



**Brentwood  
Borough  
School  
District**

# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DR. AMY M. BURCH



## Possibilities out of the Pandemic

Several renovation projects at the Middle High School have now been completed. The Middle-High School exterior structure including the roof, windows, doors, rebuilding of one wall, repointing masonry, lighting, electrical, concrete sidewalks, and parking lots were updated. These items had not been addressed since the early 1990s and outlived their life expectancy. The Elroy and Moore elementary buildings were scheduled to be renovated next, but the pandemic struck, and the world stopped. The elementary renovation plans were paused and out of the pandemic emerged a glorious opportunity to reimagine the configuration of District buildings.

**Instead of renovating the two, one hundred-year-old elementary buildings, would it be possible to consolidate and construct one new elementary building in the heart of the Borough for all kindergarten through fifth grade students?**

Prior to the closing of St. Sylvester School and Convent, there was no land available within Brentwood Borough to even consider consolidating and constructing a new building. The District considered consolidating into one building by adding on to one elementary and closing the other elementary building. An addition to Elroy Elementary was ruled out due

to the distance the students would be required to walk to school. Adding on to Moore elementary was rejected due to the lack of property available. This led to the Diocese and the District discussing the purchasing of the school and convent with the intention of consolidating the two elementary schools into one school building. The District hired HHS DR to complete a feasibility study on renovating the former St. Sylvester school and convent to consolidate the District buildings, but the renovation costs exceeded the total to build a new building. The discussion then turned to leveling the school and convent buildings and constructing one new elementary building for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

**What are the steps required to even consider such an option?**

After determining that the newly available land could potentially be used for a new elementary building the discussions evolved into what logistically would need to happen to accommodate a new building. In July of 2021 the Diocese and the District released a joint announcement that an agreement was reached in principle to purchase the former St. Sylvester school and the convent. While this purchase is not finalized the District continues to examine zoning changes, ordinance changes, and waivers needed to move forward with a



building project. The District also purchased 54 W Willock to be included in the overall school footprint.

In April 2022, the District applied to the Brentwood Borough Zoning Board to reclassify the parcels of 52 and 54 W Willock to be part of the Mixed Use Neighborhood District. A District letter was sent in May 2022 to all residents who live in properties on West Willock Road and Olanca Avenue inviting them to a planning meeting. The Borough scheduled two meetings to gather testimony pertaining to the rezoning of the properties. The first meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 20 at 7pm and will take place at the Borough Building located at 3735 Brownsville Road. The Borough is scheduled to consider the adopting an ordinance to ratify the proposal to rezone the properties on June 27, 2022.

**What will be done with the two existing elementary buildings?**

The Board of School Directors is adamant about utilizing the existing elementary buildings to add value to the Borough and community. Discussions began about selling the land and buildings to be used for additional housing that may include single family, townhomes, or luxury condominiums. The properties if/when sold, would be returned to the tax rolls.

**How would a new elementary project be funded?**

Act 70 of 2019 reauthorized the Commonwealth's PlanCon program which was designed to split the cost of renovations and construction between the state of Pennsylvania and the school district,

however, a moratorium remains in place which prohibits school districts from applying. If PlanCon were available, the District would apply and would be reimbursed for approximately 40% of the overall cost of the project. This means that on a 30 million dollar building project the district would be reimbursed 12 million dollars over time. Without the PlanCon program, school districts are responsible for the entire cost of renovations and construction. For planning purposes, the District is not expecting PlanCon to reopen for reimbursement.

PFM, Financial Advisors, LLC was hired three years ago to assist in providing critical information on the bond market and guides the District in making decisions about the best times to secure bonds to pay for renovations and construction. The District secured bonds for the necessary district capital improvements. The District has approximately five million dollars remaining before additional bonds would be required. With the addition of a new elementary building, the District expects to pay approximately 2.4 million dollars a year in debt service.

**What are the next steps in the process?**

The District must close on the properties with the Diocese. The Borough must grant the appropriate zoning changes, variances, and waivers to build a new elementary building. The District must secure the appropriate bonds to pay for the project. These are just a few of the steps that will seem to occur simultaneously. Additional updates will be released as the discussions and planning continues.





**Brentwood Borough School Board Members Advocate for our Students**

On April 25th, Brentwood Borough School Board members Mr. David Schaap and Mr. Dave Tinker participated in Public Education Advocacy Day in Harrisburg held by the Pennsylvania School Board Association and the Pennsylvania Superintendents Association. They, along with school board members and superintendents from across the commonwealth, met with legislators and legislative staff to discuss fair funding for our respective districts. Dr. Jessica Beham, PA State Representative for Brentwood met with Mr. Schaap and Mr. Tinker in her office. She shared her support for more equitable school funding to help our school district. They also met with the Senate Legislative Director, the policy and coordinating director for the 15 Democratic House Members from Allegheny County, and PA State Representative Lee James.

**Tinker Completes Innovation and Advocacy Cohort**



Last Fall, Brentwood Borough School Board Member Dave Tinker was selected in the inaugural class of the Pennsylvania School Board Association's Innovation and Advocacy Policy Institute. The program provided leadership trainings for newer school board members with various department leaders from the PA Department of Education and other departments and education-related organizations. "This training provided me with exposure to innovative programs being tested in other districts and through the state. It's been a terrific experience and I hope what I am able to bring back to our district will be helpful both in the short-term and long-term."



Brentwood Borough School District is continuing to accept registrations for kindergartners who will be the Class of 2035! Enrollment can be completed through the District's Online Registration Portal located on the district's website [www.bb-sd.com](http://www.bb-sd.com) under the REGISTRATION heading. The District has re-instated its screening process this year and are seeking input from parents regarding their child's development in the following areas: Social and Emotional, Language, Math, approaches to Learning, and Physical Development. Kindergarten teachers will also work directly with each newly enrolled kindergarten to screen their skills in these areas. This information is valuable for staff as they prepare for the

new school year. The screening information helps teachers learn about their students' strengths and weaknesses and helps them to adapt their instruction to meet the needs of all new learners.

The District will be operating the Kindergarten Camps again this year. Students attending Moore will be invited to participate in the kindergarten camp held August 1-5. Students attending Elroy will be invited to participate in kindergarten camp held on August 8-12. Newly enrolled families should keep a watch out for information surrounding kindergarten events and ideas for how to get students ready for the Fall.

**IMPORTANT CAFETERIA NEWS !!!**



The nationwide waiver program set in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic that offered free meals to all school age children is ending on June 30, 2022. For the 2022-2023 school year, the District will be returning to the traditional three-tiered system in which families pay for meals based on their income levels; free, reduced, or full price. To prepare your family for the upcoming year every family should apply for free and reduced benefits for meals starting on July 1, 2022, for the 2022-2023 school year. Meals are priced at \$1.55 for a paid breakfast, \$2.65 for a paid elementary lunch and \$2.90 for a paid secondary lunch.

Considering applying online starting July 1, 2022 at <https://www.schoolcafe.com/>

Brentwood families gathered for Community Connections, an evening to unplug with the family and reconnect with friends and neighbors. Thanks to a generous grant from a project called Parents as Allies, hosted in partnership with Kidsburgh, the Brookings Institute and the Grable Foundation we were able to host a wonderful evening for families. During the event, we gathered to enjoy meals from local businesses Rowdy BBQ, Big Guys Pizza, and special treats to-go from Love Made Edible. Each family participated in different activities throughout the evening while several of our Brentwood National Honor Society students and Brentwood Education Association members volunteered to help the event run smoothly.



**A time to build togetherness**

Throughout the evening, families participated in group team building activities geared towards breaking down barriers and getting to know one another again. These events included a collaborative version of "the floor is lava" where children and parents had to get from one side of the gym to the other on gymnastic mats without touching the floor. Additionally, teams worked together to build the tallest tower using foam blocks and completed a paper airplane challenge. People gathered to play board games and lawn games throughout the evening challenging their family members to things like giant checkers, Connect4 and ladder ball.



**Being sensible with Common Sense Media**

During the pandemic, many families found that their expectations around screen time changed dramatically. During this event, families worked together to use resources from Common Sense Media to consider what they value when it comes to television programming. Then, families rated

some of the tv they consume in their own homes, and finally, designed a character or storyboard for a show that best aligns with their family television values.

**Giving back to the community**

We know that many families have been impacted by the pandemic in a variety of different ways, and that hard times have fallen on many. Families created and decorated personal care packages for the Stewart Avenue Lutheran Church Food Bank to be distributed throughout the community as needed. Nearly 100 care packages were created.

This event would not have been possible without the efforts of the team who participated in the Kidsburgh Parents as Allies Design Sprint and Family Engagement learning opportunity with the Brentwood Borough School District. Moore Elementary Principal, Dr. Bonnie Betler and parents Erin Dusch and Jamie Mason were integral to the planning and execution of this evening. Balloons were provided by Keylee with a Twist.



BY AMY FERKETT



The joy and wonder of reading were celebrated by students, teachers, and staff at Elroy and Moore Elementary Schools during Read Across America Week. An annual event focusing on the importance of reading, Read Across America Week was started by the National Education Association, centering around Dr. Seuss' birthday, March 2nd. Dr. Seuss' prominent position in children's literature for decades



and the sheer enjoyment that his books bring to children (and adults) of all ages made his birthday the perfect time to highlight the importance of reading.

Many fun and valuable activities occurred throughout the week. Brentwood Superintendent, Dr. Burch did a live virtual reading of two stories for both elementary schools on Tuesday. Students and staff wore special themed clothing everyday, like Dress like Your Favorite Character, or Wacky Wednesday, honoring the uniqueness of Dr. Seuss' characters. Mrs. Kate Smeltz taught Suess-themed lessons during Media Literacy classes all week. At Elroy there were many virtual class readers from the community, and a Reading is Fun photo area for classes to show their love of reading. At Moore, Literacy Week was celebrated by having students participate in writing and illustrating what reading meant to them. Hopefully Read Across America week watered the seed of lifelong reading in our Brentwood Borough elementary students!

BUILDING LIFE-LONG READERS

BY SHANNON SCIULLI AND LYNNE ZIETAK

The Moore School staff plans many educational and fun events to build the love of reading in students. This year, some of those events included having older and younger students work together to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday and showcasing their hard efforts through a reading fair.

Fifth grade and kindergarten students came together to celebrate Read Across America Week. Fifth graders had the opportunity to share their love for reading with our school's youngest learners by reading a variety of Dr. Seuss books to them. Providing both groups of students with community building opportunities like these benefits them all. Kindergarten is exposed to a variety of reading skills modeled by fifth grade. Some of these skills include concepts of print including identifying the title of the book and how to turn the page, reading fluently, making predictions and connections, and much more. Our fifth-grade students also practice their social and emotional skills like patience and empathy as they work with younger students. It's amazing how one experience with books creates a powerful moment of connection for all involved. It's our hope to continue to provide opportunities like this for both groups of students as our year continues.

The students at Moore School showcased their hard work and creativity during the 4th and 5th grade Reading Fair. Mrs. Zietak and Mrs. Sciulli, the 4th and 5th grade E.L.A. teachers, planned this evening event to celebrate reading.

*"The Reading Fair isn't new to Moore and we've held in in past years on a much smaller scale. But this year, we wanted to make it an even bigger celebration that encouraged our students to be proud of what they're capable of and to give the community a chance to see all of the wonderful things that our students are doing here!" -Mrs. Zietak (4th grade E.L.A. teacher)*

Over 200 people came through the Moore School doors that night to view the students' reading projects that they had been working on throughout the months of March and April. For these projects, the 4th and 5th grade students chose their own interest-based novel and decorated a trifold board to display their novel's story elements. Many students added props and decorations to accompany the theme of their novel and really impressed the visitors with their originality and dedication!

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*"I liked that there were a lot of people at Reading Night looking at our work. I got to hang out with my friends after school and I liked that. The scavenger hunt was a lot of fun because I got to take a closer look at both 4th and 5th grade tri-fold boards." – Isaiah Whiting (5th grade student)*

Families were also invited to visit the bake sale, participate in a reading themed Bingo game, and engage in our school-wide scavenger hunt which took visitors through various rooms in the school to view the 72 student created projects.



*"As a new teacher to this school and community, I enjoyed working alongside Mrs. Zietak to create a community event that was centered around the students and their hard work. Connecting with the Brentwood community and becoming a part of it is important to me. The students worked hard using skills they learned from this year in class and applied that knowledge to their novels and projects. Watching them proudly share their work and celebrate their friend's work was a proud teacher moment. This was a wonderful event and I look forward to being a part of it for year to come!" – Mrs. Sciulli (5th grade E.L.A. teacher)*

Yovi's Food Truck, Millie's Ice Cream, and Pappy's Gourmet Popcorn also joined in on the event and greeted the community on the Moore School playground, while the Moore PTA provided trophies for students whose projects were anonymously voted on by faculty and staff.

*"It was nice to get out and see so many people at a school activity and support our students. We appreciate the effort to create this event!" –Lynda Mackoff (5th grade parent).*

## STUDENTS TRAVEL TO THE SHORE (NORTH SHORE)

A group of students with disabilities participated in travel training to help strengthen their ability to move around the community while utilizing public transportation. Dr. Ian Shortt, Brentwood Transition Coordinator, worked with the students to teach them how to read bus schedules, plan routes from one part of the city to another, and calculate fares. Mrs. Colleen Mertz and Mrs. Heather McElhone accompanied the group on the community outing. The group left Brentwood High School and took a Port Authority bus to downtown Pittsburgh where they transferred onto a subway and travelled to the Carnegie Science Center on the North Shore. The students were able to enjoy time interacting with the exhibits at the Science Center then went to the Highmark Sports Works Center where they learned about sports and the laws of science that control sports. Students were able to have lunch in the Science Center cafeteria and then headed back to school via Port Authority transit. This training and trip were made possible through a grant from Carnegie Science Center.

Samir Kadariya, senior at Brentwood High School, has been awarded a Gates Scholarship. He plans to use it when he attends Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the Fall of 2022 where he plans to study Applied Math. Samir was born in Nepal and is the son of Puspa and Sabitra Kadariya. Samir also lives with two younger siblings, Samip and Simon. Samir has maintained an excellent grade point average during his time at Brentwood High School. He is dual enrolled with Community College of Allegheny County and is participating in an internship with a start-up company, Each Day, where he is the data analyst intern. The company works with adolescents with ADHD. Samir has also participated in extracurriculars including soccer, and NHS. He has also volunteered with BCAP, the Bhutanese Community Association Of Pittsburgh.



The Gates Scholarship funds 300 students per year, starting with 2018, totaling 3,000 students over the life of the program. With the launch of this program in 2017, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has continued its long-standing commitment to helping outstanding minority students who come from low-income backgrounds realize their maximum potential.

This prestigious scholarship program is based on evidence that by eliminating the financial barriers to college, a last-dollar scholarship can enable high-potential, low-income minority students to excel in their course work, graduate college, and continue to be leaders throughout their lives.

In addition to funding, The Gates Scholarship will provide further support to Scholars, by engaging with them and their institutions in a variety of ways, to ensure they have access to the resources and services they need, from their first to last day of classes, through graduation and the transition to their chosen careers.

## VOICEOVER ARTIST MEETS WITH STUDENTS

BY KATY KENNEDY-RODRIGUEZ

When I was a kid, Japanese Animation- or anime- was seen as a relic of the Speed Racer Days or an obsession for the weird-o arts kids (of which I was one). Finding VHS copies of Akira, Ghost in the Shell, Cat Girl Nuku-Nuku, or Sailor Moon required hours scouring Eide's in the Strip District or ordering expensive imports from Japanese catalogs. Now the pendulum has swung and anime has taken over the mainstream. From My Hero Academia to Naruto to Demon Slayer, evidence of the anime invasion is everywhere. No place is it more apparent than at the malls where kids spend small fortunes on lunch boxes, plushies, costumes, and t-shirts depicting the hottest anime titles. The trend has made its way to the upper elementary school students in Brentwood and they are here for it!

Upon the wall of Moore's third floor, articulate essays written by the fourth-grade students in Mrs. Zietak's classes announce the career choices of their authors. For this annual tradition, Mrs. Zietak has the students research their dream job and write an essay describing why they want to do it. These essays, along with student photos, are enshrined in a bound book to serve as a memento of each student's dream for their future selves. Every year, there is a wide array of potential jobs- veterinarians, teachers, engineers, YouTubers, singers, authors, football players, and doctors. But this year, anime voiceover actor emerged the fan favorite. That's where Leraldo Anzaldua comes in.

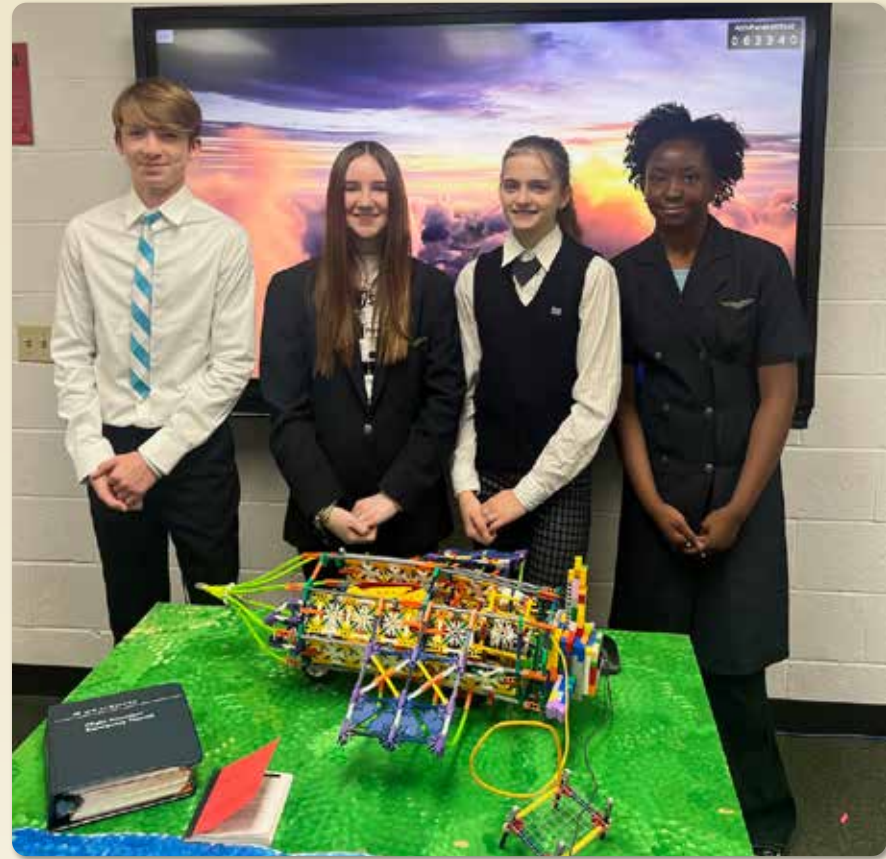
Mr. Anzaldua, or LA- as he is known, is a theatre professor at University of Indiana at Bloomington. He also works as a fight director and fight choreographer for



various theatres and films. He is a mo-cap actor (the people who wear the funny suits for CGI) for video games and movies. AND, he is a voiceover actor for the English dubs of dozens of anime titles. It was that last one that really got the kids' attention. LA held a Zoom meeting with the fourth grade to talk about his work. He shared with the students how he got started in his career and how he reads scripts set to timers that match the films. He answered great student questions from the audience. LA's polydactyl cat Salem even popped onto the screen for a visit.

In the end, even more fourth graders are gearing up for voiceover futures. And, it is safe to say that anime will not be leaving Moore Elementary any time soon. Thank you to Leraldo Anzaldua for sharing your time and talent with our school community.

## BRENTWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WIN COUNTYWIDE COMPETITION

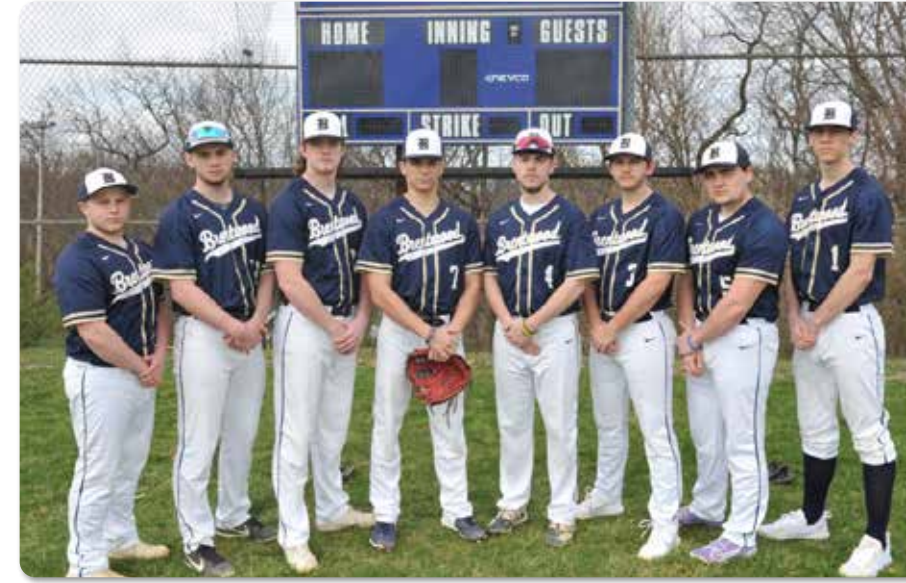


A team of four 8th grade students from Brentwood Middle School took first place in the Allegheny County STEM K'Nex Challenge sponsored by Thermo Fisher Scientific. More than 20 schools from Allegheny County participated in this competition. The team of **Nia Aten**, **Ryan Kammermeier**, **Logan Metzger**, and **Meghan Schruben** tackled this year's challenge of developing a new mode of transportation or improving a current mode of transportation to help the world be cleaner, healthier, and safer. Through exhaustive research, the team created a proposal that focused on developing a plane that can be charged with solar panels while grounded before using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) as necessary during flight. As part of their presentation to the judges, the team was required to design a prototype, provide design documents and blueprints, and create a video presentation. Brentwood Middle School's GIFTED coordinator, Mrs. Maureen Anderson, oversaw the team and was able to gather pilot and flight attendant uniforms for the students to wear during their video presentation.

In addition to the design of the aircraft, the team identified travel to Papua New Guinea as a way to efficiently conserve energy while providing needed supplies such as humanitarian aid and medications for HIV and malaria to citizens of that nation, while returning imports such as coffee and vanilla to the United States.

The team will now move onto the state level competition that will be held virtually with school districts across Pennsylvania. Congratulations to Nia, Ryan, Logan, and Meghan for their well-deserved award!

## SPRING SENIOR ATHLETES



### Boys Baseball

Kyle Keener, Zach Dirling, Kevin McCleary, Lucas Huntley, Ryan Challinor, Tyler Bianco, Shane Rock, Mitchell Fox

### Girls Softball

Bailey Herrera, Olivia Kraeuter, Reghan Woods, Kelli Bruschi, Alyssa Steele



### Track & Field

Ava Barker, Alona Washington, Lauren Milcic

