



# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DR. AMY M. BURCH



## BRENTWOOD BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BREAKS GROUND ON NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Brentwood Borough School District marked a historic moment with the groundbreaking of its new elementary school. This new facility represents a major investment in the future of the district and the broader Brentwood Borough community, as it will consolidate two aging schools—Elroy Elementary and Moore Elementary—into a single, state-of-the-art building. The groundbreaking ceremony was attended by district officials, community leaders, and residents eager to witness the next chapter in Brentwood's educational journey.

"The groundbreaking of this new elementary school is a significant milestone as we work to provide the best possible educational experience to our students," said Robert F. Kircher, Jr., Board President. "For over a century, Elroy and Moore Elementary Schools have been at the heart of our community, and while it will be bittersweet to say goodbye, this new facility ensures that our students will have the modern, safe, and innovative learning environment they deserve. This investment is not just in bricks and mortar, but also in the future of our children and the vitality of our entire community."

### A LONG ROAD TO MODERNIZATION

The decision to move forward with the construction of a new elementary school followed years of planning, discussions, and analysis. Both Elroy Elementary—built in 1921, shortly after World War I—and Moore Elementary, which was already standing when the district was incorporated in 1915, have been staples of the Brentwood community for over 100 years. However, despite regular maintenance and care, both schools have been showing their age. Critical repairs and upgrades are now necessary to ensure the buildings remain safe and functional.

A 2017 feasibility study commissioned by the Brentwood Borough School Board painted a stark picture of the needs at both schools. The study estimated that the District would need to spend between \$5 to \$7 million on each school—for a combined cost of at least \$12 million—just to address the most pressing issues.

Among the recommended upgrades were new roofs, windows, boilers, and ductwork, along with significant upgrades to electrical and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. In addition, both buildings would need extensive exterior repairs, including new brick and masonry work, and internal updates like doors, flooring, and parking lot renovations.

This estimate, however, did not include the additional space needed to accommodate the District's changing student population, nor did it account for the modern educational amenities today's schools require. With inflation and rising construction costs, by the time planning reached its next stage in 2023, the estimated cost for renovations had ballooned to approximately \$20 million.

### SEEKING A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Faced with these challenges, the School Board began to explore alternative options. The board's discussions, which spanned several years and involved numerous public meetings and consultations with community members, eventually led to the conclusion that building a new, consolidated elementary school would be a more sustainable and cost-effective solution than continuing to invest in the aging Elroy and Moore buildings.

The new school will be built on the site of the former St. Sylvester School and convent, which closed in 2019. This site presented an ideal opportunity for the District to move forward with its plans. The School Board entered negotiations with the



Diocese of Pittsburgh to purchase the property, securing the necessary approvals from both the Diocese and Brentwood Borough in early 2023.

During the planning phase, the District held several public forums to engage with the community and address concerns about the new school's potential impact on traffic, taxes, and infrastructure. Meetings were held virtually and in person, and news articles were published regularly to keep residents informed.

### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The new elementary school, designed by HHS DR Architects/Engineers, reflects a modern vision for education. The building will feature flexible learning spaces that can adapt to the evolving needs of students and teachers, with dual-purpose designs that make efficient use of space. Classrooms will be equipped with interactive learning structures, and the school will incorporate advanced safety and security features to ensure a secure learning environment.

Additionally, the school's design includes flexible furniture and spaces that can be reconfigured for different educational activities. This forward-thinking approach will enable the District to better meet the needs of its students, particularly as teaching methods and technologies continue to evolve.

The new building will also provide the much-needed additional space that both Elroy and Moore were lacking. With a changing student population, the District needed a facility that could accommodate more students while offering modern amenities such as science labs, art rooms, and collaborative spaces for group projects and extracurricular activities.

"The new elementary school represents a significant investment in the future of Brentwood Borough School District," said Superintendent Dr. Amy Burch. "It will provide our students with a learning environment that both meets their needs today and prepares them for the challenges of tomorrow."

### HONORING THE PAST WHILE BUILDING FOR TOMORROW

The decision to close Elroy and Moore Elementary Schools was not an easy one for the School Board. Both schools have been at the heart of the Brentwood community for over a century, with generations of



families passing through their doors. For many, these schools hold deep sentimental value. However, the board and administration recognized that honoring the past also meant ensuring the district's future success.

The District has taken steps to ensure that the transition is smooth and that the legacies of Elroy and Moore are preserved. As part of the broader project, the Board is working to sell the two properties with the goal of enhancing the Brentwood community through redevelopment opportunities. Additionally, by adding the properties to the borough's tax rolls, the District aims to generate new revenue that can further benefit the community.

During monthly board meetings updates will be given to keep residents informed as the project progresses. These public meetings will provide an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts and feedback, as well as to learn more about the construction timeline and the potential impact on the neighborhood.

### A COMMUNITY EFFORT

The Brentwood Borough School District's new elementary school is not just a project for the district—it's a project for the entire community. The District's leaders, teachers and staff, and families have all played a role in bringing this vision to life. Throughout the process, the District has worked closely with local government officials, community organizations, and residents to ensure that the new school will meet the needs of the entire Brentwood community.

As the District moves forward with construction, there's a growing sense of excitement and optimism for what lies ahead. The new elementary school symbolizes more than just a building—it represents stability, growth, and a shared commitment to the future of Brentwood's children.

In the coming months, the District will continue to engage with the community and provide updates on the construction process. With every step, the District remains focused on its ultimate goal: to provide students with the best possible educational experience in a safe, modern, and innovative environment.

Photo credit: Jeff Healy

## EXPLORING EARTH, SUN, AND SHADOWS: A THREE-PART STEM LESSON WITH PENN STATE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

As Pennsylvania shifts towards more engaging science and technology education standards (PA STEELS) preparing future educators to effectively teach these subjects is essential and preparing our students to understand science in new ways is an exciting opportunity! Recently, from the grace of the Martinson Family Foundation through a grant at Penn State University, pre-service teachers at Penn State collaborated to design a comprehensive three-part lesson focused on the relationships between the Earth, the Sun, and shadows, specifically aimed at our Brentwood sixth-grade students. But here's the catch: the Penn State students never left State College, all connection was done virtually in the newly design library STEM hub, funded by the project through the University.

This hands-on experience allowed the pre-service teachers to cultivate both their understanding of astronomical concepts and their ability to create age-appropriate, interactive learning activities.

### LEARNING ABOUT THE SCIENCE

During the first lesson, students were asked the problem, where should you sit if attending a game at Acrisure stadium, so the sun isn't in your eyes? How can we figure this out?

With the guidance of their Penn State mentors, students worked in groups to complete a series of activities modeling the position of the sun, time of day and the shadows created by the architecture in the stadium.



### EMPOWERING FUTURE EDUCATORS

This collaborative lesson design not only enhanced the pre-service teachers' understanding of the concepts but also empowered them to create engaging, interactive lessons tailored for sixth graders. The experience exemplified how using science and engineering practices and integrating real-world phenomena can bridge the gap between complex scientific ideas and accessible, meaningful education for young learners, ultimately shaping the next generation of inquisitive minds eager to explore the wonders of our solar system.



### MATH NIGHT MAGIC: ENGAGING FAMILIES AND SPARKING CURIOSITY AT BRENTWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Immediately following the new Brentwood Elementary School groundbreaking ceremony, teachers from both Elroy and Moore Elementary came together to host families for a combined evening of numbers, creativity, and collaboration during its annual Math Night. This engaging event, aimed at students and families showcased the importance of mathematics in everyday life and provided a platform for families to explore mathematical concepts together.

As families arrived, they were greeted by delicious food trucks and cheerful volunteers that set the tone for a night of fun and learning. The Brentwood Middle High School gymnasium buzzed with excitement as participants checked in and began circulating the gym

## MATH NIGHT cont

through games like River Crossing, Jumping Julia and Toothpick Squares where students use logic and math knowledge to solve problems.

The heart of Math Night lay in its diverse array of hands-on activities designed to make math puzzles enjoyable and accessible. Students and family members of all ages were encouraged to engage with math in innovative ways.

As always, students got to participate in a raffle to extend the math fun at home – with different games that they can play at home with families. Each family that attended also received a math dice game favor this year.

A key theme of the math festival this year was the spirit of community and collaboration in the air. Families worked together to tackle problems and share insights, fostering a sense of camaraderie and teamwork. Brentwood Elementary Math Festival is now a staple in our annual calendar, that families can look forward to for years to come helping build bridges between school and home in our students' mathematical understanding.



## ESL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Brentwood Middle School recently hosted approximately fifteen English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and administrators from six local school districts for a day of learning and collaboration. Educators from Brentwood, Canon McMillan, Peters Township, South Fayette, South Park, and Upper St. Clair gathered to share ideas on how to best support ESL students in our districts. Many local school districts have seen a significant increase in the number of students who qualify for ESL services, including 'newcomer' students. Newcomers are defined as K-12 students born outside the United States who have arrived in the country in the last three years and are still learning English.

The idea for the gathering at Brentwood was initiated by Brentwood Middle School Principal, David Radcliffe, and ESL teachers Katy Rodriguez and Lily Alba. Because ESL teachers have such unique responsibilities, often working with students who have a wide variety of home languages and various levels of English proficiency, the chance for teachers to collaborate and share their knowledge presented a valuable opportunity.

The session began with a presentation from Jill Santa from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Mrs. Santa provided an overview of current trends in ESL, best practices in working with ESL students and families, and a wide range of resources available to both school districts and individual teachers. Mrs. Santa was able to share her expertise in many elements of education that are unique to ESL learners.

After Mrs. Santa's presentation, the teachers attending the session had an opportunity to collaborate and discuss topics that fall within their realm of responsibility. The teachers shared ideas on everything from how best to streamline the intake process for ESL students and families to what types of curricular resources



they use in their classrooms to how they assist other teachers in making appropriate accommodations for students who may face language barriers.

The final, and most valuable, portion of the session took place when the teachers had an opportunity to ask questions to a panel of eight ESL students who currently attend Brentwood Middle/High School. The students ranged from 8th graders to high school seniors and their home languages included Arabic, Swahili, Nepali, Dari, Spanish, Persian, Kinyarwanda, and Mjako. After introducing themselves and sharing a little about their personal background, the students answered a multitude of questions including their experiences when first arriving in the United States, how they were able to feel comfortable in their new surroundings, and what steps teachers took in class to help them have success academically. The teachers in attendance openly voiced how impressed they were with the student panel and how beneficial it was to hear directly from students who have such amazing and unique life experiences. As one participant commented, "Thank you for sharing these eight phenomenal young women and men with us this afternoon and for giving us an opportunity to learn from them!"



## BRENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME HONORS NEW INDUCTEES



Michael Mathias, Harry Reinhart, Nancy Reinhart, Nancy Kaminski, Gregory Cappetta, Debra Sperling Spaulding, Howard Motyl, and Donald Brenner

The Brentwood High School Hall of Fame has been a long-standing partner with Brentwood High School since its inception in 2001. The Brentwood High School Hall of Fame recognizes accomplished alumni in a wide variety of professions and personal accomplishments. To date, the Brentwood High School Hall of Fame has 121 members who have been elevated to this prestigious honor. The Brentwood High School Hall of Fame is also run by volunteers who donate their time for the promotion of worthy graduates as well as supporting the high school with an annual scholarship for students. The board is comprised of Lynne (Williams) Golvash, Co-Chair; Dawn (Owens) Ziegler, Co-Chair; Helen Hughes Smith, Secretary; Kerry (Koepl) Huffman, Treasurer; Karly Foster, Julie (Saia) McCarthy, Jennifer (Boyd) Pribanic, and Deborah (Murray) Recker.

This was the first year since 2021 that the Brentwood High School Hall of Fame was able to offer their biennial banquet. The banquet was a huge success and honored several people who were associated with the Hall of Fame as well as the new inductees. The Brentwood High School Hall of Fame honored a few former board members who were recognized

as Emeritus Trustees. The honorees were Joe Curtin, Dan Golvash, Cheryl Graziano, Donna Kissel, Kim Pope, Bill Pope, and Dave Radcliffe. The leadership also recognized alumni who were all members of the Brentwood High School Hall of Fame and served on the board who had passed away in the last year. They were Jim Kehi, Rudy Pallan and John Carlin. Also recognized was Julie McCarthy who served as the Chairwoman of the Brentwood High School Hall of Fame for thirteen years. Julie's leadership was instrumental in moving the organization forward, navigating through the COVID crisis, and reimagining the program and the Hall of Fame Day that is done in recognition of inductees. Her vision and dedication to the organization was honored at the event.

This year the Brentwood High School Hall of Fame welcomed five new members as well as issuing a Spirit of Community Award and a Circle of Excellence Award. The new inductees were Michael Mathias, Brentwood High School Class of 1992 and HOF Class of 2022; Howard Motyl Brentwood High School Class of 1973 and HOF Class of 2023; Donald Brenner, Brentwood High School Class of 1973 and HOF Class of 2023; Gregory Cappetta, Brentwood High School Class of 1976 and HOF Class of 2024; and Debra Sperling Spaulding, Brentwood High School Class 1973 and Brentwood HOF Class of 2024. The Spirit of Community Award was presented to the Reinhart Family. The Circle of Excellence Award was presented to Nancy Kaminski.

Each year that the Brentwood High School Hall of Fame offers its banquet, all the inductees are invited to come to Brentwood High School the Friday before the banquet. This tradition has become known as Brentwood High School Hall of Fame Day. This year was no exception, and all the honorees attended the Hall of Fame Day event. They were greeted by student ambassadors, enjoyed a light breakfast, each honoree spoke to students in classes about their journey and career which led to their induction. Following their time in the classrooms the honorees were treated to a celebratory lunch and a private tour of the facilities. It was a pleasure to host all our inductees. A wonderful weekend was enjoyed by all of those who participated in the event.

## BRENTWOOD STUDENTS PRESENT AT STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

Brentwood High School's 2024 F1 in Schools Team, Redemption Racing, who are the current U.S. National Champions, just returned from presenting at the PSBA (Pennsylvania School Board Association) School Leadership Conference at the Kalahari Resort in the Poconos Mountains.

The PSBA is a private, non-profit organization that helps Pennsylvania elected school board directors with support and services.

"After the 2024 competition was announced for Saudi Arabia, and Brentwood's team made the decision not to attend, Nathan Mains, PSBA executive director, hoped to do something for the team that would honor their achievements, and let other schools in Pennsylvania learn about the F1 in Schools program," said David Schaap, Brentwood School Board member and PSBA past president.

PSBA has been a supporter of Brentwood's F1 program for the past 2 years. The PSBA trust donated \$15,000 to help teams travel to Singapore for the 2023 world finals and the 2024 national championships in Charlotte, NC.

"The PSBA has been a huge supporter of our F1 in Program, without their help we would not have raised enough money to attend the world finals in Singapore. They continue to support us financially and attending the conference was great exposure for our team and our program," said advisor Jennifer Hughes.

Brentwood High School was asked to attend the conference to be a representative for PA Great Schools. Redemption Racing showcased their 2024 National Championship Pit display, for other districts to learn more about the success of Brentwood's F1 program in past competitions.

## BRENTWOOD STUDENTS PRESENT AT STATEWIDE CONFERENCE cont

"When I became PSBA president, Mains and Dr. Britta Barrickman, Chief Impact Officer of PSBA, toured our district to see the innovative work being done at our Middle/High School. They were impressed by all the programs they saw but were especially impressed with the continued high-level success of Brentwood's F1 teams, year after year, and the enthusiasm of the students involved," said Schaap.

Seniors Millie Foley, Sarah Schruben, Jessica Yee attended along with Hughes and engineering teacher, Beau Sedlar, who is also an advisor for Brentwood's team.

"It's real-world experience in a STEM competition that helps to shape what they want to do after graduation. It gets students out of the classroom and gives them an opportunity to utilize their skills against some of the best students in the world," said Sedlar.

F1 in Schools is the largest STEM competition in the world for high school students. Brentwood is among 40 countries who participate in the yearly competition. The contest challenges students to create a miniature F1 car to race down a 20-meter track as well as market, advertise and fundraise for their brand.

"F1 in Schools is so much more than just racing cars, you need marketing, business, project management skills



in order to succeed. These qualities you need to learn are important for out of school instances, not just in high school," said Yee.

Redemption Racing will not be competing at the World Finals in 2024, but Brentwood has two new F1 teams preparing to compete in the upcoming season. A junior team, Nova Racing, and a sophomore team, Riptide Racing. The teams plan to participate in regionals in the Spring of 2025. PSBA will continue promoting the success of Brentwood.

## 6TH GRADE READERS AT BMS

Reading a book for pleasure? In the era of TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, online gaming, and other technology related options, seeing a middle school student with a novel in their hands may seem like scene from an old movie.

Mrs. Jaime Staab, the 6th grade ELA teacher at Brentwood Middle School, made it her goal to reintroduce students to reading for pleasure. To encourage the students and persuade them to read on their own, Mrs. Staab partnered with the Brentwood Public Library. Once each grading period, Mrs. Staab's classes will travel to the library to choose a book that interests them. Fortunately, it is only about a two-minute walk from Mrs. Staab's classroom on the 3rd floor of the middle school to the library, which is located right next door to Brentwood Middle/High School.

When the students arrived at the library for their first visit in September, library staff members Tracy O'Neill, JC Johnson, Andrew Kilpatrick, and Kristin McCormick gave the students a tour of the library, discussed the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and provided recommendations about books the students may enjoy. After explaining the inner workings of the library, the staff then gave the students an opportunity to browse the library and choose their books.



Once the students choose their books, they are provided time twice per week during a middle school study period to read independently. As they progress through the book, the students keep a journal to emphasize the most significant elements of the story. Upon finishing each book, the students will write a book review that highlights the genre of the book and author's purpose. They will also offer their rating of

the book and whether they would recommend the book to someone else. In addition, the students will write a mini-book report and present it to their classmates. Mrs. Staab used a choice board to provide the students with a wide variety of ways to present their book report including interviewing a character, writing an alternative ending, creating a movie poster, and designing a diorama among many other options.

By the end of the school year, each student in Mrs. Staab's class will have read at least 4 books outside of what is required for their traditional classes. And for the overachievers in the group, any students who complete more than one book during each grading period will be entered into a raffle to win a gift card. While they may still be attached to their electronic devices, the 6th graders at Brentwood Middle School will be exposed to the joy of reading thanks to Mrs. Staab and her partners at the Brentwood Public Library!

**ELROY ELEMENTARY'S "LOLLIPOPS FOR FRIENDS" SPREADS KINDNESS ACROSS THE SCHOOL**

At Elroy Elementary School, a small act of kindness is making a big difference through the "Lollipops for Friends." This heartwarming fundraiser encourages students to show appreciation for one another by gifting colorful lollipops, spreading kindness, friendship, and positivity throughout the school.

The "Lollipops for Friends" fundraiser began as a simple idea to build a more supportive and caring school environment. With support from teachers and staff, the program quickly gained momentum, and students eagerly embraced the opportunity to celebrate their friends, teachers, and classmates with a sweet treat and a kind note. Write a message of encouragement, gratitude, or friendship, making each gift feel personal and meaningful.

"The best part of 'Lollipops for Friends' was seeing students' faces light up when they receive one," says Elroy's school secretary, Emily Cramer who has seen firsthand how the lollipops uplifted students. "It's a simple way for students to express gratitude and spread happiness. Sometimes, just knowing that someone cares about you can make a world of difference."

This initiative aligns with Elroy's broader focus on social-emotional learning, reinforcing the idea that small gestures can have a lasting impact. Many students have even chosen to give lollipops to classmates they don't know very well, making new friends and widening their circle of support.

The success of "Lollipops for Friends" has inspired plans for other student-led kindness initiatives, including a gratitude wall and a kindness countdown. At Elroy Elementary, the sweetness of lollipops is only matched by the spirit of kindness and friendship that fills the school, reminding everyone that even the smallest acts can make the biggest difference.



**MEET ELROY ELEMENTARY'S NEW SCHOOL COUNSELOR, MADISON MUCCI**

Elroy Elementary is excited to introduce our new school counselor, Madison Mucci. Madison brings a wealth of experience, empathy, and dedication to her role, making her a valuable addition to the Elroy family. With a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in School Counseling from California University of Pennsylvania, she is well-equipped to address the varied needs of our students. Madison also has four years of experience as a paraprofessional in an emotional support classroom, where she developed a keen understanding of the social, emotional, and academic challenges students can face.

As Elroy's counselor, Madison is committed to creating an environment where each student feels valued, supported, and empowered to achieve their personal best. She is passionate about helping students build self-confidence, resilience, and interpersonal skills, which are crucial for their success in school and beyond. Her approach centers on collaboration, working closely with teachers, staff, and families to create a strong support network that ensures students have all the resources they need to thrive.



Beyond her commitment to individual students, Madison is excited to engage in schoolwide programs that promote a culture of inclusivity and empathy. She believes strongly in fostering a positive and accepting school environment, where every student feels they belong. Madison is eager to implement new initiatives, support peer connection programs, and introduce activities that enhance students' emotional well-being and social skills.

We are thrilled to have Madison on board, knowing her compassion and expertise will make a lasting impact on our students and our school community. Please join us in giving a warm welcome to Madison Mucci as she begins her journey with us at Elroy Elementary!

**LUNCH WITH THE SPARTANS: A DAY OF CONNECTION AT MOORE AND ELROY ELEMENTARY**

On Fridays this fall, the halls of Moore and Elroy Elementary Schools buzzed with excitement as Brentwood High School's football players and cheerleaders made special visits for a program called "Lunch with the Spartans." This initiative, conceived by Head Football Coach Nick Caponi—who also



teaches social studies at the middle school—aimed to bridge the gap between high school athletes and the younger students, fostering community spirit, school pride, and mentorship.

On these afternoons, the high schoolers arrived in their white, navy blue and Vegas gold uniforms, ready to engage with the eager

elementary students. They joined the children for lunch, sharing stories, laughter, and insights about teamwork and sports. The young students enjoyed their meals alongside the high school students, who answered many questions about their time as students here at Brentwood.

After lunch, the athletes and cheerleaders took on the role of mentors, walking the students to their classrooms. The high-fives, fist-bumps and cheers exchanged along the way created an atmosphere of camaraderie and joy.

A highlight of the day was when the football players and cheerleaders read to kindergarten students, immersing them in the world of stories. With genuine enthusiasm, they brought



the pages to life, captivating the little ones and igniting a love for reading. The interactions reinforced the message that education is a community effort, and the presence of the high schoolers served as a motivating reminder of the potential that lies ahead.

Special thanks go to Dr. Bonnie Betler, Principal of Moore Elementary, and Mrs. Jennifer Zunic, Principal of Elroy Elementary, whose support made this meaningful program possible. Their commitment to fostering connections

between the schools speaks volumes about the collaborative spirit of the Brentwood community.

"Lunch with the Spartans" was more than just an event; it was a celebration of local pride and support. The memories created that day will linger in the hearts of both the young students and their high school mentors, reminding everyone of the power of connection and community spirit in Brentwood.

**ATHLETICS**

Photo credit: Jeff Healy



**Volleyball Seniors:**

Ay Marie Henry, Amelia Foley, Jessie Yee, Shayla Leutch, Lexi Wardzinski, Madison Kuklinski & Page Boehm



**Football:**

Front: Cody Jablonski, Zack Vickless, Braden Hall & Colton Rosing Back: Forest Betz, Antonio Weir, Max Rock, Daymire Spencer & Owen Beck



**Golf:**

L-R Cory Topping, Olivia Witt, Joseph Klem, Luke Hammond, Isaac Johnson & Aiden Barker



**Cheer:**

Tristen Lipper, Lexi Wardzinsk, Amera Smith, Olivia Witt, Dakota Billy, Maura Bender, & Jolina Ghassa



**Soccer:**

Collin Enzweiler, Brett Barker, Carlos Duran & Jeremy Steele

**Cross Country:**

The Cross Country team will be highlighted in the next edition. Seniors are Ashton Petit, Joe Klemm, Elliot Cramer, Evan Ford, Mas Schwerer & Karina Pfeil