

# BRENTWOOD BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

FALL 2020

## BRENTWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT: *Building a Better World One Student at a Time*

With so much changing so drastically this year, it's impossible not to think of the future. *What will post-pandemic life look like? What will a return to normalcy be? What will help us to avoid another tragic virus?* This forward-thinking mindset is at the heart of the Brentwood Union Free School District's theme this school year: **Building a Better World One Student at a Time**. We have the utmost confidence that the world of tomorrow will be a better world because we have seen firsthand the leaders of tomorrow—they walk the halls of our schools and log-on to remote learning across our district every single day. The future is in good hands.

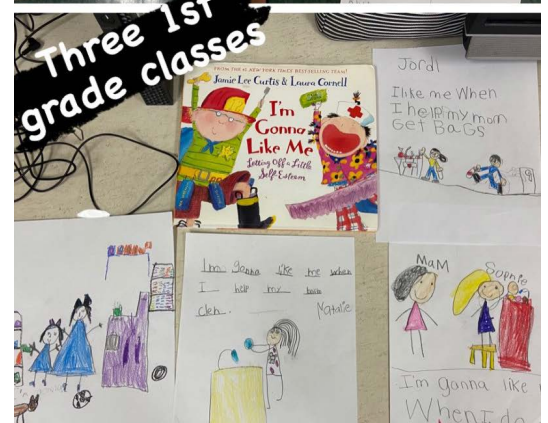
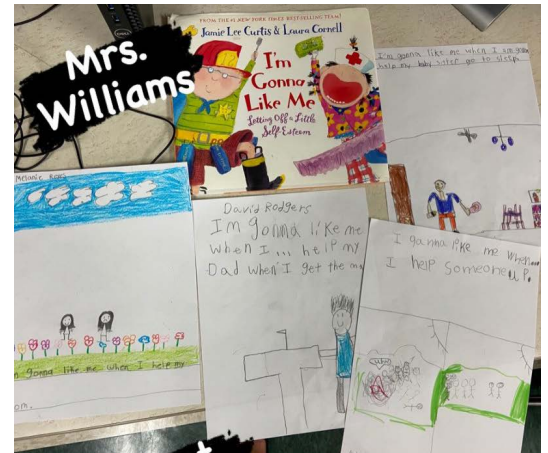
### MENTAL HEALTH IN FOCUS

This year, Brentwood is placing a strong emphasis on addressing the social and emotional needs of students, enhancing self-love, and boosting self-esteem for students across the district. 2020 has been a challenging year for every single American, and certainly students in all grades are not exempt from the challenges of this historic year.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL), which begins as early as the elementary level, plays a formative role in shaping a student's self-esteem and confidence. To this end, Brentwood's teachers recently developed focal points for classroom activities and exercises surrounding topics such as belonging, curiosity, friendship, kindness, confidence, courage and hope.

“The district has been constantly refining curriculum to place the focus on enhancing student success in school, careers, and life through the short-term and long-term benefits of social and emotional learning,” said Mr. Richard Loeschner, Superintendent of Schools.

The district's elementary art teachers use SEL-related mentor texts—written pieces used as an example of good writing for student writers—to supplement classroom exercises in support of the Seven Strength Model. This method provides Brentwood's students with a model to emulate while creating an original piece to express their creativity through their art, adding colors and details to describe their feelings. Mrs. Dennehy, an elementary substitute teacher, developed a lesson that taught students how to love themselves using art skills alongside a mentor text, *I'm Gonna Like Me*, by Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell. Her students began with the prompt “I'm gonna like me when...” and completed the sentence alongside their creative drawings. Examples of these projects are pictured here.



This publication is designed to inform residents of the Brentwood School District community of news about your schools. For further information, call 434-2334.

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## *A Message from Your Board of Education and the Superintendent*

The Brentwood Union Free School District would like to formally welcome you back for the start of another school year, a school year that will—without a doubt—resemble no other in our district’s history. It goes without saying at this point that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will color every facet of our school district experience this year, just as it will for school districts all over the country and the world. Speaking on behalf of the Board of Education and the central administration, we have absolutely no doubt that our students, teachers and faculty are up to the unique challenges that await them this year, and that despite it all, our young scholars will still receive the education to which they are entitled.

One reason we remain so confident that the Brentwood School District will continue providing a sterling education to our students is because of our district’s embrace of synchronous learning. This phrase has certainly been referenced many times by many districts, but what exactly it does it mean? Synchronous learning is a seamless melding of traditional in-person instruction and remote instruction that has become so commonplace since the start of the pandemic. In synchronous learning, all students go through the learning path together, live, whether in person or remote, using tools such as video conferencing. This enables our instructors to mitigate the growing digital divide and guarantee equity in education among all their students. For a student, there is simply no substitute for live, in-the-moment instruction from a teacher, and with synchronous learning, we can ensure that students, no matter where they are, can receive just that.

During a time where social distancing is imperative to keep each other safe, we would like to reiterate that the Brentwood Board of Education and the central administration continue to be accessible to the residents we proudly serve. We continue to prioritize our communication with the district throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. A concerted effort has been made to increase availability to us through digital meetings or by phone and email (District Clerk Kathy Hoey can be reached at 631-434-2327 or [khoey@bufsd.org](mailto:khoey@bufsd.org)). Reach out to us. Let us know what your concerns are. Now more than ever, we must seek to listen to one another. We are capable of achieving even more in Brentwood if we come together and collaborate. In doing so, we will emerge from the other side of this trying moment in history stronger than ever before.

**Sincerely,**

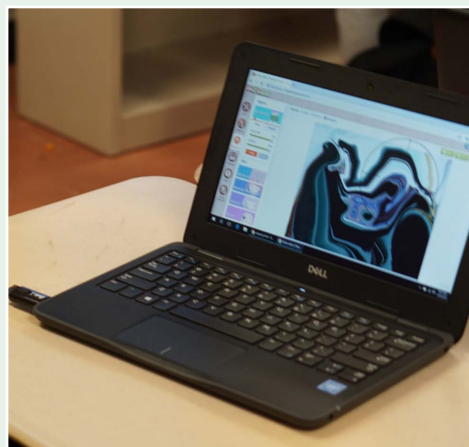
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*Richard Loeschner, Superintendent of Schools*

## **BRENTWOOD PURCHASES STUDENT LAPTOPS WITH \$20,000 DONATION FROM ALTICE**

Here in Brentwood, we were grateful to receive a helping hand from Altice USA. As part of the company’s COVID-19 response initiatives to support communities recovering from the impact of the pandemic, Altice USA generously donated to Brentwood a check in the amount of \$20,000. We will allocate these funds to purchase new devices to support distance learning for our students.

“We are grateful for the support that Altice has provided with this generous donation,” said Mr. Richard Loeschner, superintendent of Brentwood. “Since school closures in March, the coronavirus has amplified the need for bridging the digital divide in our community and now with assistance from Altice, we are one step closer to our goal. It’s critical that all of our students have the resources to learn at home and remain connected with their teachers. On behalf of the Board of Education and central office, we are deeply appreciative of Altice’s gesture.”



# Introducing our Newest Administrators!

*One of the best parts of the new year is saying welcome to new administrators. We wish the following the best of luck in the 2020-2021 school year!*



**Rosa Cortese is the newly appointed Principal of Northeast Elementary.**



**Evania Galindez is the Graphic Materials Designer**



**Francisco Herrera is the Interim Coordinator of Health, Recreation, K-12 Physical Education and Athletics**



**Rosa Nieves is the newly appointed Principal of Pine Park Elementary.**



**Angel Perez is the new Coordinator of Performing and Fine Arts and Libraries.**



**April Seneus is the new Assistant to the Director of Special Services-Secondary.**



**Rhonda Young is the new Director of Special Services.**

## THANK YOU BUILDING FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENTS!

The men and women who work in the Brentwood School District's Building and Grounds Department, Technology Department and Food Services are truly unsung heroes. Preparing our schools to be ready for the start of the 2020-2021 school year was a Herculean task, and we simply would not have been ready without a total team effort. For months, buildings and grounds worked tirelessly to acquire, construct and distribute the necessary PPE and prepare our buildings for social distancing. Our technology department—among a litany of other essential, complicated tasks—prepared thousands of computers to be ready for distribution to the students, installed cameras in all classrooms and supported our community with a technology hotline. Since the start of the pandemic, the Food Services Department has continued to provide nutritious meals to our students in ways we never thought possible in the past. We owe these unsung heroes a tremendous debt of gratitude. On behalf of the Brentwood School District Board of Education and the Administration, we say thank you!

# IT'S SO GOOD TO BE BACK

*BUFSD Kicks Off the 2020-21 School Year with Hybrid and Remote Learning Models*



With incredible excitement and great anticipation, Brentwood welcomed its students back for the official first day of school on September 16. Eager to see new and familiar faces for the year ahead, building faculty, principals and central administration greeted students as they arrived at school throughout the week. In adherence to the district's new protocols, district employees utilized non-contact infrared forehead thermometers to check students' temperatures prior to entering the building. Each building has implemented additional entry and exit points for arrival and dismissal to assist in avoiding congestion.

"After the challenges of the past six months, it was such a heartwarming, uplifting sight to see all our young students once again in our schools," said Robert Feliciano, President of the Brentwood Board of Education. "This will no doubt be a different and challenging year, but I have the utmost faith that our students, teachers and staff will rise to the occasion, as they always have."



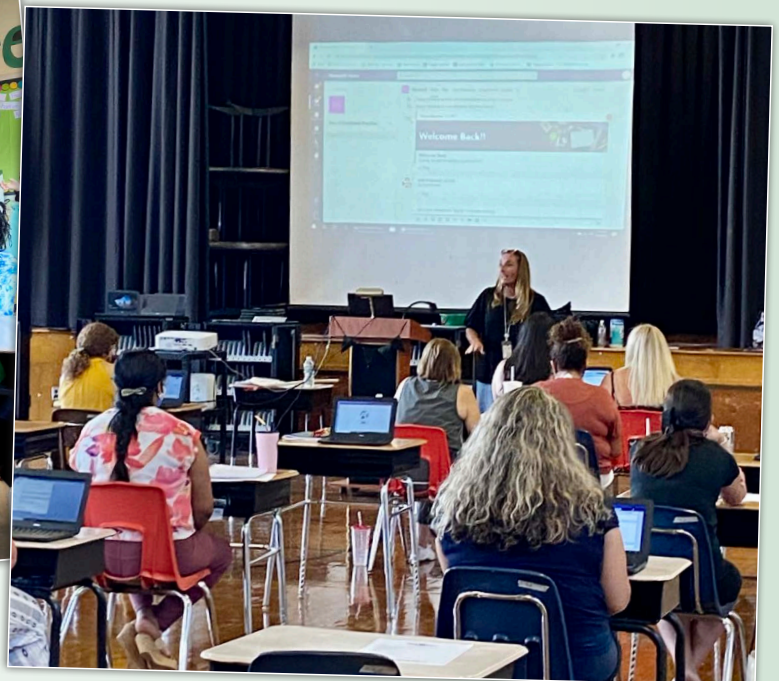
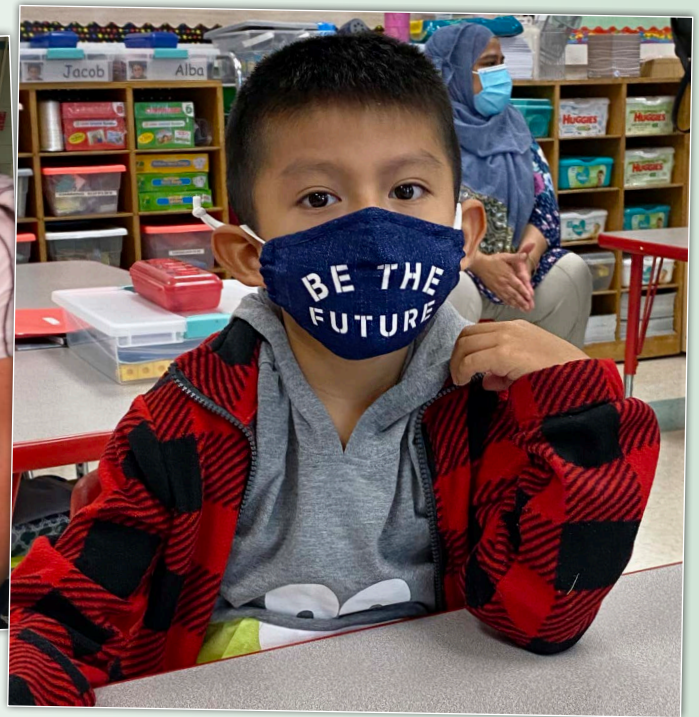
As part of the district's reopening plans, kindergarten students participate in 5-day per week in-person instruction while grades 1-12 are divided into two groups, Green and Gold, and follow a hybrid schedule. On days that students are home, they participate in a balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning to ensure continuity while not in-person.

"There has been no better feeling than witnessing our students and staff reunite after all the hardships our community has faced over the last several months," said Mr. Richard Loeschner, superintendent of Brentwood Union Free School District. "It's remarkable to witness the innovation and creativity between our teachers and support staff who work hand-in-hand with district

families to ensure our students remain engaged, learning and safe. Whether it's virtually, or in-person, Brentwood faculty always have our students' best interest at heart, and I am forever humbled to work with such a distinguished team of individuals."

When students are cleared to enter their respective buildings, they are guided to their classrooms by signage, in English and Spanish, that identify traffic flow direction as well as social distancing precautions, such as wearing a mask and remaining six feet from others.

Please enjoy these photos from some of the first days of school.



# Three of Our Extraordinary Music Students Recognized by NYSSMA



Pictured from left to right behind the students are Dr. Dashana Dulin, Assistant Principal of BHS; Ann Palmer, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education and Personnel; Angel Perez, Director of Fine Art, Music and Library Media; Christina Helbock, Wind Ensemble Director; Joe Sitler, Band Director; Jonathan Bley, Choral Director; John Callan, Principal of Brentwood High School; Dr. Monique Darrisaw-Akil, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, Programs and Policy; and Wanda Ortiz-Rivera, Assistant Superintendent for Bilingual Programs K - 12 and Student Intake Services.

Three student-musicians from Brentwood High School have earned themselves a prestigious seat in the 2020 New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Ensembles. Congratulations are in order for Wilmer Lopez, symphonic band (trumpet); Tiana Morris, soprano 2 (mixed chorus); and Chloe Portillo, jazz soprano voice (vocal jazz). Such an honor is a testament to their extraordinary talent and proficiency in music.

“Wilmer, Tiana and Chloe are wonderful examples of our district’s phenomenal music department,” said Superintendent Richard Loeschner. “On behalf of the Board of Education and central office, we’d like to congratulate them—and their teachers—who have been instrumental in their success, for the commitment and hard work throughout the years.”

Brentwood’s three students earned their place on NYSSMA’s All-State Ensembles by scoring 98 or higher during their audition for solo and ensemble festivals. This year’s performance, which was initially cancelled, will take place virtually later in the year.

“We are so proud of these students and their accomplishments, as they are a great credit to their families and teachers,” said Mr. John Callan, Principal of Brentwood High School.