Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties.



Aiden Sayre and Jacklyn Roesch

### Brentwood Students PMEA Festival

In March, **Jacklyn Roesch** (eighth grade/clarinet) and **Aiden Sayre** (seventh grade/percussion) will be separately attending the PMEA District 1 Junior High Band and PMEA District 1 Junior High Orchestra Festivals. Both festivals will be held at Mellon Middle School in Mount Lebanon.

In May, **Jennifer Bakowski** (sixth grade/flute) and **Amelia Foley** (fifth grade/percussion) will be attending the PMEA District 1 Elementary Band West Festival together. This festival accepts students from fourth to sixth grade, and will be held at South Fayette Middle School.



Amelia Foley

### PMEA Chorus

By Mr. White

**Zana Daghles**, Brentwood High School junior, participated in the PMEA District Chorus festival with over 300 students from 51 area high schools. They rehearsed & performed a glorious concert under the artful direction of esteemed guest conductor Dr. Franklin Gallo. Zana auditioned with 52 Soprano I singers. She was selected to be one of 12 in her section to move on to perform at the Regional level and represent the Brentwood High School Chorus under the direction of Brentwood’s choral director Mr. Darren White. Congratulations, Zana!



Zana Daghles

## Limiting the Screen Time for Students

By Mrs. Pagan

Like many other issues these days, the video gaming epidemic is very controversial. The line between a healthy amount of gaming and an excessive amount is easily blurred and crossed. As parents, it is prudent to find moderation in all things. Banning games entirely may be good for some households, but others will find that it may socially isolate their children and take away a source of joy. However, opening the door to the good, will also allow access to the bad including exposing the children's minds to the realm of violence, taking their free time away from doing other things, and putting them at risk for obesity. It is important that the parent monitors what kinds of games children are playing. Part of this job is to know the descriptors and the genres they represent. The Entertainment Software Rating Board has ratings that provide concerned parents information about the content of the games (ESRB, 2014). Efficient use of these ratings can help parents to make more informed choices for their children.

The following are the rating symbols currently in use, according to the ESRB Web site.

**Early Childhood (EC)** - Content suitable for children 3 years and older and contain no objectionable material.

**Everyone (E)** - Content suitable for persons ages 6 and older. The game may contain minimal violence and some "comic mischief."

**Teen (T)** - Content suitable for persons ages 13 and older. Content is more violent than (E) rating and contains mild or strong language, and/or suggestive themes.

**Mature (M)** - Content suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Content definitely has more mature sexual themes, intense violence and stronger language.

**Adults Only (AO)** - Content suitable only for adults and may contain graphic sex and/or violence. Adult Only products are not intended for persons under the age of 18.

**Rating Pending (RP)** - Game has been submitted to the ESRB and is awaiting a final rating.

The ESRB Website has more details about this rating system, as well as the "content descriptors" that are used in conjunction with the ratings on game packaging. The site is also useful for parents who want to search for the rating of a particular game. Another useful link for media ratings is <https://www.common SenseMedia.org/game-reviews>. One major concern linked to screen time is that it interferes with the needed sleep for children. For children, not getting enough sleep can be particularly problematic. Their bodies and minds are still growing and maturing and sleep is a crucial part of healthy development. Studies have shown that getting enough sleep improves kids' attention; behavior; emotional, mental and physical health; as well as their ability to learn and remember. In 2016, the AASM suggested the following sleep recommendations for kids for optimal health:

Infants 4 to 12 months old: 12 to 16 hours (including naps)  
Kids ages 1 to 2: 11 to 14 hours (including naps)  
Kids ages 3 to 5: 10 to 13 hours (including naps)  
Kids ages 6 to 12: 9 to 12 hours  
Kids ages 13 to 18: 8 to 10 hours

It is especially important for parents to take steps to make sure kids get enough sleep. If your child regularly fights going to bed or has trouble going to sleep, be sure to set up good bedtime routines and talk to your doctor if those measures still don't add up to enough zzz's.

### Animal Shelter Collection

By Mrs. Forsyth and Mrs. Sauro

The **Second Grade Classes** at Elroy Elementary decided to collect donations for a local animal shelter, the “Who Rescued Who Humane Rescue” in Clairton. They felt that helping out an animal shelter is a great way to assist animals in need. The students decided to “give up” their classroom gifts to each other and replace it with a gift for the animal shelter. The second graders made posters and asked each grade to donate to their cause. Many students at Elroy Elementary generously donated blankets, bones, cat treats, dog food, cat food, collars, bowls and lots of leashes to help the animals.





## Moore School Using Data to Plan for Student Achievement

By Mrs. Betler

If your child has come home recently and talked about their flex groups you may have wondered how the students are assigned to those groups or even what do they do during that time. In all of our grades we have been focusing on using data in order to help our students succeed. To that end, this school year we have expanded the use of the Measures of Academic Progress or MAP assessment from kindergarten through second grade to now include third through fifth grades at the elementary level.

The MAP assessment is given three times per year, at the beginning of the year, in January, and in April or early May in order to gauge student growth and achievement in reading and mathematics. The MAP tests in reading and in mathematics are reviewed together with the DIBELS (Dynamics Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) results, and classroom progress. Grade level teams of teachers along with the special education teachers, the reading specialist, the enrichment and English as a second language teacher meet to discuss all of the students and to work on a plan to meet their individual needs. Student

groups are created based off of the discussion and students are divided up between teachers to work on various skills during their flexible group time.

In some grades, the teachers regroup the students and then divide them between the grade level teachers. In other grades additional personnel may be used to further group the students. Depending on the skills being instructed groups may be working on phonics, comprehension, novel studies, math fact fluency or even geometry or probability. Another positive aspect of the flexible group time is that students get to interact with peers and teachers that they may not see outside of lunch or recess.

Although the way that the groups are divide may vary from grade to grade one thing is consistent- the use of data to identify student needs and to make plans for student achievement! The teachers will continue to review data and to make the necessary adjustments to the groupings so that every child receives instruction that builds upon their skills and helps them increase their achievement.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

#### It's All in the Transition

By Dr. Winiarski

In the area of special education, we talk about and plan for two big transitions in students' lives: for five-year-olds we plan for transition from Early Intervention/Preschool to Kindergarten (school-age programming), and for 17-18 year olds we plan for the transition from school to work or life after graduation.

Traditionally, Early Intervention has referred to services for youngsters from birth to age 5. There has been an increased focus on providing services to students who show signs and symptoms of disabilities at very young ages. Think about Early Intervention as a program which targets symptoms of a disability while the child is very young with the goal that these interventions will address any deficits and will lessen or even negate the need for more involved interventions when the child is older.

Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3 is the agency that works with students with disabilities under the age of 5. These Early Intervention programs evaluate young children and develop educational plans to address delays. These plans are similar to the IEPs used in school-age programs. Prior to registering their child for kindergarten, parents are invited to meet with Early Intervention staff and staff from the school where the child will be attending kindergarten. At this meeting information regarding the student's specific

challenges and needed supports are shared. This information is shared with the school district staff so the district can prepare for the student, review all information, conduct any evaluations that may be needed, and put in place the supports and services the student will be needing when he/she comes to kindergarten. This sharing of information and collaboration allows for a seamless system of supports that start on Day One of kindergarten and allow the student to begin their school career in a positive way.

Another big transition schools plan for in a student's life is the transition to life after high school. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to incorporate a set of coordinated goals and activities into student IEPs that address a student's desired post-school outcomes. IEPs for all students over age 14 contain goals and activities relative to what a student would like to do after high school in terms of their education, employment, and independent living.

It isn't enough to simply be aware that teenagers need guidance to transition successfully from high school to the next phase of young adulthood; concrete action steps must be taken to guide and prepare teens for college and/or a career, and for independent living. Without this guidance, students with disabilities often flounder in high school and beyond.

## Moore Celebrates 100 Days of School

By Mrs. Betler

The Kindergarten students at Moore School celebrated the 100th Day of School on February 1, by making a project or poster depicting 100 things. Pictured are students from Mrs. O'Neill's class - **Claire Fickley, Natalie Schruben, and Jack Sommer.**



### ATHLETICS



Boys' basketball seniors (second picture from top) are pictured from left to right as follows: Justin Moon, Austin Veatch, DeAngelo Brisco, Tanner Wells, Stephanos Mavroides, Michael Trent, Sullivan Conway, Evan Vickless



Diving seniors: Kylie Brunsell, Brendan Donnelly, Emily Vickless



Girls' basketball seniors (third picture from top) are pictured left to right as follows: Morgan Dryburgh, Taylor Kottler, Brittany Stewart, Marie Stofesky



Swimming seniors (second picture from top) are pictured left to right as follows: Front row - Julia Walter, Calista Dodson, Julie Boytim, Cyrene Kephalogianis, Rachel Milcic, Sarah Walas, Emily Vickless Back row - Hunter Consolmagno, Grant Davis, Michael Casey, Brendan Donnelly, Mason Woods. Missing from photo - Kylie Brunsell

Photos credited to Mr. Healy

### • Cafeteria Employees Wanted •

The Brentwood Borough School District has multiple cafeteria positions open at our Middle/High School. Earn money while your children attend school! For more information, please contact Dr. Burch or Mrs. Pesanka at 412-881-2227 ext. 2400 for more information.