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THE TORNADO CONNECTION

KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN



All-School Musical Rocks the House

BY BRYNN CORNIBE, EDITOR

Butler's all-school musical, Schoolhouse Rock Live, takes the stage on Friday and Saturday, March 18-19 at 7 p.m. in the senior high school auditorium. Tickets are \$12 each and can be purchased starting two weeks before the musical in May's Music Shoppe or at the door. The musical is directed by Mr. VanLaningham (head director), Mrs. Erevia (the music director), and Mrs. Daubenspeck (the pit director).

Schoolhouse Rock Live is about a new teacher, named Tom, who is really nervous for his first day on the job. He reflects on the rock cartoons that taught him English, math, history, and science, reminding him of why he chose to become a teacher and guiding him on how to teach his students. The lead roles of Tom, George, Dina, Joe, Dori, and Sholi are played by Tucker Christie, James Thomas, Luke Benkart, Delaney Ray, Ella Marra, and Hanna Simon respectively.

The directors chose to do Schoolhouse Rock Live for a number of different reasons. "Because we haven't been able to do a musical in two years, we needed a show that would help us rebuild the program while also featuring a number of students," commented Mrs. Erevia.

Mr. VanLaningham said, "We chose this show because it is fun and recognizable, but also because of its flexibility." Flexibility is a good thing because the musical directors had no idea if any students would audition and what guidelines they might have to follow due to the pandemic.

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The directors have years of experience working with the school's musical theater and music programs. According to Mrs. Erevia, "I grew up in the theater, performing in shows all through middle school, high school, and college. It's an incredible experience where you work with not only the other cast members, but also the pit musicians, the stage crew, and the directors to put on a wonderful production."

Mr. VanLaningham also has a theatrical past. "I worked on the plays and musicals when I was a student here, and I minored in theater in college. I've been directing shows at the Senior High since 1998, but took over the All-School Musical in 2001," he said.

The cast has been doing a lot of work in order to pull off the show, practicing Monday through Friday, starting right after school until 6 p.m. Students at the IHS had different rehearsal requirements depending on their parts in the ensemble. "I blocked three songs, or when you have the director talk you through the scene," said Chloe Shoentag, an eighth grader. Chloe has been in two other school productions, Willy Wonka Jr. and Cinderella and the Substitute Fairy Godmother. Chloe played Merwin, the Big Bad Wolf, in Cinderella and the Substitute Fairy Godmother. "That was my favorite role, I enjoyed it a lot!"

Zacharias Marra, an eighth grade member in the men's chorus, said that the progress on choreography is going well, and they are making progress daily. Zach has also been in those school productions, and even played Charlie Bucket in Willy Wonka Jr., but he also participated in school productions before he came to Butler. "My favorite role was definitely Charlie," he said.

The pit is also a big part of the musical this year. For the very first time, there is an eighth grader in the pit. Ty Young, an eighth grade musician, is joined in the pit by students who play bass and piano, as well as another student who plays percussion too. Percussion for this musical includes mainly drumset and wood block. Ty has a lot of experience too. "I have been playing for seven years," he said. The pit practices one-to-three times a week, sometimes with the cast. "They come down sometimes while we rehearse, and want us to play while they sing," Ty said. His experience has been unforgettable so far. "Everyone is kind, and all of the teachers are awesome," he observed.

Being involved in theater has taught these young actors a lot about life. Chloe said, "It can help you to overcome the fear of public speaking. Plus, you always grow from a character and gain qualities from good characters sometimes."

Zach agreed. "If your character is a morally good character, then the actor or actress could learn about being a better human being." The unique all-school musical experience has been missed the last two years in Butler, and we are excited it is back. Be sure to mark your calendar for March 18-19, so you don't miss Schoolhouse Rock Live!



Clubs Pique Student Interest

BY CARLI HOEHN

This school year, the Intermediate has given students opportunities to join clubs. Three of these many clubs are German, Leadership, and Orchestra.

Herr Schneider is the host for the German Club. The group meets in Cafe D once a month to discuss the German language and culture. Sometimes they even do a group project on topics, such as the Berlin Wall. Anyone that is interested in the German language or culture can join this club. Herr Schneider said, "I started this club as an opportunity to further their German exposure outside of class in a fun environment."

According to Karmin McCalman, a member of the German Club, "My favorite part of German Club is that everyone is included in all of the activities, so no one is left out." She decided to join this club after not being a part of a group. She wishes that they would have more members and also meet more than once a month.

Katie Black is the sponsor for the Orchestra Club. On a typical club day, seventh and ninth graders will meet together in the orchestra/band room and work on technique and improve the music they are working on for a concert. Each seventh grader is given a ninth grade buddy to help them grow as a musician. The ninth grader will also teach the seventh grader fun tricks like vibrato.

Mrs. Black commented, "This club started as a way to assist seventh graders in string technique since they did not have lessons last year." This is the first time she has hosted an orchestra club, and she loves seeing the ninth graders mentor the younger musicians. She just wishes that they were able to meet more often to get so much more done. One ninth grade member, Rylee Colteryahn, said that her favorite part about this club is being able to work with her seventh grade buddy. She also enjoys being able to play the music for herself and even improve on her own playing.

Major Richard Coleman sponsors the new Leadership Club. A typical club day will start with them reviewing the following: a national holiday, a word of the day, an historic event that may have happened that day, and a famous birthday. They then begin to discuss ways they can meet the leadership needs of the IHS. Some of these things include creating hall monitors, working with the Butler Humane Society, and conducting monthly heritage and national holiday recognitions. Currently, they are working on recognizing Irish American heritage month and International Women's Day in March.

Anyone in grades 7-9 is able to join. Major Coleman said, "I began this club to meet the leadership needs of the IHS and to foster interest in students to take care of our community. I also wanted to create a place where current JROTC cadets could interact with the future of the organization in light of our pending move to the SHS."

His favorite part of sponsoring this club is being able to work with all the grades in the IHS. Also, he loves seeing them work together to identify ways to address the community's needs at the IHS and local Butler community. The most challenging aspect of the club is coordinating with cadets at the SHS to come and teach certain classes.

According to member Maela Catanese, her favorite part about this club is the amazing friends she has made and knowing she is making a difference. "I decided to join this club because I think this will have a good impact on the school community and will create a welcoming environment for next year's JROTC members."



Freshmen Enjoy Elective Offerings

BY GRACIE FARNEN AND LEAH GARCIA

This year at the BIHS, the ninth grade students have many electives that they can take. Some of those choices include Metalworking, Photography, and Family and Prenatal Development.

According to Mr. Sovek, Metalworking is an organic class where students are able to move around, use machines, and work in a hands-on setting. This elective is located in room 105 at the Metal Shop and Woodshop shared entrance doors. When ninth grade moves up to the Senior High School next year, this class will somewhat evolve and may have a different name.

The type of equipment used in metalworking revolves around spot welding, along with hand tools and power tools. Before students are allowed to work with the equipment, they are tested on each machine and must pass a safety test. The students must also act appropriately, along with wearing safety goggles. Students will also be able to take home the projects once they are complete. Mr. Sovek said, "Seeing the kids take home their finished projects is probably my favorite part of this elective."

Metalworking benefits students who think they may want to work in a field revolving around metal because they gain valuable experience. This elective can also benefit students by improving their general grasp of working with hand tools and just repairing things in general. This elective is for everyone who is interested in metal working, and both girls and boys are encouraged to take the course. "It's not odd to have girls in this class. We have three girls in this class currently," Mr. Sovek said. All the tools and machines in this class are funded by the school, so as long as you don't break anything, this class is cost free. The only skills needed for this elective are basic math skills such as adding fractions and measuring.

Photography is another popular ninth grade elective. In this elective, students learn how to use DSLR cameras, how to use Photoshop, and most importantly, how to take amazing photos. This class is located in room 103, but participants do not just stay in room 103 and take pictures. Students search outside, in hallways, and sometimes at home, to take photos for this class. According to Ms. DeVanney, this is an 18-week course, but then students can take Advanced Photography the second semester, if they wish. One thing the students love about this class is that they can go outside, and they love freedom and creativity. In the beginning of this class, the students will be on a "mission" to capture a certain feeling or tone with their photography.

This class can help students in the real world since they will be learning about photography and how to take good quality photos, along with getting acclimated to certain software and learning editing skills. Taking this elective has additional advantages as well. Ms. DeVanney said, "Photography students can use these skills to promote their business, increase their social following, and develop and build websites."

Students are not required to provide their own camera; they will use one provided by the school. "I do recommend students bring their own folder and USB drive to store pictures," said Ms. DeVanney. There are eight cameras that the class will share equally, so students who own their own DSLR cameras are welcome to bring them if desired.

Finally, Family and Prenatal Development is taught by Mrs. Walker. This class will be located at the SHS as a 9-12 course next year. The elective is an 18-week course and focuses on the development of the fetus, birthing, medical terminology, and family dynamics. According to Mrs. Walker, "Like all Family and Consumer Science classes, Family and Prenatal is a project based learning environment that will cater to all learning styles." The course helps students in the real world in many ways. Beyond the obvious, it will help students with time management and to learn to put others before themselves. It teaches students empathy towards their parents, siblings, and future children.

All the supplies for Family Prenatal are provided in the class. Students are expected to have a growth mindset to be ready to learn and participate. Mrs. Walker is very passionate about teaching the students about differences in people. According to Mrs. Walker, "Rare diseases, congenital diseases, and birth defects are a passion of mine." She wants the students to feel that her classroom is a safe place to share stories.

Students Schedule For 22-23 School Year

BY ADDISON TACKETT

At the end of February, all students in grades 6-11 scheduled for their classes next school year. The process of scheduling is a joint effort by students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators.

Mrs. Marla Porter, the guidance secretary, assisting with scheduling. "It's my favorite thing to do, and some students think it's a bit weird," she commented. She spends hours working to make sure the students, parents, and teachers are happy with the final result. Before the scheduling window opens, Mr. Dobransky meets with Dr. White to decide if any classes need to be added or deleted. Then, Mrs. Porter starts her part of the process. Mrs. Porter said, "We don't look at behavior; we basically just look at the request that we get and the numbers we need." The computer decides who is filled into each course section, when teachers teach what class, and what the teacher duties are, and when they have plan periods. "We start to make schedules as early as the beginning of February, and we have student schedules at the end of July," she said.

The most difficult part of making schedules is that there is a master schedule, and within that schedule, there's a teacher schedule. The administrators use Tyler and sometimes it's hard for it to connect. The bell schedule is also added prior to inputting the teacher schedules. Once the bell schedule is added, followed by the teacher schedules, the student schedules are merged through Tyler.

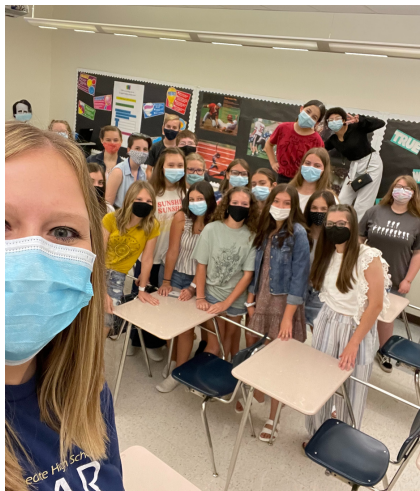
"The student schedules were entered into Tyler by students during advisory period at the end of February," Mrs. Porter said. The principals, guidance counselors, and secretaries then double-check errors against scheduling request paper forms. Tyler generates a report to indicate how many sections of each course are needed based on requests. Once those sections are entered, Tyler fills the schedules, a report shows errors, and they run it again. "This happens at least 10 times. It is an extensive process," Mrs. Porter said.

In July, when student schedules are completed, there are limited changes that still occur. Assistant Principal Mr. Dunn said, "Some students never change their schedule, and then there's a handful of students wanting to change their schedules, and it would depend on the situation."

If a student wants to change something in their schedule, they would have to go over the changes with their parents or guardian. After they approve of the changes to the schedule, they would then have to show a guidance counselor, and it has to be within the first ten days of the semester.

Mr. Dunn said, "Yes, there's a lot of meetings about schedules. Student schedules are kind of like a playbook. We want students to have a good education, so there's a lot of meetings with parents/guardians and teachers. Some students might need more support and that might make their schedule a bit different."

If you have any concerns about your child's schedule for next year, contact the guidance office for more information.



New English Teachers Join the IHS Faculty

BY LONDON DAVIS AND ARIANNA SETH

The Butler Intermediate High School welcomed new English teachers to our staff this year. Some of these new English teachers include: Miss Angela Kryl, Mr. Richard Rossini, and Miss Gretchen Wilson.

Miss Kryl teaches seventh grade English. She attended Duquesne University, earning her double major in English and secondary English education. Miss Kryl was a long-term sub for Mrs. Kravitz last year, but she was permanently hired in May 2021. "I immediately fell in love with it here. The principals and staff are awesome, and I really enjoy the students," she said.

When choosing her subject area, she selected English for many reasons. "I always liked English and history and how the text covered both," she said. Within the English subject, Miss Kryl enjoys teaching poetry the most. One of her favorite poems to teach is "I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman.

According to Miss Kryl, the most challenging part of being a new teacher is finding her way around the building and learning room numbers. Her favorite aspect of being a teacher is getting to know the students and hearing about their lives.

In her time after school hours, Miss Kryl is currently coaching lacrosse with North Hills and coaches travel lacrosse, as well as earning her Master's degree in instructional technology. In addition, she enjoys spending time with her friends and family.

According to Sophia Cornetti, one of Miss Kryl's students from last year, "Miss Kryl was always super fun, and she always gave us a break whenever we needed one." Many students enjoyed the things that Miss Kryl taught them. Emily Cornish said, "She taught us how to read poetry and taught me to love reading."

Another new teacher at the Intermediate is Mr. Richard Rossini, who teaches ninth grade English. Like Miss Kryl, he joined the Intermediate last year when was a long-term substitute for Mrs. Herzog. Mr. Rossini attended William and Mary University and according to Mr. Rossini, "They have strong English and history programs." During college, Mr. Rossini earned his Bachelor's of Arts in English and history and also a Master's of Arts in education and a dual certification in ESL.

According to Mr. Rossini, "I really enjoy the people at IHS. I felt really welcomed last year in spite of social distancing. People were very friendly and helpful, and it was a place where I could find a home." Within the English subject, Mr. Rossini likes teaching writing to his students the best.

His favorite part about being a teacher is his students. "I try to make sure I stand in the doorway between every class to greet my students. I realize some students go the entire day without anybody saying their name, so I always include names. It also gives me a chance to notice if someone is already having a bad day, so I can pull them aside to check in to reduce negative energy in the room."

Mr. Rossini lives near Pittsburgh. He loves exploring the city and visiting fun and weird little shops. At the end of the year, he wants his students to be able to have more confidence in their writing.

One of Mr. Rossini's students, Hayden Grey, said, "Mr. Rossini is friendly and caring. He listens to and connects with the students very well." Many of his students love what he taught them overall, but Josh Greenawalt said, "I like when he taught about the Holocaust during Anne Frank; he kept it simple and made sure no one was harmed while sharing the real truth of the dark time of WWII."

Miss Willson teaches ninth grade. She attended Grove City College earning her English certifications and Bachelor's of Arts in secondary education. Although this is her first year as a full-time hire, Miss Wilson was a long term substitute at the IHS a few years ago. Miss Wilson attended Butler as a student, and she knew in ninth grade that she wanted to be an English teacher because she liked reading and writing. She said, "My favorite part of teaching is being creative, and I love teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird*."

Miss Wilson thinks that the hardest thing about being a new teacher is creating lessons. "I have five different classes that I teach, so I have to put a lot of out of school work into my lesson design." Her favorite part about being a teacher is making connections with the students and teaching elective courses.

When she is not teaching, Miss Wilson stays very active. "I am a coach for girls' tennis and boys' volleyball, so that takes up a lot of my time in the fall and spring. I love being outdoors and taking my dog Benji for walks."

One of her students, Laynee Saeler, said, "She read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and showed us the meaning behind the book. That was hard to figure out." Kadence Dunlap added, "I like the way she teaches because it is easy to understand, and she explains it well."

Students and Principals Discuss Dress Code Policy

BY SARAH MUNKO

With so much coverage and controversy in the news and social media about school dress codes, it was interesting to interview some students of Butler Intermediate High School, Addy Daniels and Kailyn Plant, as well as one of the assistant principals, Mrs. Crissman.

Both the students and the principal agree that as fashion and trends change, it is necessary to change the dress code so that the rules address different levels of appropriateness. Mrs. Crissman indicated that the dress code was updated several years ago to update some of those trends. "There is nothing I would change about our current dress code," she said.

According to Mrs. Crissman, the number of dress code violations fluctuates with the seasons. "Typically, in warmer weather or as the seasons change, we see more dress code violations," she said. As far as specific types of dress code violations, she stated, "Crop tops, holes too high in jeans, and during warmer months, shorts/skirts that are too short seem to be the biggest issues." As for the consequences of violating the dress code, there are standard consequences for everyone. "The first offense is a warning and change of clothing. The second requires a change of clothing and detention, and the third offense is a change of clothing and in-school suspension," Mrs. Crissman explained.

Like many students nationally, female students worry that the dress code is more directed towards the girls than it is the boys. According to Kailyn Plant, an eighth grader, "The dress code unfairly targets girls because in my opinion, I have only seen girls get dress-coded at school. Also, all girls have different body types, and one girl can get dress-coded for wearing the same thing another girl is wearing but doesn't get dress-coded."

Another IHS student, Addy Daniels shared, "I think it would be a good thing to change some of the rules, like the allowed length of shorts and spaghetti straps on shirts." Several different students at the IHS commented on the difficulty of finding the appropriate length of shorts to wear to school that meet the dress code requirements.

Even when trying to stay current, it can be difficult to keep everyone happy. "The district does its best to develop the dress code in a way that is fair and equitable to all," Mrs. Crissman commented. "The dress code permits students to express themselves while reflecting respect and sensitivity to others," she added.

Although the students seem to report that sometimes the dress code can at times feel unfair, it seems that both the students and the principal agree on the fact that a dress code is necessary to prevent crazy distractions at school. It is also agreed upon that it is reasonable and an attempt is made to keep it up-to-date.

Enrichment Classes Provide Variety

BY BROOKE LOOMIS

The Enrichment Studies Program, known as ESP, is offered to students based on GPA in grades 7-8. Students enrolled in the program can select different classes based on their interests. Some of the classes offered are TV Video, Civil Rights Movement, and a new class, Makerspace Workshop.

The TV Video ESP has been taught by Mr. Cochran, an eighth-grade history teacher, for the last 12 years. This class helps teach students how to shoot and produce videos and learn about the importance of organization and time management. According to Mr. Cochran, "I enjoy teaching ESP because I like to see my students find out something new and work well together." He likes teaching the fundamentals and helping when someone doesn't understand an assignment.

Since Mr. Cochran has taken over the class, students have had the opportunity to participate in several local and regional competitions that showcase their learning. During the second trimester in this class, teams take on a video contest called What's So Cool About Manufacturing.



Teams partner with local businesses to share their manufacturing services via a narrated video presentation. The process involves visiting the business to find out what they would like the students to include in the presentation. Then, students take video footage which they edit using Vegas Movie Studio and combine with narration and interviews.

All of the equipment that is used in the TV Video ESP is provided by the school. Macie McLister, a student in Mr. Cochran's class, loves being a part of this ESP. This was her first choice since she had heard so many good things about it from friends. Macie likes to be in the videos, and has filmed short pieces about metal detectors and the Lost and Found. During class, Mr. Cochran will usually tell his students what they are going to film about. They will write down their ideas and shoot it the next day. According to Macie, "My favorite part about this class is that you get to work with your friends most of the time, which allows for more socializing." The most challenging part for Macie is editing the videos and putting them in order. This class has increased her knowledge of editing software and how it works.

Mrs. Behrens, an eighth grade history teacher, teaches the Civil Rights Movement ESP. This class teaches students about race relationships and how far we have come in equality. It also shows what all the African Americans had to go through to be treated equally. Mrs. Behrens wrote the class curriculum on her own because she has always been interested in civil rights. "This class is valuable because race relations are still relevant, and we need to know how to work towards equality," she said.

The Civil Rights class has been offered for around seven years. Before this class used to be non-graded but there have been changes made so students are graded on their work. Mrs. Behrens loves to talk about the Project C Birmingham campaign. During this, the goals were to desegregate all the public facilities in Birmingham, Alabama. She started to teach in the first place because she has always been interested in history and she loves to work with kids. Mrs. Behrens enjoys both of her classes but she likes her ESP class better since she can go more in depth on the topics.

During a typical day in this class, students are lectured on a topic with discussions about it. They then sometimes watch video clips and do group work. Mrs. Behrens thinks students find this class interesting because they talk about hard to believe topics and they don't realize what African Americans went through. Mackenzie Hornicack, one of Mrs. Behren's students, loves that she gets to be a part of this class. This was her first choice because she had heard a lot of good things about it from her friends. Usually in this class they will watch the morning announcements, do the assignment, and have discussions about the topic.

Mackenzie likes this class because she learns about interesting topics she wouldn't have had time for with just a normal history class. Mackenzie thinks that the Civil Rights Movement class is easy, but the tests can be challenging. "My favorite topic has been the Freedom Riders. They really worked to make a difference, and we learned about the lengths they went to for that to happen," she said.

Mrs. Snyder, an eighth grade math teacher, plans to teach a whole new ESP course this March called Makerspace Workshop. She is starting this new ESP because her husband works in the makerspace at his school and introduced her to the idea of making. "I like the idea of students encountering a problem and finding a solution with the given materials around them," she said. Mrs. Snyder has used this many times in her everyday life and wanted to share it with students who like to think outside the box. She wants her students to be able to find a solution for every problem using creativity.

To get her ESP idea approved, Mrs. Snyder wrote the curriculum then submitted it to Dr. DeThomas, the ESP class head coordinator. Dr. DeThomas took it to the curriculum council for approval. For students to join this class, they have to have at least three teachers sign an application form. Since this class will be working with items that could cause harm, Mrs. Snyder needed to make sure that all students in this class are responsible.

Mrs. Snyder has been teaching for 20 years and is excited to start this class because she wants to see what ideas students conceive. "I think students will enjoy this class because it is very hands-on and is not like any class currently offered," Mrs. Snyder observed. Gabrielle Snyder, one of the students that's going to be in this class, is really excited to be one of the first people to experience this. "I like to do arts and crafts, so I feel it will be a perfect fit," she said. She added that finding a creative solution to a problem will be challenging for her, but she is up for the task. Gabrielle is excited to have individual freedom, and she is already comfortable with some of the tools they are going to be using since she is familiar with them.

Students in the ESP classes will begin their last class of the year on March 9.

Butler Stands Up Against Drugs With Stand Tall

BY LEEAH CROLL

Stand Tall is an anti-drug program available to students in grades 7-12, teaching members that they can have fun without drugs and alcohol.

Ms. Beth LeFebvre has sponsored the program for more than 10 years, but it has existed in Butler for over 15 years. According to Ms. LeFebvre, "I was born and raised in Butler, and I saw a lot of drug use all over. I even saw my own friends go down bad paths because of drugs. I wanted a way to make a difference and improve the community for future students."

Stand Tall's purpose is to give students something fun to do together and to provide them with a place of sanctuary where they can open up and feel safe. This program is very beneficial to the school and the community itself because it extends an education on the dangers of drugs beyond the health classroom. Stand Tall is also an excellent program for kids who are struggling and just need support for anything.

Stand Tall is a very supportive program for the school district and the Butler community itself. For one, it helps students have fun without drugs or alcohol, hence the activities that the Stand Tall members participate in. For instance, the members try to meet up at least once a month after school, and they usually go to Family Bowlaway or play laser tag, and they even go to the trampoline park sometimes. They also have an end-of-year annual picnic to close out the school year. Occasionally, they have speakers that are usually former addicts, and they come and talk about themselves and how hard it was for them to get clean and how their past actions still affect them.

The Stand Tall program is an extremely important aspect of the school district. It helps students who are feeling the pressures of potential drug use, while also providing a supportive group in which to belong. Ms. LeFebvre said, "I've seen a lot of new friendships being formed due to Stand Tall, and since money is tight with lots of people, especially during Covid, joining and participating in Stand Tall is free."

If your child is in grades 7-12 and is interested in joining Stand Tall, have them stop by Ms. LeFebvre's room, 101, for a permission slip to take part in the next fun activity, a trip to Family Bowlaway for bowling and lazer tag on March 29 from 2:45-4:30 p.m.



Eighth Graders Participate in National Exam

BY NICK NIEBAUER

Randomly selected eighth grade students participated in the NAEP tests on February 23 or March 4 during the school day. The National Assessment of Educational Progress is a two-hour standardized test that measures a student's education level. The two test subjects that students are tested on are math and English language arts.

Students were tested in the teacher's center on their district-issued Chromebooks in either a morning or afternoon session. Forty-three participants were chosen at random, and parents were notified. If parents did not want their child to take the test, they could choose to complete the opt-out option.

Once the test is completed, results are sent to the federal government and kept in a database. The results are analyzed and kept confidential by the government.

According to Mr. Dobransky, "The test is important as it does help to determine the amount of money specific schools are allowed." Federal funding is used on items such as electronics, staff, programs, etc. Each year, hundreds of schools across the state take part in the test.

After randomly selecting each student, the NAEP organization sent out a letter to each student explaining the test information. The letters shared basic information, about the dates of the test and what the parents must do in order to make the decision for their child. It is simple to apply for not taking the test. All parents have to do is send an email to a principal explaining that they would not like their child to take the NAEP test. It is the same if the parent wants to test. They must email, with it showing that they would like to take the test.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Butler students have not participated in the NAEP for the last two years. When schools closed in 2020, the NAEP test was rescheduled for the 2021 school year. The hope is that this year the data will be useful and lead to additional funding for programs in the district.



District Tackles Transportation Issues

BY CALEB WISNIEWSKI

School districts across Pennsylvania have been struggling with transportation this year due to a shortage of drivers, and Butler is no different. Ms. Brenda Collins, the transportation supervisor, has made adjustments on a daily basis to ensure that students are delivered to and from school safely.

At times this year, some buses have been overcrowded as a result of the driver shortage. By the time students load themselves and their backpacks into the seats, space for more than two students per seat is difficult. According to Ms. Collins, "Due to the lack of school bus drivers, routes have been combined which have loaded some routes which were not at the start of the school year. The more drivers available, the more routes created which would limit the number of students and the travel time for each route."

When routes have to be combined, a lot of aspects are considered. "Locations and safety of bus stops, flow of the routes. There are also laws and recommendations regarding the locations of school bus stops," she said. With the addition of sixth grade to Intermediate and the closing of the middle school, Mrs. Collins predicts that the bus situation will get a lot better.

To add to the challenge, inclement weather can alter driving schedules. According to Ms. Collins, "There are a few people who check the road conditions in various areas of the school district in making the determination." To complicate this, severe temperatures can impact bus performance. "School buses are just like cars and trucks with the exception they are inspected twice a year and once by the state police. Breakdowns vary as does the effect of cold weather," she observed.

Many of the drivers have several jobs, and some cannot drive on days that school is delayed. To solve this, the school has been using other means of getting kids to school, such as teachers driving the buses.

Ms. Collins said, "There have been a couple of teachers here at the district who have obtained their licenses to operate a school bus just this school year. In order to get a school bus license, they must have several clearances, a physical, drug testing, hours of training in the classroom and driver training. Once all of this is completed, they must take a driver's test at a testing center. This process can take months to complete."

Ms. Collins is a veteran to school transportation, and she understands many aspects of the operations due to her experience. "I started to drive school buses in the fall of 1983. After a couple of years, I became the dispatcher for a local school bus contractor. Eventually, I became the Supervisor of Transportation for the Butler Area School District in 1989." Since then, she has held different positions, but starting this fall, she returned to her old position as Supervisor of Transportation.

If your family has any issues with transportation, Ms. Collins encourages you to contact the district transportation department

Musicians To Present Spring Concerts

BY TY YOUNG, EDITOR

Do you enjoy music, theater, plays, or musicals? Is your child interested in singing or playing an instrument? If so, you need to get ready for Butler Intermediate's Annual Spring concerts.

Here at Butler Intermediate High School, we host many extravagant and exciting musical concerts that capture everyone's interests. We play live music ranging from modern pop to classic jazz, with something here for everyone to enjoy. All of our concerts will be held between the months of April and May. They will be in the BIHS auditorium in the evenings, and as usual, admission is free for all of our shows.

The IHS choir students will host a concert May 19 at 7 p.m., and the senior high choirs will have concerts on both April 13 and May 18. The orchestra already had their POPS concert on February 17, but will also be playing a spring concert on May 11 at 7.00 p.m. The 7-9 grade bands will all be performing on May 4 at 7 p.m. Last but definitely not least, the Butler jazz ensemble, percussion ensemble and Tornado Big Band will all be performing on March 30 at 7 p.m.

The 7-9 grade chorus is taught by Mrs. Emmalyne Waseleski, an enthusiastic and supportive teacher who puts her students above everything else. She stated, "There isn't a day that I don't come to school and learn how to be a better teacher from my students. Their needs and wants are at the heart of each lesson I teach." She will be conducting the spring choir concerts stating, "We will sing a multitude of genres, so there will be something for every child to love learning and every audience member love listening to."

The 7-9 grade orchestra is conducted by Mrs. Katherine Black, who is excited to see all of her students' hard work pay off this spring. She explained, "I really like the viola and cello line in If I Can't Have You, the intensity of We Will Rock You, and the artistry of Pirates of the Caribbean. There is something different for everyone to listen to." She also directs the Butler Rock Orchestra. She stated, "This year the Rock Orchestra performed hits by Lady Gaga, One Republic and Journey for their POPS Concert. I am looking forward to the Spring Concert where we will perform a Van Halen medley as well as some Led Zeppelin."

Mr. Todd Karenbauer is the director of the 7-9 grade bands, the Butler Percussion Ensemble, the Tornado Marching Band, and the Butler Jazz Ensemble. He said, "I learn from my kids every day, and I learn something new every day. I learn how to make the group the best that they can be. This year definitely has not been normal, but this year students have really improved in dealing with students not being there due to Covid; they have learned how to continue progress even with many students in the band out." This year he will be directing a lot of good music including charts such as, Take the A Train, Lids, Isn't She Lovely, and Frim Fram Sauce.

Mr. Jeffery Kroner directs the 10-12th grade bands, The Tornado Marching Band, and The Tornado Big Band. He stated, "I learn things every day I walk into school. It is my responsibility to grow as a teacher along with my students. Every year, every class is different. I try to make sure I provide what is needed for my students at any time they may need."

He went on to discuss the upcoming performances. “We will be performing some amazing music this year, including my favorite, *Tico-Tico*. It is a VERY challenging piece of music. It is a Latin style song that just makes you want to move and dance,” he said. The Big Band will be performing charts such as *Jazz Me Blues*, *Out The Doghouse*, and *Night Train* this year for their March 30 concert.

Overall this year has been very successful for our music program, and we can only see it getting better in the future. Mr. Kroner explained, “I have witnessed growth in tone quality AND technique. I could not be prouder as the pandemic cost us a lot of rehearsal time over the last two years.” Our musicians should be very proud of their progress and very excited to be playing in front of an audience again. The BIHS music program is back and it’s better than ever. We can’t wait to see you in our audience!



How Social Media Impacts Students

BY KAILYN PLANT AND LANDEN FISHER

The effects of social media can impact the way a student performs at school by influencing them socially and emotionally. Teachers have grown accustomed to the impact social media has on their students, but they hope that their students learn to find some balance in their lives.

According to Mrs. Vasey, “Unfortunately, I think that social media can set unattainable standards for physical appearance, when in actuality, it’s not real and photoshopped.” She expressed that students may get pressured into different situations on social media. Mrs. Vasey feels like Instagram and Snapchat impacts the students the most. Mrs. Vasey suggests that the amount of time students should spend on social media each day depends on the student, as some students are more heavily influenced and distracted than others. She thinks that the algorithms on some of these apps are meant to keep scrolling and keep you addicted. “The fact that you can be anonymous is also an issue,” she added.

Mr. Niederberger, an eighth grade history teacher, also has concerns about the impact of social media on teens. He said, “I think social media does more bad than good. There’s a lot of negativity on there, and it can be an addiction. People are obsessed with getting likes. I think it does mental and social harm.” He added that many of his students are uncomfortable communicating face-to-face because they spend so much time on devices. “My students need to have the skill to talk to people in person,” he said. After school hours, he worries about students who spend hours scrolling through social media late at night. According to Mr. Niederberger, “I’m not sure that there should be a specific time limit, but you shouldn’t let it control you.”

Mr. Butler, another eighth grade history teacher, had some of the same thoughts, but he did try to look at the positives. “Social media can help you connect and help you prepare for an academic challenge,” he said. He added that it can also have negative aspects such as cyber bullying and over-sharing of personal information. “I think probably one of the biggest negatives is the isolation social media can create,” Mr. Butler said. He explained that during the Covid-19 pandemic, people absorbed themselves in social media to connect, but now we avoid some in-person interactions. Like Mr. Niederberger, he believes in-person communication is more valuable.

Maiya Kamer thinks that social media has some negative impacts, but it can help teens deal with stress. However, it can be all-consuming. “Students get less sleep because they are on their phone a lot,” she said. Maiya also thinks that it can stress them out and put them in a bad mood.

According to Maggie Lucas, an eighth grader, "Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok affect the students the most." She feels that two hours on social media will not impact the students as much. Maggie also said, "Students may get cyber bullied and end up with lower confidence."

Rowan Follstaed thinks that social media distracts students all of the time. He believes that Snapchat impacts them the most. In his words, "Snapchat impacts them the most, which is not positive all the time." Social media can also have a great impact on a student's sleep schedule. He said, "It can make them lazy, they can get less sleep, and they do not do well in school or activities." For social media to not impact them as much as it does now, usage should be three hours maximum per day, according to Rowan.

There are many positives and negatives about social media, which can take a toll on students. Social media can create good relationships with people, but some can cause adverse effects on the students' lives.

Winter Athletes Wrap Up Successful Season

BY AUDREY SANSOM AND ASHLAN TOSADORI

This winter, BIHS student athletes had the opportunity to participate in wrestling, boys' basketball and girls' basketball, swimming, and cheerleading.

The varsity wrestling team has had a great season. Coach Stoner, the head coach, commented, "We're doing the best we've done in a while." They have won two tournaments against tough competition. Also with their great season, Coach Stoner was able to hit his 400th win. Coach Stoner decided to start coaching so that he can help young wrestlers become successful. In addition to his work with students through the school, he started a program called Legacy Wrestling because he wanted to give back to the wrestling community, another reason why he began coaching.

Layne Zmijowski is an eighth grade wrestler that started wrestling because Coach Stoner asked him to join the team; he has loved wrestling ever since. Throughout Layne's wrestling experience, he has learned that you should be respectful to anyone no matter who they are and what they look like. Layne said he practices about 10 hours a week, and in the off-season he participates in wrestling clubs.

Another winter sport is basketball. The season started in early December and recently ended in February. The Junior High boys' white team went 13-5 this season. According to Coach Glagola, "The team had very good chemistry, and every player was a competitor." Coach Glagola explained that one of the team's strengths is that none of his players wanted to lose any game they played, and they showed that on the court all season long. Whenever the team would be having a rough day or game, Coach Glagola would remind them that "positive things happen to positive people."

Ty Miller, a member of the team, explained his love for the sport. "I love the sport and my team. It's my passion, and I think about it all day." Each boy does something different to get ready for their games. To get Ty ready before each game, he listens to music and rubs his basketball. Ty believes that the basketball "has a nice feeling to it." To be successful, Ty practices basketball 14 hours a week to stay successful. Ty plays AAU and pick-up with his friends in his free time. While playing basketball, Ty has learned leadership skills.

According to the eighth grade girls' coach, Coach Rader, "I loved seeing how much each player has improved since the beginning of the year." Coach Rader explained that a strength the girls had was having the "ability to enjoy the success and accomplishments of one another and of the team." After a game, Coach Rader would focus on positive things more than negative things.

Maiya Kamerer is a member of Coach Rader's team. She enjoys playing basketball because it keeps her busy after school. Even with Maiya loving the sport, she doesn't see herself playing for much longer. Outside of school, Maiya plays basketball with her family to keep her active whenever not playing for the team. Playing basketball has taught Maiya many things. "One important thing I have learned is how to take criticism from peers and adults," she said.

Swimming is another winter sport here in Butler. Jackson Morgus, a ninth grade swimmer, swims because he loves it. Jackson explained, "Most people think it's a death penalty to swim in gym, but I enjoy it." Jackson practices about 11 hours a week and all year long. Jackson feels that he has to eliminate his distractions when competing. Even with Jackson being a successful athlete, he feels that he improves with every loss.

Cheerleading is a very successful sport in Butler. This winter, Varsity Cheer had the opportunity to compete in PIAA Championships and National Championships in Florida. Madison Lewis is an eighth grader that had the opportunity to cheer on the competitive spirit team. "I have learned that you have to work as a team to succeed," she said. The cheerleaders enjoy the basketball and football games they cheer at. Many cheerleaders at Butler, including Madi, are motivated by Coach Miller.

The varsity team competed in the PIAA Championships against very tough competition and came in second place. After the tough loss, the team practiced and prepared for nationals. They left for Florida on February 9th. When in Disney the team spent time going to different parks such as Animal Kingdom and Disney Springs. The competition was tough, but Butler was able to place in the semifinals. The team unfortunately did not place in the finals, but they are already using what they have learned to come back stronger next year!

