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## Mrs. Somerville Reflects on Career, Plans for Retirement

BY ANNA BAIRD AND CALLIE MCKINDLEY

Mrs. Darla Somerville, an eighth grade learning support teacher, will be retiring from Butler Intermediate High School at the end of the school year. Mrs. Somerville began teaching 31 years ago and has worked at five schools: Northwest, Summit, Broad Street, Butler Junior High School, and Butler Intermediate High School. She used to work with elementary students for 23 years but wanted to work with older students, so she switched to secondary eight years ago.

She co-taught in most academic subject areas while teaching seventh-ninth grade, but English was always her favorite. "I enjoyed reading the different selections with the students," she said. According to Mrs. Somerville, the special education department was her favorite staff to work with because they were so helpful when she moved to secondary. Mrs. Somerville said, "When I came from elementary school, they were very welcoming." She really likes the school and feels so fortunate to have worked with such an amazing staff.

Before becoming a teacher, Mrs. Somerville was a manager at a clothing store called Brooks Fashion. She graduated from Slippery Rock University in 1991 earning her teaching degree.

Mrs. Somerville's favorite thing about the IHS is working with the students one-on-one and interacting with them. Her least favorite thing about working at the IHS is all the paperwork and having to write IEP's. She will miss all the great people here at the IHS.

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Although she views her career as a positive one, her toughest challenge while teaching was getting her students to see the importance in learning. Her greatest accomplishment was having students who she taught come back and see her when they graduated. "It is always nice to know that students I have taught so long ago still remember me," she said.

Mrs. Somerville decided to retire in 2022 because in her words, "I am getting old and want to spend time with my girls. It is time." In her retirement, she plans to travel, garden, read, and get a part-time job as a tour guide with a bus company. She has served as a chaperone on the IHS Gettysburg and Washington, D.C. field trips for years, and she always thought that she could be successful as a tour guide.

Mrs. Somerville's best advice to new teachers is: "Start your job with a positive attitude, watch, and listen before you make judgments. Do a lot of listening and learning, and always have a smile on your face and be kind to the kids you are working with." She added, "If you're kind and positive and willing to learn, you will be fine."

Thank you, Mrs. Somerville, for all you have done for the students of Butler over the years. Enjoy your retirement!



## ESP Offers New Courses

BY CARTER FEIDT

Next year, the IHS will be offering two new enrichment studies program, or ESP, courses for seventh and eighth grade students. ESP is an enrichment opportunity for students who have demonstrated outstanding academic performances in sixth and seventh grade. The new courses, including Intro to Fashion and Investing in Your Future, will round out the already diverse offerings of the program.

Mrs. Lindsey Walker, a family consumer sciences teacher, will be offering a new ESP course called Intro to Fashion. Mrs. Walker has been teaching for 15 years. "I enjoy teaching at IHS because of the great people including the teachers, the school administration, and the amazing students," she said.

In the new course designed by Mrs. Walker, students will be learning about different eras of fashion. "They will complete research projects, create fashion outfits, and learn about different clothing styles," she said. Walker also said that the students will be graded on assignments, projects, and participation. Intro to Fashion will be offered during two of the three trimesters next year. According to Mrs. Walker, "My overall vision for the class was to give the students the opportunity to take a class in which they can be creative, participate in project-based learning, and learn about old and new styles of fashion."

The main goal of the class was to offer a creative class that would be of high interest to the students. "Anyone with an eye for fashion will enjoy this ESP class," she commented. Walker said that she has high expectations for the students. She expects them to complete all assignments and projects to the best of their ability.

The second new ESP course next year will be Investing in Your Future. This ESP course will be taught by Ms. Jamie Veltri. The focus of this class is to teach the students about the stock market. The students will be implementing investment strategies and exploring entrepreneurship.

Ms. Veltri currently teaches eighth grade family and consumer sciences, Exploring Foods 1 and Exploring Foods 2, as well as online versions of these courses and Family and Prenatal Development. Due to the school reconfiguration, Ms. Veltri may be teaching sixth grade next school year.

The students will be working together in groups on a variety of financial games. In the past, Ms. Velti introduced the stock market games in her family consumer science classes; the new ESP class will expand on it. According to Mrs. Veltri, the ESP program provides great enrichment to challenge students, and her class will add an interesting option. "I want to give the students an opportunity to learn about finance in a fun environment," she said. The course will be available during the first trimester of the school year only and anyone who is interested in investing should thoroughly enjoy it.



Starfish Leaders recently attended a reward day field trip to Camp Guyasuta in Sharpsburg, PA.

## A Day in the Life of a New IHS Student

BY RYAN MAIRE AND KRYSTIAN MERTEN

As the school year comes to an end, administrators, teachers, and staff at IHS are busy preparing for new students to arrive. With the ninth graders moving to the high school and the sixth grade coming to the Intermediate, a lot of preparations must occur. Keep reading to find out more about a typical day for your incoming sixth or seventh grader next year!

The principals' advice to the newcomers is to ask questions and come to orientation to help figure out the layout of the building. The principals believe that this will be a new and positive change to the Intermediate. By keeping the sixth grade on the first floor, their schedule will be very similar to the one they had at the middle school in fifth grade but with 42-minute long classes just like seventh and eighth graders.

"With two new groups of students coming up and two leaving, that is about 1000 new kids coming to our school...more than 67% new students!" said Mr. Dunn. He is excited for the opportunity to continue with a strong anti-bullying program and the creation of an environment where students look forward to coming to school. Although the grades will be separated in different wings in the school, sixth through eighth grade together seems like a natural fit.

The schedule is going to be a big change for the new sixth and seventh graders. Mr. Dunn explained, "The start of the day is at 7:35, almost two hours before sixth graders currently start. Each class is 42 minutes, lunch is 30 minutes, and the day goes from 7:35 a.m. to 2:45 p.m."

According to Daniel Duncan, a current seventh grader, it is an adjustment but not impossible. "I wake up at 5-5:30 a.m. I eat whatever we have at home. If we have cereal, I eat cereal. I leave around 6:00 A.M., and get to school at 7:00. Sometimes I'll pick up apple juice and a super donut for breakfast in the cafeteria when I get to school," he explained.

Another seventh grader, James Delprete, said, "I wake up at 5. I get up, and I change out of my sleeping clothes. I put on cologne and deodorant and figure out what I'm bringing to school. I get my lunches delivered by a family member. I leave around 6:15, and wait until the bus picks me up at 6:25."

Another major concern of sixth graders is the staff at the IHS. From personal experience, most of the teachers at the IHS are kind and great. They are all here to help and make sure you have a great experience at the IHS. Mr. Dunn's feelings on the IHS staff are quite the same as mine. He said, "We care about our students personally, and we also have high expectations for them. We want school to be a fun experience, but we also have a job to do. We want them to be the best learners they can be."

Mr. Dobransky, the principal, added, "We are all here to help them, take advantage of the learning opportunities we have to offer. If students have any questions, they should just ask them. If they have an issue, tell someone."

One change for new sixth and seventh graders is advisory. For sixth graders, advisory will be a time when they can attend their special classes. Instead of having specials on a rotation by day, students in sixth grade will attend different special classes such as music and art daily during advisory period. Another change is that students in sixth grade will no longer have recess.

For seventh grade students, advisory is a time to participate in clubs, learn about the school's SOAR program, and/or participate in the ESP program. Mr. Dobransky explained, "I would say advisory is where you can get extra help, and a good time to participate in different activities."

Lunch is always a cause of anxiety during the first few days of school, but there is really no need to stress! Students in each grade have separate assigned times for lunch in the daily schedule. Sixth grade students all eat at the same time in the four smaller cafeterias. Seventh graders do the same. Each cafeteria has plenty of seating and several teachers circulating to help. If a student wishes to buy lunch, each cafeteria has its own line so that lunches can be provided quickly.

Finally, the end of the day dismissal always brings up many questions. The students are dismissed in waves, depending on when their busses arrive or if they are parent pick-up. Parents who wish to pick their children up from school line up in three lines on the far side of the parking lot. Once students begin dismissing, those who have parents waiting for them leave with the first wave. Those students staying for after school activities dismiss with the last wave.

The most important bit of advice that the principals have to offer is: attend the summer orientation! In August, sixth and seventh grade students will be invited to come in and walk their schedule and become acclimated to the new building. Once the new students get used to the building, it is a really fun and enjoyable time. The IHS staff and students are kind and the school in its own right is just a great place.



# Briggs Shines in One Acts

BY ZACH MARRA, EDITOR

On April 30, the Butler Senior High drama department performed a series of One Act plays. Savannah Briggs, an 11th grade student, played the role of Samantha in "Beggar's Night."

A One Act is a 25-30 minute bite-sized play performance. According to Savannah, "I played a teenage girl who experiences a very crazy Halloween night." She stated that she had so much fun performing in One Acts and that it was such an amazing experience. Acting is key to remember when performing in an One Act, or performing in any play, and Savannah knows what it's all about. She believes that acting is an amazing experience that has been around forever. "It allows for your favorite stories to be brought to life," she said.

Savannah has been in love with acting since she was nearly five years old. Savannah said, "Ever since I was a kid, I have always loved watching plays, musicals, and movies. I saw my first musical, Wizard of Oz, when I was five, and it sparked my love for theatre." She stated she couldn't wait to perform on stage one day. Acting is important, not just to those who watch it, but to those who do it. "It is very important to me, and is my favorite thing to do. There is nothing I love doing more than being able to portray a character on stage," according to Savannah. She loves the community that comes along with being a part of a theater production and has made so many amazing friends through being part of shows.

Having a career as an actor or actress can be stressful and a big deal, so goals need to be set, short term or long term. Savannah's short term career goals are to improve on her singing and dancing. She said, "I also want to practice my acting skills more and portray many different types of characters on stage." Her long term goals, regarding acting, are to be employed in a job that has something to do with public speaking: "Whether it's being on the radio, news broadcasting, acting in film, or live theater," Savannah said.

There are many different types of acting, such as live theater and film. She wouldn't mind working in either. According to Savannah, "My dream job would be to perform in live theater! However, performing in film would also be an experience I would love to be able to do!" Her strengths in acting is her ability to portray emotion in many different ways, shapes, and forms. "I think my greatest strength is the ability to portray emotion in my face, voice, and body language," she said.

One of Savannah's biggest challenges has been her perfectionism. "I overcame this through practicing and making sure that my performance is the best I can possibly give. Know that even if a little mistake is made or a line is forgotten, if you recover quickly and blend the mistake into the performance, the audience will not be able to know if you made a little mistake. They don't know the script," Savannah said.

Values are crucial to everyday life. They keep you going through the day. Some of Savannah's values, regarding acting, are responsibility and hard work to memorizing lines. As stated by Savannah, "Put forth your best effort while performing, along with courage and confidence to perform it in front of people."

## Solitude

BY MELISSA ARCURI, CHIEF EDITOR

Take pride in your solitude  
Dance in the rain  
Gaze up into the stars  
Ride your bike against the wind  
Make footprints in the freshly fallen snow  
Skip down the sidewalk  
Listen closely to the spring songbirds  
And watch yourself as you start to grow  
Overflowing with beauty  
Blooming with peace

# Nutrition Group Provides Quality Lunches

BY ISAAC MILLER AND CORBIN MURDY

Have you ever wondered how your children's school food is prepared? According to Brian Beauregard of The Nutrition Group, there are many factors that contribute to making the schools menus.

The state of Pennsylvania requires specific nutritional values for every school lunch so that students are provided with well-balanced, nutritional food each day. Depending on the age group, caloric and serving requirements vary. K-8 have smaller portions; whereas 9-12 have more significant portions.

The Nutrition Group has certain suppliers for the food they deliver to schools. Their main supplier is Reinhart and that is where most of their food comes from. When the food arrives at the high school, they have large freezers and coolers to store the food. Most of the goods they buy are canned. If they are not canned, they are dried until they are used.

The Nutrition Group's goal is to give students nutrition and energy throughout the school day. According to Mr. Beauregard, "It is important to give students nutritious meals because it positively affects their physical and mental health."

There is a specific thought process for making the menus for students. The school orders supplies that did well in the past so they are not wasting money on orders students do not enjoy. The schools sometimes reuse previous items from the day before to make different food choices. "The quality of food is great, and we only order quality supplies," Mr. Beauregard said.

Mr. Beauregard's favorite menu items are the new choices, so students can have more variety when it comes to school food. He has worked for The Nutrition Group since July of last summer. The Nutrition Group also offers food delivery for senior centers and retirement homes.



## Electronics In Education

BY AARON BERNARDI

Over the last few years, a lot has changed when it comes to electronics in school. The amount of paper that the district uses has been cut drastically, and all secondary students have Chromebooks. According to Mr. Dunn, one of the IHS's assistant principals, Chromebooks are a step in the right direction. "A paperless world isn't completely realistic for us right now, but many subjects have transitioned to nearly all digital." Math teachers generally prefer to use paper while other subjects tend to prefer Chromebooks. Overall, Mr. Dunn thinks that Chromebooks are a great resource for learning. He states, "I think the software and programs are outstanding." However, he says that Chromebooks can be a distraction with the access to the internet.

Working in the office, Mr. Dunn sees a lot of Chromebooks that experience some rough use, and he feels that they are durable and capable. In addition, they have good storage space. He was a little nervous at first since they had never given students personal laptops that they would have to take care of, but overall, the students are responsible with their devices.

Even though the Chromebooks are cost effective, durable, and dependable, there are a few things that Mr. Dunn would like to see Dell improve on. The biggest one he mentioned was that he does not like the charger. Whenever students turn in Chromebooks at the end of the year with damage, the cord is the most common issue. The other aspect that could be a little more durable is the screens.

With new technology comes a need for student monitoring. The office uses a tiered monitoring system to keep students on track and using the Chromebooks for educational purposes. Tier one is the least restrictive, which is where most of the student population is monitored. During classes, tier one students can be restricted to certain websites by their teachers via a program called Go Guardian. Outside of class, however, tier one students are not monitored. Tier three is the most restrictive, which only allows students to access Google classrooms, and tier two is somewhere in between. To get into the tiered monitoring system, a student would have to repeatedly do something that teachers or administrators don't want them to be doing. For instance, if a teacher discovers that a student is accessing YouTube during class or messaging friends instead of completing school assignments, a referral to the office may result in a tier two or tier three designation. Being in the tiered system can also be temporary; maybe for a couple of weeks or a couple of months. Parents can also simply ask administrators or staff to have their kid added into the tiered system.

Over the summer, students submit their Chromebooks so that they can receive the needed updates by the IT department. The IT department is mostly based in the BIHS library, but they are spread throughout the district. The director of technology is JR Deer who oversees all the other IT workers. When the Chromebooks are collected, they are cleaned both internally and externally, in addition to any software updates that may be needed. "It is an ongoing process," Mr. Dunn said.

Although the use of school technology is central to a student's success at IHS, personal device use is still prohibited. According to Mr. Dunn, students are required to keep their phones put away and off during the school day because they are a huge distraction. "It is too difficult to monitor social media and keep students focused on learning during the school day," Mr. Dunn commented. Students can use their phones if they come down to the office and ask, which is preferred to students trying to use their phones in bathrooms or the hallways, especially if they are having a medical problem.

Discipline issued for cell phone use varies from warnings to suspension. Any student who outright refuses to put their phone away would have their parents called and have them come into school for a meeting.

## IHS Launches Best Buddies Club

BY CONNOR PLATT (EDITOR) AND BRADY SCHOCH

Best Buddies is an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for one-to-one friendships in an inclusive way. Many teachers and students are involved with the program at the Intermediate High School. The program was launched at the IHS this school year by Mrs. Dawnielle Minch and eighth grade student Leah Poskin.

Both Mrs. Minch and Leah agree that the Best Buddies program has a positive impact on the IHS. "I believe that the students feel more included and with the program, we all have an opportunity to make great friends and experience new things," observed Leah. Because this was the first IHS chapter, Mrs. Minch and Leah decided to start small. "We were just trying to figure things out, and we didn't want to overwhelm our special education teachers with too many buddies," Mrs. Minch said. The program is currently a branch of the Starfish program, along with a few additional members who expressed interest in being a part of the club.

According to Mrs. Minch, "In the future we hope to open it up to more people, but the issue is that we only have so many students that need a buddy, and we don't want to overwhelm the students that need buddies. We want them to enjoy hanging out with a few kids that are their age, that they can relate to and talk to."

Leah added, "We started the program part way through the year, so I hope that in the future, we can involve more people and expand our activities." This year, the buddies meet twice a month: once for lunch and again for an organized activity.

The program began because of Leah's positive experience at Butler Middle School with the Best Buddies program. She enjoyed it and approached Mrs. Minch about starting the club at the IHS. "It was clear that Leah was very passionate about the program, and although I was already very busy with other school activities, she was very convincing. I just couldn't say no!" Mrs. Minch said. "And now I have to say that being a part of this club has been the highlight of my school year," she added.

Some of the activities that the Best Buddies have done this spring include: a Valentine's Day cookie decorating party, a St. Patrick's Day scavenger hunt, an Easter Egg hunt, and a pool party. In addition, the buddies met for lunch each month in the teacher's center. "When we are all together, we are a pretty big group, and the teacher's center makes it so it isn't quite as loud and the buddies can spread out and enjoy each other's company," said Mrs. Minch.

In addition to the activities and lunch, the buddies also exchange emails, notes, and cards. According to Leah, "Everyone seems to be having lots of fun with each other and the activities that we do." The Best Buddies concluded their year with the End of Year Picnic on May 24, where the students played yard games, ate, and celebrated a great school year.



## Blending Fashion and the Dress Code

BY LAYNE ZMIJOWSKI

Students at the IHS keep up with the current fashion, and they try their best to do this while respecting the dress code. According to Jake Stevens, a student at the IHS, "Guys are wearing bright and dark color clothing, usually 5-7 inch shorts and a hoodie and tee." He has noticed boys wearing shoes such as Crocs or ordinary Nike shoes or so called "dad shoes." "I usually see kids going shopping at Dick's, Target, or Ross Park Mall down in Pittsburgh," he added. Jake said that he mostly wears Nike, New Balance, or Adidas, and other sports or comfortably fitting clothes.

As far as the dress code, Jake had some strong opinions. "I've seen many people wearing articles of clothing that I feel aren't appropriate for school. Too much skin is showing, and I don't think it's very school appropriate, like short shorts, crop tops, and muscle shirts." In Jake's opinion, the staff is tired of correcting the students but they need to "keep the foot on the pedal." Jake feels like the modern day fashion for teens isn't meant to offend a dress code; it is just what is in style now.

The girls in the school also have strong feelings on fashion and the dress code. Eighth grader Melissa Arcuri feels like she fits into the dress code well. However, Melissa feels as if women's clothing is more targeted than other articles of clothing. When Melissa is shopping, she enjoys thrift stores, American Eagle, and Aerie. According to Melissa, "I feel like the dress code is pretty understandable, I don't have anything against it really. I understand the need for it, and it's not too strict."

In Melissa's opinion, the dress code is more enforced on girls than boys. "It just doesn't really seem fair, we're all human," Melissa explained. Melissa looks up to influencers such as Emma Chamberlain, and she gets inspiration by looking at fashion trends from over the years. She prefers styles from the 90's and Y2K. When asked if her emotions ever impact her outfit choice she claims, "What I wear doesn't really reflect on my mood; I just like to wear whatever I want," she said.



## What's So Cool Contestants Win

BY NOLAN CALLENDER AND WILLIAM WIMER

Two teams of students created videos for submission into the What's So Cool About Manufacturing Contest this spring. Both teams won awards for their work, and one team traveled to Harrisburg in May to be recognized for their efforts.

The two teams started their work back in the fall. Team One consisted of Emma Davis, Max Davis, Kaden Kozik, Gabby Snyder, Rylee Jack, and Mylei Schaefer. Team Two included Ava Davis, Logan Monday, Macie McLister, Sophia Cornetti, Natalie Collins, and Ayla Werner.

In order to create the videos, the teams visited their assigned companies to learn what they do and to get some ideas for the actual video. Team One worked with JSP Manufacturing, and Team Two worked with EPD Electronics. Both companies were eager to assist the student teams as much as possible, which made for a great learning process.

When the teams went on the second field trip, they took all of their actual footage for the video, and from there, it was a lot of editing and script writing. Both Ava Davis and Logan Monday played a crucial role in their group; they were both editing the video to make the final pieces fit together.

Both teams were recognized for their efforts with awards. Team One won the Viewer's Choice Award, based on online voting for their video. Although the team did not know the exact number of votes their video received, they know they received at least a few thousand. Team Two took first place for Best Promotion and fourth place for Best Overall Manufacturing Message. For winning, they received a laser cut deer plaque.

Mrs. Snyder and Mr. Cochran, the teachers who sponsored the teams, are thrilled with the hard work their students put forth in the contest. This is Mrs. Snyder's third year acting as a group advisor, but Mr. Cochran has been participating for the last seven. According to Mrs. Snyder, "We are very proud of what they accomplished!"

At the end of May, the team that won the viewer's choice award traveled to Harrisburg for another awards ceremony. While there, the students also visited the capitol building. Congratulations to both teams on a job well done!

# Relieving the Stress of Choosing a Language

BY BRYNN CORNIBE, CHIEF EDITOR

When I started eighth grade, I had to choose whether or not to use my extra class period for a language class. Then when I decided that I would be taking a language, I had no idea which to choose. Do I choose one that seems practical? Or one that is fun? Should I take Spanish, German, French, or Latin? I eventually chose which language to take after a few days of worrying. This may be what your child is thinking about coming into eighth or ninth grade. If they need some help, share these tips from the language teachers: Herr Schneider, German; Madame Lepage, French; Magister Kasperek, Latin; Senora Thomas, Spanish; and Senora Taoufik, Spanish.

When selecting a language, your teen doesn't really need to worry about which languages are practical. According to Magister Kasperek, "Take the language you're interested in. I'm happy no matter what language you choose." Herr Schneider, Senora Thomas, and Senora Taoufik agree that your child should choose the one that interests them the most. This reassurance may be helpful if your child has a problem that was similar to mine: deciding to select a language out of practicality.

Your child shouldn't be concerned about which languages are fun and which ones aren't. According to all of the language teachers, entertaining activities are incorporated into all of the language courses. This includes dances, songs, and games! For instance, Herr Schneider has his students play interesting games about German. Madame Lepage enjoys dressing up and teaching her students songs. Magister Kasperek has fun characters that teach his students songs and sayings to memorize Latin. Senora Taoufik explained that she has a song for almost everything they learn. And Senora Thomas said that she doesn't sing; however, she plays songs for her students.

If your student is still unsure, always advise that they ask their peers or older students about their experience in the language. According to Madame Lepage, "Talk to your peers and the teachers that teach the language." Talking to people who have already taken or are taking the language is great because they can provide all kinds of viewpoints and opinions.

Don't forget, your child can take two languages in high school! Be sure to remind them that if they are passionate about two languages, they are able to take another language starting in high school. The school also offers French and German clubs to all students, and it doesn't matter what language they are taking.

I bet at this point you might be wondering: "What is the use of going through all of this stress just to pick a language? Is it really worth it?" Yes, it is worth it; trust me! All of the language teachers at the BIHS agree that taking a language course is beneficial to your child. Senora Taoufik said, "People say learning an instrument can open doors in your mind. Recent studies show that the same thing happens when you learn a language!" Your child will have an increased chance of getting into a college or landing a job if they know more than one language. It is also really helpful for traveling and communicating with people in other countries. Madame Lepage believes that learning languages opens your mind and helps your brain to develop.

Taking a language is also good because your child won't be just learning a new language, they will be learning a new culture also. According to Herr Schneider, "It allows you to understand another culture's viewpoint on things." The world is very connected with the internet now. Facetime calls can be made across different countries for business. It is really important to understand other cultures and languages.



# Spring Sports Wrap Up Season

BY MALINA MCELROY AND EVA STUTZ

This spring, BIHS athletes participated in softball, boys' volleyball, baseball, tennis, lacrosse, and track.

Miss Baxter had the opportunity to coach the girls' junior high softball team. She has been coaching softball for four years. At a typical practice, Coach Baxter has her players work on hitting and fielding. She stated, "Everyone at practice puts in all of their effort and hard work, and they all know their role on and off of the field." Some of the life lessons players can learn from softball are responsibility, time management, work ethic, and to never give up on your goals. If your daughter is interested in joining the team next year, some things she can do to prepare herself in the offseason are practicing in the summer, playing fall ball, and contacting one of the coaches.



This spring Miss Wilson had the chance to coach the boys' junior high volleyball team. Coach Wilson has been coaching for three years, but she wouldn't have gotten into coaching without a little help from Mr. Liparulo. Coach Wilson had the opportunity to play volleyball in high school, and she coached girls' volleyball before boys'. She said, "The boys are a little bit different, but overall not much has changed since I played." At a regular practice, they spend two hours working on setting, bumping, and hitting to show their strengths and weaknesses. The volleyball team played 16 games this season, and she felt that the team's strength was athleticism. Some life lessons players can learn from volleyball are to be able to focus on the bigger picture and to not let the past get you down. If your son would like to play volleyball next year, he should go to open gyms, contact the coaches, practice with others who have experience, and practice on his own.

Coach Conklin led the boys' junior high lacrosse team this year. One of the players, Nolan Cranmer, said that he has enjoyed this season with his team. Nolan stated that a typical practice is an hour and thirty minutes long. "We warm up, do running drills, shooting drills, and passing drills to get better," Nolan said. He added, "The season went very well this year because we all put in maximum effort and work together as a team." Nolan said that his favorite thing about his team is that they are a skilled team and actually win games. He said, "The team's strengths are offense and shooting, but the team's weaknesses are defense." The team is currently working on preparing for their last game, but overall they haven't played bad this year, going 8-5. If your son is hoping to join the team next year, he should contact others who have experience and just work to get better in the off-season.

This spring Coach Willams and Coach Nist coached the boys' and girls' junior high track team. Coach Willams has been coaching for five years, and this was Coach Nist's first year coaching in Butler. Coach Willams and Coach Nist both had the opportunity to compete in track in high school and college. Coach Nist said his love of the sport drove him to be a track coach, but Coach Williams said, "My family has a long history of coaching, and when the position was available, it felt like the right thing to do."

At one point this season, there were 64 girls and 50 boys on the track team. The strength of the team is sprints, and the weakness is distance. According to Coach Nist, "My favorite moments in track are when an athlete gets a PR. I love to share in that excitement." He added that track teaches participants how to work through adversity and encourages them to try new things.

This spring Coach Buzzard coached the freshman baseball team. Coach Buzzard has coached for eight years, and this is his fourth year coaching freshman baseball. The team's season has been going well all things considered. The weather hasn't been very cooperative, so they haven't been able to play as many games as they would have liked. Their practice normally is two hours long if it is being held outside. It consists of a good warmup, then a mix of defensive and offensive work/drills. "There were 17 kids on the team this year, and every one works hard across the board," Coach Buzzards said.

Coach Buzzard's team was scheduled to play 14 games, but they only played nine games due to the weather; they are 4-5. If players want to join next year, Coach Buzzard said, "They should follow Butler Tornado Baseball on Facebook and Instagram. Get on our email chain. That way, they know when we have open gyms."

The boys' tennis coach is Coach Walsh. According to Coach Walsh, "Tennis is a great sport. I loved playing tennis in high school, and I wanted to share my passion for the sport with the team. Unlike some other sports, tennis is a sport you can play for your entire life," Coach Walsh said.

The tennis team has some outstanding qualities. "I love the passion the players have and their desire to get better," Coach said. He added, "My least favorite thing is the spring weather and how often we cancel practice or games." A typical tennis practice consists of warm-ups, usually a short, fun competition, then skills practice, and game-like drills. According to Walsh, the tennis program is looking to add a JV team, so they are hoping for more players to join next season. The program is improving every year. "Last year our record was 2-9, and this year we are 6-6. We hope to improve each year with our team's very hard work," he said. If a student would like to join tennis next year Coach Walsh said, "Anyone is welcome to join the team. No experience necessary. We have off-season practices starting in May and throughout the summer. Anyone interested should sign up for notifications on the Remind App at: <https://www.remind.com/join/gt-tennis>."

## Music Department Develops Talent

BY ZACH MARRA, EDITOR

Butler boasts one of the very best music departments in the state, thanks in part to our amazing music faculty. Mrs. Black, Mr. Karenbauer, Mrs. Waseleski, and Mrs. Tepper give their all every day for their music students.

Mrs. Black, the current orchestra teacher and director at the Intermediate and Senior High, has worked in Butler for the last seven years. Orchestra is very important to Mrs. Black, she stated that teaching the orchestras at Butler has been a blessing. "The orchestra continues to grow in numbers and ability to perform more advanced music and take on new opportunities every year. This year we had our annual Winter Concert, Spooktacular, POPS Concert, and Spring Concert," she said.

All of us have strengths and weaknesses in certain subjects. Mrs. Black considers her strength to be that students say they love her energy and always come to her class excited to work hard and make music. As she stated, "I think my weakness is I am a perfectionist, I want to make everything even better every day - but that's part of the job, pushing every student to get even BETTER than they were before!" There are several things to enjoy in an orchestra, but Mrs. Black has a clear favorite. "My favorite part is sharing the music with the community," she said. She stated that seeing the students' hard work pay off in an amazing performance is the best part.

A teacher's role is crucial for a student, especially when the teacher is the one conducting the orchestra. As the director, Mrs. Black selects the music, rehearses the ensembles, directs the extra-curricular groups, which includes Rock Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra, and conducts the concert. According to Mrs. Black, "I also make an effort to bring in clinicians if possible from surrounding universities and have coordinated a few educational outreach opportunities with the Butler Symphony as well."

In year seven, she said she is continually adapting and trying to improve her teaching abilities, but she has found her unique voice that resonates with students. She said, "When you start teaching, you try to be like your old teachers, or you try to be like other teachers you see. But really, every teacher has their own style and their own way of connecting to students. Learning to find my own "teacher voice" was probably my biggest obstacle."

There are many aspects to being an orchestra director and Mrs. Black's are having fun everyday working with her favorite musicians, growing as both a team and in music ability. Practice and needed in order to succeed and what better place to practice than in rehearsal. A typical orchestra rehearsal begins with tuning the instruments, followed by "fundamentals" - a combination of scales, sight reading or a chorale to get warmed up. "Then we work on the pieces for the day; typically three-four songs and continue to improve rhythm, intonation, phrasing and dynamics," she said. With day by day rehearsals comes the big day of the performance.

There have been many absolutely wonderful performances out there played by the Butler orchestra students. Mrs. Black said that one of her favorite performances was conducting Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with our Senior High Orchestra. "We performed the actual piece, not a high school modified version - and performed it as a full orchestra with members of the band. It was an exhilarating experience to bring such a classical piece of music history to life," as stated by Mrs. Black. Goals are first, then come the achievements.

"Next year, with the combination of ninth grade, we have 96 students signed up for high school orchestra. Currently, the orchestra is performing advanced high school literature including a level five (advanced) piece." She stated that she is so excited to hear the powerful sound of that many strings together. She has achieved this goal by gradually increasing the difficulty over their years in orchestra as well as adding additional performance opportunities. "Perhaps the biggest addition to the program has been the annual Spooktacular event in October and the POPS Concert in February which the students look forward to every year," Mrs. Black stated.

Mr. Karenbauer, the band director at the Butler Intermediate High School and director of the Butler marching band, gives Butler students a further understanding of what it's like to be a band director. The reason why he wanted to be a band director is because he had two influential people in his life that were really great music teachers. He said, "They influenced me because I saw how they could impact lives in a positive way and how they could connect with students." He stated that his world and family is band, that's just how his life runs. "During weekends, if I'm not playing with my own bands, then I am preparing what I can do to make myself better for the following week for my bands here at school," Mr. Karenbauer said.

Mr. Karenbauer considers his greatest strength to be making learning music as fun as possible. According to Mr. Karenbauer, "A part of that is because people become better musicians if they are comfortable while they are playing, and they are not on edge because they are afraid. I think fear is a bad thing." He believes that one of his biggest weaknesses is sometimes he cares a little too much. "When I say that I care too much, sometimes I let that get in my way. I get hurt too easily when I see the kids that don't want to put the full effort into it," he stated.

There are many aspects to enjoy in a band, but Mr. Karenbauer loves seeing his students grow. "In my position, I get to see students come in to me in seventh grade and one of the biggest things that I enjoy is watching them graduate as I work with them," he said. Mr. Karenbauer not only works with the concert band, but he works with the marching band. He's watched the growth over the seven to eight years and to him, "that's very, very rewarding to watch students grow and find their instruments and grow as human beings," he said.

According to Mr. Karenbauer, "My role is to teach students to love and enjoy playing music for the rest of their lives." Mr. Karenbauer has taken it upon himself to do many things for the Butler band and its students' music careers. That is a very key quality to have. Mr. Karenbauer believes that a band director needs to have a positive attitude, an outgoing and energetic personality, and be motivational.

Practice is needed in order to succeed and what better place to practice than in rehearsal. A typical band rehearsal begins with the students getting their instruments out. "From there," he said, "there are warm ups with long tones, followed by scales and taking into account the successes and needs from the day before and building upon where we left off or in slight review of what we did the day before and building from there." By the end, he has something new taught that the students learned from that day.

There have been many absolutely wonderful performances out there played by the Butler band students. Mr. Karenbauer said that one of his favorite performances was just recently. "The students did a phenomenal job. It was actually a lot of fun to conduct because the students paid attention and watched me and with that I was able to make the music even more than what we were able to do in rehearsal," he stated.

Mrs. Waseleski, the chorus director at the Butler Intermediate High School and Senior High, gives Butler a further understanding of the everyday life of this choral conductor. A chorus is a large organized group of singers.

Mrs. Waseleski, the current teacher and director at the Senior and Intermediate High, has an interest in this type of music group. When she was in seventh grade, she became interested in music and knew she wanted to be a teacher. According to Mrs. Waseleski, "All through junior high, high school, and then obviously into college, I knew that teaching was my passion." Her original first choice was actually to teach band or orchestra because she was an instrumental focus at that point. But then she got hired here for junior high chorus and never wanted to leave.

According to Mrs. Waseleski, "I think that music is such an outlet for students. Post pandemic, I feel like mental health has become a big focus, I also feel like students grow so much more when they develop their artistic abilities." She also believes that socially, all of band, chorus, orchestra, are really important for students because they learn to work with others and for the rest of your life, you're going to work with others.

Mrs. Waseleski considers one of her greatest strengths to be really getting to know her kids. She said, "I love getting to know my kids." Some of her other strengths are being a really strong musician. She said, "That's a good thing, but that can become a weakness because you can be too picky of a teacher if you are too focussed on the music." Mrs. Waseleski said that she is good at selecting music that students will like, which she believes to be important. "It's hard for kids to want to learn music that they don't connect with," she said.

There are several things to enjoy in a chorus, but Mrs. Waseleski has a clear favorite. "The students, definitely getting to know the students, is what I enjoy the most. I love helping them learn to love music, making this their favorite part of the day, making this their outlet. Chorus becomes a really safe space for students, and I love that," Mrs. Waseleski said.

All of her experience, prior to working here at Butler, is high school and college related. She stated, "I got hired here my first year out of college when I was 22. All of my well-rounded experience is Butler driven," she offered. Mrs. Waseleski said that she grew from a baby teacher into a veteran teacher here at Butler.

Mrs. Waseleski's three favorite aspects of teaching music are her students, music in general, and performances. Her biggest value is that the student needs to come first. She always feels that she teaches students music, she doesn't teach music to students. "At the end of the day, if the students needed something personal to their well being, as opposed to whatever rehearsal plans I had, I always put the student first," she said. She believes that a lot of teachers do that in this school.

At any given point in the year, Mrs. Waseleski has the repertoire they're doing and from there, depending on where they are, she sets goals across a week and she always develops them Monday through Thursday. According to her, "So maybe on Monday I'm exposing students to something. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, we're fine tuning that goal, and then Friday, I always give the students the chance to demonstrate whatever my goal was so that I can then plan again for the next week."

Besides loving all types of music, she looks forward to experiencing performances with her students. "I think you get to know students on a whole different level whenever you get to take a stage with them," she commented. Mrs. Waseleski said that one of her favorite performances was her winter concert, this year, that went so well, especially because it was her first concert back from the pandemic world. "I think in general," she said, "seventh grade performances always go really well because it's often the first chance for a student to be in front of an audience," she said.

Mrs. Waseleski is excited to continue teaching seventh grade chorus and high school chorus next year. "Now, I'm moving to the high school so I'm kind of taking on a whole new world of getting to teach students 7-12, which is really exciting," she stated. Her current goal is to increase enrollment and gain some stability in the vocal program.