



**Brentwood
Borough
School
District**

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DR. AMY M. BURCH



Attitude of Gratitude

Thanksgiving is traditionally the time to display gratitude for the multiple blessings bestowed on us throughout the year. This year it is especially important that we say thank you to the tremendous people in and around our organization who continue to serve our community.

Maintenance, Technology, and Custodial Teams

With COVID-19 continuing to disrupt our daily lives, the maintenance and technology teams collaborated to install twenty-seven new Promethean Activpanels over the course of two weekends in the Middle/High School. The new panels were paid for through ESSER funding and replaced the original Promethean Boards that were installed during the Classrooms for the Future grant in 2010. While the maintenance team installed the Activpanels, the technology team completed the programming. The custodial team is continuing the increased cleaning protocols of all common areas including bathrooms, conference rooms, cafeteria, and classrooms.

Secretarial and Paraprofessionals Teams

Without these support professionals and secretaries, the distribution of the student devices would not have been successful. These dedicated professionals returned to work prior to the end of summer break to assist with labeling the devices and handling the paperwork associated with being a 1:1 device district.

Professional, Administrative, and Administrative Support Teams

The school year began with students returning to the classroom for in-person instruction. Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to interrupt our instructional model. Certain classrooms had to transition to online learning. While it was not the preferred instructional method, our professional staff was able to provide synchronous instruction to ensure continuity of education. Our building

administrators efficiently worked to communicate the changes to our families and answer questions about individual needs. Our administrative support team staff accepted additional responsibilities to ensure our district had the supplies and information necessary to be successful at the building level.

Directors of School Police/Security and Facilities

Our School Police and Security Director continues to lead the Pandemic Team in tracking our COVID-19 cases and completing the contact tracing required by the ACHD. Our Director of Facilities continues to monitor the district renovation projects while supporting the custodial and maintenance teams with the increased cleaning protocols.

Board of School Directors and Our Brentwood Community

We are eternally grateful to our Board of School Directors and our Brentwood Community. The Board of Directors have different points of view on varying topics but always keep the students in the center of the room when making critical decisions. Parents, families, and community members participated in monthly Board meetings and shared varying points of view with respect and kindness. We are proof even when we disagree, we can co-exist with each other peacefully. It is a pleasure to say that we work in such a caring and invested community.

Brentwood Borough Students

The saying of "saving the best for last" applies to our students because we know that without them, we would not be here. We are grateful that they have chosen to return to the school building to live, laugh, and learn together. We all acknowledge that returning to school wearing masks was less than desirable, but they have maintained a positive attitude. We are so fortunate to have such a tremendous group of students.

BRENTWOOD TEACHERS PARTICIPATE IN CMU EXTERNSHIP

BY MRS. STEPHANIE DELUCA

This semester, two of our Brentwood teachers, Art teacher, Ben Miller and Media Literacy teacher, Kate Smeltz, are participating in an externship opportunity with Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center. The Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) was "founded in 1998 as a joint venture between Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science and the College of Fine Arts. This interdisciplinary approach remains unique today and has led to one of the most inventive and impactful programs in the world. Students from a diversity of backgrounds converge at the ETC to study and work together on applied design-based research projects, develop their skills as leaders, innovate in their work, and create cutting-edge products for their clients."

The purpose of the externship is designed to help teachers elevate their abilities to cultivate teams and students who collaborate, experiment, and create solutions to design challenges by creating more authentic educational experiences.

Through the externship, teachers participated in aspects of several of the courses offered to students at the ETC. They've participated in playtesting of newly designed immersive video games in virtual reality, listened in on project presentations and demonstrations, and will join the students, faculty and community members for an end of semester showcase featuring the best projects from each experience at the ETC.

In the photograph, you can see Mr. Miller artfully mastering his virtual reality game, expertly maneuvering through challenges to get to the end of his quest. He states, "Honestly, it's just been really incredible to see that a program like this exists in Pittsburgh. I had no idea what was being developed in this building that is essentially in our backyards. This concept of "entertainment technology" is so fantastic because it encompasses so many different fields of study like



engineering, art, computer programming, sound editing, and cohesively merges them into one field in a very exciting sort of way."

In addition to learning all about cutting edge technology by being immersed in this unique and progressive learning environment, teachers participating spend time throughout the externship experience reflecting together on what they've learned by participating in the process, how the practices and techniques may be reflected in their K-12 classrooms and considering the role of technology in each of their classes.

Mr. Miller explains that, "they are working with concepts and ideas that can be universally achieved no matter the funding or facilities. To me, this program is all about understanding strengths and weaknesses within a group setting and the interplay between different areas of expertise, and how great things can come out of great teams, not necessarily great individuals."

We look forward to continuing to participate in additional opportunities like this fostering collaboration and innovation among our faculty and staff through real-world experiences beyond the walls of K-12 education and bringing facets of those experiences back to our students here at Brentwood.

BCAP OPENS AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

BY DR. DR. CHRISTINE WINIARSKI

The Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh (BCAP) has recently hired a new Youth and Family Coordinator named Katie Mirt. Katie is a Baldwin-Whitehall alumnus with sixteen years of teaching experience. She worked at Paynter Elementary School as the ESL teacher and worked with children from all over the globe, which filled her classroom with many types of culture and languages. While working with English Language Learners, Ms. Mirt recognized the need for additional supports for immigrant and refugee students and families. With language barriers and cultural differences, communication with families and homework supports are difficult. Ms. Mirt, in her new position with BCAP, will be addressing these barriers and helping families navigate the American approach to education.

BCAP continues to work on developing strong partnerships with local school districts that help Bhutanese students (as well as students from other immigrant and refugee groups) to continue to grow and learn. BCAP is prepared to provide

assistance with school and family related matters and is planning to offer tutoring, afterschool programming, and youth sports as the year progresses. Their goal is to reduce the gap that exists between immigrant and refugee students and their peers and increase family involvement in after school routines and school events.

The afterschool tutoring program, beginning on October 25, 2021, is offered at the BCAP office on Brownsville Road. The program will utilize a hybrid model- two days in person and two days virtual. There is also a social-emotional component being offered to participating students. BCAP is working with Keep It Real Tutors from the University of Pittsburgh. The program does not provide transportation, so families interested in having a student participate in the program will have to have their own transportation plan to and from the office. Families from the Brentwood Borough School District who are interested in participating in this program may contact Dr. Christine Winiarski at (412) 881-4940 for an application.

BRENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND HELPS OPENS NEW BRENTWOOD WETGO

BY DR. JASON OLEXA

Brentwood High School has had a long-standing relationship with local businesses and organizations. Many of the student organizations partner and are supported by organizations like; the Brentwood, Baldwin, Whitehall Chamber of Commerce, Brentwood Business Owners Association, GBU Life, Brentwood Food Bank, Brentwood Historical Society, Brentwood Library, and the West Jefferson Rotary Club just to name a few. The GetGo located in Brentwood conducted a complete renovation of their WetGo Car Wash. As a business in the community, they asked members of the Brentwood High School Spartan Marching Band to provide the entertainment for the Grand Opening of the new WetGo. GetGo and WetGo believe strongly in supporting the community and they presented Mr. McKinney, Brentwood High School Director of Band, and members of the marching band with a \$5,000.00 donation to Brentwood High School. This was quite a surprise and an honor to receive. Brentwood High School and all of our student groups are grateful for the support of GetGo and WetGo and they community partnership.



BRENTWOOD SPARTAN MARCHING BAND GETS NEW UNIFORMS

BY DR. JASON OLEXA



The Brentwood Spartan Marching Band are sporting new uniforms for this season. Senior Drum Majors Julia Ferranti and Kellie Bruschi model the new layout. Brentwood High School uses a uniform timeline for all sports and activities for purchasing new uniforms. This was the marching band's year in the replacement cycle. The new uniforms are more comfortable, easier to clean, and present a sharper color scheme than the past uniforms. The marching band not only plays on Friday nights at football games, but they support the Brentwood 4th of July Parade, Brentwood Light-up Night and many community events in the area. The new uniforms are sure to be a showstopper in the events to come.

BRENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL NEW HIRES MAKE AN IMPACT

BY DR. JASON OLEXA

One of the most important responsibilities of a high school administrator is the hiring process. Success is not often in the programs, rather they are in the people who run them. Hiring the best teachers is a priority that pays dividends for years.

Brianne Stadelman was hired this year as a new mathematics teacher at the high school. Ms. Stadelman is a graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School. She majored in mathematics at Slippery Rock University and earned her master's degree in Secondary Education. Ms. Stadelman completed her student teaching experience at Bethel Park. She then taught substitute positions at West Mifflin and West Allegheny High Schools respectively. She came to Brentwood High School with a very strong background in Geometry and other levels of mathematics. She has been working tirelessly this year in working with our Brentwood students and has made quite an impression in a very short time.



Two new hires are teaming up to make a big difference in the music program. **Mr. Galen McKinney** was hired as a music teacher K-12 during the 2020-2021 school year. He had experience at Brownsville High School as a music teacher as well as being the director of bands. The opportunity came available in Brentwood and Mr. McKinney answered the call. He is an excellent musician who has played in band for the United States Navy. He is currently in the Air Force Band as a reserve soldier. His experience in public high schools and his professional playing have made him a valuable asset to the staff.



This year **Samantha Douglas** was hired as an elementary music teacher as well as an assistant director for the Brentwood Spartan Marching Band. Ms. Douglas is a graduate of Bentworth High School and was involved in the music program there serving as section leader and Drum Major. She attended Westminster College where she studied music and became the Drum Major of the college band. She did her student teaching experience at Grove City High School before coming to Brentwood. She is also an assistant band director with the California University of Pennsylvania Marching Band. She also teaches instrumental music privately.

Mr. McKinney had one goal in mind when he came to Brentwood and that was to increase the number of students in the marching band and retaining more students in instrumental music. In his first year, he met his goals. When

the position for a person came open to assist him, the goal was to hire a person who could support his efforts K-12 and help build an even stronger music program. Ms. Douglas was hired for this task. Needless to say, they have worked very well together and the sound and the quality for the band have improved under their leadership. Affectionately, Mr. McKinney is known as the "Admiral" and Ms. Douglas as the "Captain." We are looking forward to the future of what this duo can do for our students and our music program.

BY DR. BONNIE BETLER

As the days are getting shorter and we approach the long winter families sometimes wonder how we can support our learners at home. As young children, families often read books and play games but as children grow and the content becomes more difficult to practice the schoolwork. Regardless of age, there are a few reading, math, and readiness skills that any student can benefit from reinforcing, reviewing, and repeating.

When it comes to reading the educational adage goes, students learn to read by the end of second grade and read to learn for the rest of their lives. When thinking of activities to do with students related to primary grades one of the most important skills is being able to identify all of the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds. If students know the sounds and letters, then they can sound out words. Once students can sound out words, they can read!

Comprehension and vocabulary development are strengthened by repeated reading. Children in grades three and above should be encouraged to read every day outside of school for at least 15 minutes. The reading material should not be challenging and should be on a student's independent reading level. The local and school library are excellent resources for high interest reading materials for students. Once a student discovers an author or genre that they enjoy, the nightly 'chore' of 15 minutes of reading will not seem like a chore at all.

When it comes to supporting math learning one of the most important concepts for primary students to learn is how to count and what each number means. Much like you need to learn the letters and their sounds, students in kindergarten, first and second grades need to know numbers and what those numbers represent. Any set of objects can be used to teach numbers and quantities. Young learners can count out cookies for dessert or goldfish for a snack.

Once students have a grasp on the numbers one through 20 they can start basic addition and subtraction. Fact fluency is a skill that students must master in order to be successful mathematicians. Fact fluency does not need to be rapid-timed facts are not necessary- however the faster a student can complete basic facts (addition and subtraction to 20 and multiplication and division through the 12 tables) the easier it is for them to complete more difficult problems. At school we use programs like Zearn to reinforce math facts at home, fact fluency can be reinforced with a few flash cards each evening.

Reading daily and practicing math facts are a great way to help students be prepared for school. However, of equal

importance is making sure that students are getting adequate rest each evening. When students are well rested for school, they are able to pay attention in class and they are able to persevere on difficult tasks.

Over winter break and during the winter months when students and families are spending more time indoors, encourage children to pick up a book, do some household math, and get some rest! Doing those things will keep students' skills up and put them on a path toward academic success.

During the 2018/2019 school year, Brentwood School District applied for and was awarded a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency that allowed the district to purchase a research-based curriculum dealing with the development of social and emotional skills in elementary-aged students. This grant also was used to hire an elementary school counselor, Mrs. Terri Kauric, who would devote time to the students and families in both elementary schools. Mrs. Kauric had been working in the district as the Student Assistance Program liaison from Holy Family and came to the district with 19 years of experience in the mental health field.

For the 19/20 and 20/21 school year, Mrs. Kauric devoted most of her time

to presenting the Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum (PATH) in every elementary classroom (k-5) at least one time a week. Research indicates that social and emotional learning is a critical component of the educational experience that is proven to lead to improvements in student behavior, reductions in classroom disruptions, and greater academic achievement. It does so by going beyond traditional academic skills and teaching students how to resolve conflicts, handle emotions, empathize, and make responsible decisions. The evidence shows that in order to develop healthier school climates and improve academic results, schools must teach the whole student.

While Mrs. Kauric was the primary teacher for the SEL curriculum during the 19/20 and 20/21 school years, this year teachers are participating in the lesson as "co-teachers" and share the responsibility in presenting the new skills to students. "Co-Teaching" pairs two teachers together in a classroom and allows each teacher to support the skills of the other while presenting instruction to a group of students. This teaching strategy promotes the regular classroom teacher's ability to understand the material being taught to students and then be able to reinforce the lesson with her students during those real-life "teachable moments" in the classroom, helping students to employ their newly taught strategies.



HIGHLIGHTING STUDENT EXPERIENCES: STUDENTS CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DOT DAY IN FIRST GRADE

BY MRS. ANNE STEIGERWALD



Mrs. Schubert and Mrs. Steigerwald began the day with a Read Aloud of *The Dot* by Peter Reynolds. This story teaches students to believe in oneself and have the courage and confidence to try hard things. Then the First-grade classes at Moore Elementary joined Flipgrid, FableVision/Reynolds Center, and Candlewick Press in a global celebration of creativity, courage, and collaboration: **International Dot Day!**

During this live event, Reynolds spoke about the importance of using your energy and creativity to help others around you. He asked students to think about how they can make their mark on the planet and make it a better place. Students pondered the question: How can our voices be heard? Students around the world were able to engage in a live chat with Reynolds and discuss his powerful message. Mrs. Graff concluded the day with a Dot Day art project with the first-grade classes. The first-grade classes were excited to participate in this event!



MAP AND PASS ASSESSMENTS EVALUATE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL NEEDS

BY MR. DAVID RADCLIFFE

The Brentwood Borough School District was excited to welcome our students back in-person for the 2021-2022 school year! After approximately 18 months of juggling hybrid schedules and online learning, the return to a more traditional 5 day per week in-person schedule was appreciated by both students and staff.

A major concern for school districts and families across the county was the possible academic and social impact that the pandemic had on students. Learning losses and mental health concerns have been at the forefront of conversations as students returned to school this fall.

Two assessments that the Brentwood Borough School District is using to identify both academic and social/emotional needs of our students are the MAP and PASS assessments.

The MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessments are administered to all district students in grades K-8. The assessments are given three times per year – fall, winter, and spring – in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The MAP assessments are unique in that they adapt to be appropriate for each child's level of learning. The difficulty of questions increases as the student gets more and more questions correct and the difficulty decreases as students answer incorrectly. The MAP assessments provide an overview of student academic

growth throughout the year and also identify individual student strengths and weaknesses. This information is used by the teachers to help plan instruction and provide focused individual support to students.

The PASS assessment is used 'to identify how students feel about themselves and school so educators can give them the support they need to thrive'. The PASS assessment is divided into three factor groups. The Contextual Factors address 'students' feelings toward their immediate social context and developmental environment that heavily influence their attitudes toward themselves and school'. The Self-Efficacy Factors identify areas that influence cognition, motivation, emotions, and the use of learning strategies that can have an impact on school achievement. Finally, the Motivational Factors indicate 'how motivated students are to engage with and complete school-based tasks and goals'. By looking at student responses around each of these factor groups, the district staff can identify resources or activities that may be beneficial to our students from a social/emotional perspective.

If you have any questions about the MAP or PASS assessments, please feel free to reach out to your child's building principal or school counselor.

RAISING CREATIVE KIDS

BY DR. BARBARA PAGAN

Elementary art teacher, Mrs. Graff has nurtured the imagination of our young students. We know that young children are naturally curious and inventive. The research shows that their creative thinking skills peak around age 6 and then start to decline once they start school. This is accelerating with the digital use in recent years.

Parents play an integral part to nourish creativity, which includes creating an environment in which creativity will take root, grow and flourish. Some simple strategies to help build creativity are:

1. Encourage their curiosity – Try to engage their imagination to explore the world and to solve everyday problems. Make it fun, brainstorm and mind-map, rather than make linear lists. Ask open-ended questions.

2. Let them follow their bliss – Ask insightful questions, read books, draw their ideas, put on plays, and develop an understanding of the world with their whole bodies.

3. Make creativity easy – Have lots of paper, paints, pens, and other craft items on hand in a place where it can be easily accessed to enable creativity to flow when the

mood hits. Save old cardboard boxes, empty paper towel rolls, cereal boxes and scrap paper. You will be amazed at what can be created from the simplest materials.

4. Allow them to be bored – Bored is where new ideas come from. Turn off the screens and stop providing entertainment – the results will surprise you. Boredom is the best way to give your child space to think, create, imagine, and build.

Mrs. Graff encourages our students to design and create using their imagination, which is depicted in all her projects with our students. Thank you, Mrs. Graff for all your dedication.



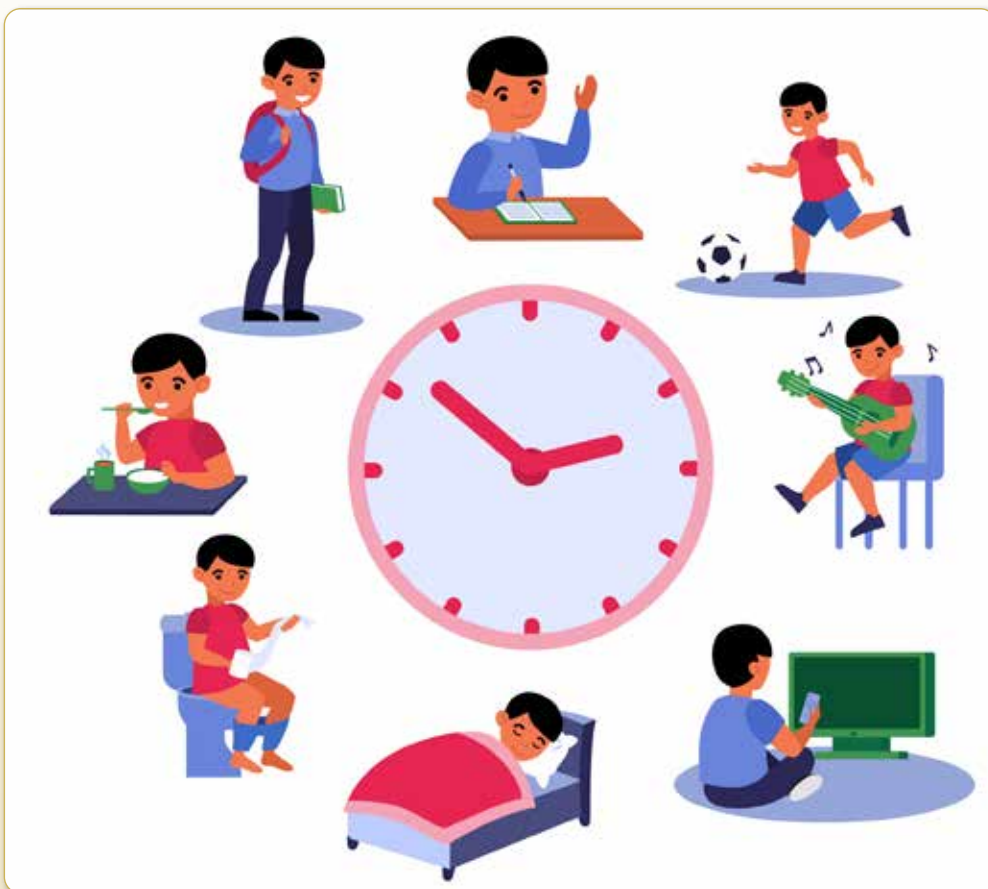
ROUTINES MATTER

BY DR. BARBARA PAGAN

At Elroy Elementary, we are excited to be getting back to our typical routines and schedules this year. To support healthy social emotional development in early childhood research shows that routines are essential. Children with regular routines have self-regulation skills, the building blocks of good mental health. When children learn to regulate feelings and behaviors, it means they can identify their feelings and have skills to manage those feelings so that they don't feel overwhelmed. Young children who learn to do this well are better able to adapt to everyday challenges, stressors, and new expectations. Children do not learn to do this all at once. Just as when a child is learning other important skills, like reading and math, self-regulation is a set of skills that build over time. Every stage includes age-appropriate milestones and important things parents can do to coach children from one stage into the next.

Adults can talk about feelings with your child and help your child respond to his feelings in ways that feel right for your family—such as by taking deep breaths or getting hugs. Parents can also provide structure and support routines for children. When children live in organized and predictable environments, they learn to self-regulate in organized and predictable ways, leading to optimal mental health over time.

Routines require a particular set of characteristics for children to be most developmentally supportive: accessibility and predictability. Children benefit from relationships and environments that are predictable to them: this includes important caregivers who behave in predictable ways, and events that occur at predictable times. Many studies demonstrate the benefit of bedtime routines and dinnertime routines. Children can anchor their day according to these expected interactions with their families. Not only can children know easily when and how they will occur, but even young children can often participate in these routines in meaningful ways by helping to set the table at dinnertime or choose their own book to read with a parent at bedtime. As we move through this year, the staff at Elroy hopes all families get back to their normal routines.



ATHLETICS

BY MR. RICK HUFFMAN

We wish all of our 2021-2022 seniors
all the best the future has to offer!



Band

Left to Right

Julia Ferranti, Haileigh Linden,
Patrick Wolfe, Jackie Roesch, Colleen
Kinneavy, Abby Emert, Kellie Bruschi,
and Katie Mariana

Cheerleading

Lauren Milcic, Alyssa Steele,
and Faith Stypula



Cross Country

Ava Barker and Martha Deng



Football

Riley Jesensky, Jackson Wisenauer, Kevin McCleary, Mitchell Fox, Jase Keib, Alec Troy, Lamarr Williams, and Tate Jones



Soccer

Sergio Garcia, Zachary Dirling, Samir Kadariya, Pasang Gurung, Prason Gurung, and Marc Accamando

Volleyball

Karime Mejia-Lopez, Isabella Grimm, Paige Mortimore, Hannah Fornear, and Cecilia Foley



Golf

Back Row: Joshua Ziegler, Nathan Ziegler, Tyler Bianco
Front row: Tyler Ho and Brady Fest