

The MakeWaves Monthly

We develop students to become the best versions of themselves, so they can transform the world.



Superintendents' Message

Spring and warmer weather makes us want to get outside as much as possible. We are very fortunate to live on the Gulf Coast where our students have the opportunity to participate in Science by the Shore - Outdoor Education, walk and bike through the Gulf State Park, and plant sea oats at the beach for dune restoration. Some upcoming events include the GSES Bike Train on March 22nd and GSCS Walk to School Day on April 5th. We are excited to have multiple activities available to bring our students, teachers, parents, and community outside to enjoy the beautiful area that we call home!

Dr. Matt Akin - Superintendent makin@gsboe.org

Dr. Stephanie Harrison - Assistant Superintendent sharrison@gsboe.org



ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL



MIDDLE SCHOOL



HIGH SCHOOL



VIRTUAL
ACADEMY



Health & Wellness



Athletics



Arts Education



Teaching &
Learning

Meet Our Student WaveMakers of the Month

Elementary School:



Lilly New

Grade: 1st Grade

Area of Recognition: Leadership and Responsibility

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Lilly is a strong leader with a great want to learn and befriend others. Lilly does everything to her full potential and wants others to do so as well. She's one that will encourage others to try their best and make them feel like they can do anything. Lilly is not only a friend to others, but she is a leader in her classroom. She is always supporting her peers and wanting them to succeed. She has a heart of gold and a true leader's work ethic. She wants everyone to succeed, and when she sees others struggling, she is the first to say she will help them. All her peers know that she will help them, and not judge them. She has proven to be a true leader and friend to others. I am so proud of her and can't wait to see the great things she does in the future.

~Nominated by Tiffanie Deese - 1st Grade Teacher~

Middle School:



Mason Slater

Grade: 8th Grade

Area of Recognition: Positive Attitude

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Mason Slater consistently shows a positive attitude towards his classmates and teammates and goes above and beyond to help other succeed. He is not only a strong athlete with the swim team, but also a kind and helpful student in the classroom. He is always willing to lend a helping hand to his classmates, and he looks for ways to make a difference in his school community. Whether it's helping a fellow student with an assignment or simply offering a kind word of encouragement, Mason always goes out his way to help others. His acts of kindness and leadership have not gone unnoticed by his peers or teachers. His positive attitude and dedications to serving others is a true inspiration to everyone.

~Nominated by Ram Talantis - Assistant Principal~

High School:



**Carleigh
Jurkiewicz**

Grade: 9th Grade

Area of Recognition: Leadership

I'm a WaveMaker because... Carleigh is a GSHS Student Ambassador, and though she is the youngest on the team, she has displayed maturity and excellent leadership and communication skills in ambassador initiatives. Most recently, Carleigh took the lead at the Annual Fort Morgan Oyster Festival when at our educational/promotional booth for the "Small Town, Big Garden" Farm to Table Harvest. Carleigh confidently shared details about the project with hundreds of people who visited our booth, and her natural ability to draw people in and engage them was evident throughout the day. It was truly inspiring to watch her find her niche and share with a diverse crowd in the community the amazing sustainability-related projects and activities our students and teachers are doing. She, along with other ambassadors, promoted GSHS and GSCS in a personalized way that no social media or website post could ever replicate. She is well-deserving of WaveMaker of the Month!

~Nominated by Jessica Sampley - CTE Coordinator~

What is a WaveMaker? Someone who incites action or activity.

Meet Our Staff WaveMakers of the Month

Elementary School:



Tammy Shirley

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Mrs. Shirley works tirelessly and joyfully for the benefit of her students and their families. Her classroom is a magical, delightful place where students respect themselves and their classmates, and where they set goals and work hard to achieve them. Mrs. Shirley's standards for student behavior and effort are high, and this in turn creates a feeling of self-worth and self-efficacy in her students. Her Shining Stars work tirelessly and joyfully to get a little bit better every day. Mrs. Shirley also encourages creativity and curiosity. She teaches her students to count to 100 in Spanish every year and fills their little desks with maps of the world. She sets a great example for the kids not only with her work ethic, but with her own willingness to continue learning new things herself. Finally, Mrs. Shirley makes her kids feel special outside of school as well. She goes to their sports competitions and cheers them on, and makes sure families know that she cares. She has been a positive force in the lives of so many people in our community for many years, and we are so lucky to have her at Gulf Shores Elementary.
~Nominated by Deborah Whetstone - Enrichment - Spanish~

Middle School:



Roger Reetz

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Mr. Reetz has always been a most helpful co-worker. He is always willing to help whenever he is asked. He was a key leader for our math textbook adoption and guided us through a thorough review of the materials. I also appreciate how hard he works for his students. He maintains his instructional materials in Canvas and makes instructional videos for almost every standard so that students can review math concepts from home when needed. Mr. Reetz has high expectations for all of his students and pushes them to excel in both math and in life skills such as being on time, meeting deadlines, and being prepared.
~Nominated by Martha Morales - Math, Spanish~

High School:



Jessica Sampley

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Jessica is a main foundational support for Gulf Shores City Schools. She works behind the scenes, and you often don't see all that she is doing, but man is she making waves! Jessica is a phenomenal grant writer and has received over \$400,000 in grants for our schools. She is constantly dreaming up innovative ideas for our whole team, and then she provides the essential support to see those dreams come true.

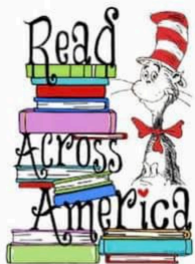
I personally would not have had the opportunity to work on our Small Town, Big Garden project if she had not opened that path for me. Just a few of the projects she has led include building airplanes, farming hydroponics, growing mushrooms, cultivating oyster gardening, restoring sand dunes, growing trees, hosting farm to table events, certifying scuba diving, hosting chef series, promoting the Hangout music lab, spearheading the Capstone projects, and directing the Student Ambassadors. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it is exhausting! She is such a hard worker and deserves to be a WaveMaker! We are fortunate to have Jessica as part of everyone's team!
~Nominated by Amanda Talantis- Hospitality and Tourism, Hospitality Management and Marketing ~

What is a WaveMaker? Someone who incites action or activity.

Elementary School

Read Across America Day-March 2

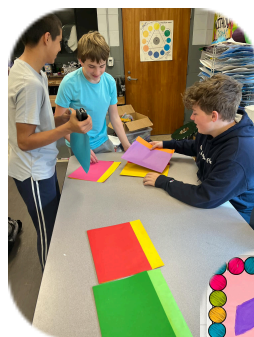
GSES celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday with "Read Across GSES", pajama day and sharing their favorite book with friends. Guest author, and illustrator, Kathy Groth, read her book: The Shell Box to students at GSES today! Others participated in camping and reading, etc. throughout the day!



Middle School

The Dolphin Encouragers at GSMS

The Dolphin Encouragers are students that work to make a difference at GSMS. Recently they made another awesome bulletin board for students to take special notes when they are feeling down. These students are sponsored by Megan Michaelson and Brooke Gilbert.



High School

Students Build Closed Oyster Reefs!

While high school science lessons often involve dissection, Gulf Shores students find themselves busy juggling clubs, everyday life as a teenager and raising baby oysters. Gulf Shores High School students work in their environmental studies class to raise baby oysters and measure for growth and population before sending them to Auburn University, which releases them in Mobile Bay.



Virtual Academy

Backyard Wildlife Habitat!

Thank you to Ms. Eckman, Baldwin County Master Environmental Educator, for presenting the Backyard Wildlife Habitat lesson to our GS Elementary Virtual Academy students. We are all ready to protect the local animals we learned about and maybe to even build a bird feeder for our friends in our area.



CATCH THE WAVE! GULF SHORES CITY SCHOOLS ARE IN THE NEWS!

Spotlight on our District gives you an update of the news for Gulf Shores City Schools! Here you will find information available from various news media on GSCS and what is happening in our district! MakeWaves!

Health & Wellness

Harvest of the Month: Broccoli & Cauliflower

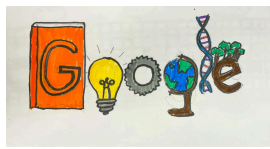
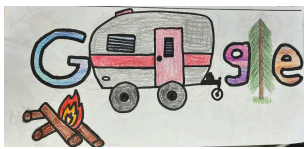
Grant and Johnna were the first 2 participants in the GSES Bike Train. The Bike Train is offered one day a month, for students in grades 2nd through 5th. Students in 2nd grade who would like to ride are required to be accompanied by a parent/guardian to participate and students in grade 3rd through 5th will be able to ride without a parent. The Bike Train is led by 5th grade teacher, Kerry Dey. If your child is interested in participating contact Mr. Dey at kdey@gsboe.org. The next ride will be on March 22nd!



All Aboard... Bike Train

Arts Education

Doodles with Google at GSMS



GSMS art teacher Megan Michaelson worked on a theme, "Doodles with Google" with her students. Below are several drawings completed in her class. The annual Google contest challenges school kids from kindergarten through the 12th grade to design their own variation of the company's famous logo in a way that reflects what they're grateful for in their personal lives.



I am grateful for ...

Athletics

Spring sports are in full motion at GSCS

The weather is warming up and our spring sports at GSCS have all begun. GSHS boys baseball for varsity and junior varsity is at bat, along with girls softball playing the field. Boys and girls golf are making their par, soccer is kicking and scoring goals, tennis is serving with aces and outdoor track keeps running. GSMS has boys baseball at the diamond, girls softball behind the plate, boys and girls soccer defending the goal, and outdoor track competing at their best. GSES spring sports include baseball, softball, and t-ball for our boys and girls with the city recreation league.



View our Athletics website!

Teaching & Learning

It never ends... our students are constantly engaged in learning at GSCS!

i-Ready is an online program for reading and mathematics that will help your child's teacher determine your child's needs, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year. i-Ready allows your child's teacher to meet your child exactly where they are and provides data to increase your child's learning gains. i-Ready consists of two parts: Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction. Take time to have your child log in and view their progress on i-Ready!

iReady at GSES and GSMS





Marie-Kah Rhode received our first Student Led Positive Behavior Referral for Habit 3, Putting First Things First. She's a model student who works first and completes quality work!



GSHS Cheerleaders had the privilege to cheer on the Kings and Queens of Baldwin County at this year's Night to Shine Event!



Congratulations to the Gulf Shores Wrestling Team and coach staff as they finished their season 4th in the AHSAA State Championships. Seven wrestlers took the podium. Sam Schepker (2nd), Lucas Salcedo (2nd), Landon Everett (3rd), Taylor Cheek (3rd), Dathan Butt (3rd), Noah Guthrie (4th), and Hayden Cook (4th).

MakeWaves With Our Dolphin Family Achievements

Students and staff at Gulf Shores City Schools are excelling inside and outside the classroom. From arts, athletics, academics, leadership, and character, we develop students to become the best versions of themselves.



Gulf Shores City Schools' Fine Arts Department celebrated the accomplishments of Anna O'Neal! Anna has been an extraordinary choir student during her time at GSHS and signed her letter of intent with Samford University.

GSHS women's basketball are Area Champs!



Tristyn Baggett and Maggie Meyers were awarded all tournament, and Maya Griffin awarded most valuable player!! Congratulations!



GSMS Teacher Scott Prince has been named the 2023 ACEA Peggy Spain McDonald Innovative STEM Award recipient for his contribution to after-school programming and communication through his Jedi Academy program.



What a fantastic opportunity afforded to our 5th graders! Dune restoration is vital to our environment and to ecotourism! The Dune Doctors did a great job educating us on the importance of maintaining a healthy dune habitat. The high school and middle school mentors and teachers were great leaders guiding the kids through the planting process!

GULF SHORES GOLF LOGAN REYNOLDS



WYNLAKE INVITATIONAL
DAY 1
76

GS

GO DOLPHINS!

GS

GULF SHORES GOLF

PLAYER SPOTLIGHT



CHRIS HAND
WYNLAKE INVITATIONAL
DAY 2
72

Congratulations to Logan Reynolds and Chris Hand on going Low, in a field of 128 players at Wynlakes Country Club in Montgomery,



Chef Madsen and 3 of her culinary students, Maria Fer Miranda, Miya Calo, and Kimoya Montique competed in the Junior Chef Competition at Jefferson State Community College, Shelby-Hoover Campus. They represented Gulf Shores by preparing and presenting their designed school cafeteria meal of Chicken Alfredo Pizza, Corn & Tomato Salad, and a Mango & Pineapple Parfait. The girls placed 3rd in the competition.



Student Ambassadors at the Fort Morgan Oyster Festival promoting the Small Town, Big Garden Farm to Table Harvest! Support our local oyster partner @navycoveoysters !



National Bus Driver Appreciation Week was celebrated in February. We have an amazing group of bus drivers that safely transport our students to and from school each day. These drivers are committed to a standard of excellence each day to protect our students! GSCS is committed to providing the safest school buses for our students. The illuminated school bus signage truly makes our buses more visible on a foggy more like today. Our bus drivers have now made a perfect score on the SETA testing from Homeland Security two years in a row. We are the only school system in the country to ever receive a perfect SETA testing score!



College & Career and Technical Education Academies

GSHS makes a difference!

The Gulf Shores High School College & Career and Technical Education Academies seek to prepare all students for post-secondary education and career through a collaborative approach by increasing student engagement, achievement, and leadership skills via rigorous and relevant curriculum, hands-on experiences, community partnerships, and personalized college and career exploration.

Agriscience, Environmental Management & Urban Forestry Business Music Tech
 Robotics, Engineering & Design Thinking Career Prep Hospitality & Tourism
 Aviation NJROTC Culinary Art Principles of Public Safety and Fire Science
 Band Theatre Health Science Marine & Gulf Coast Ecology



Random Acts of Kindness Day: A Success at GSCS

"If you can be anything, be kind!"

"Kindness is power and so easy to share!"



Kindness is one gift we can give to anyone, and it costs nothing. A random act of kindness is an act done for another and is usually completely unexpected by the recipient(s). February 17th was the culmination of all the effort put forth by our counselors, peer helpers, students, teachers, community, and Board. A few simple Act of Kindness Ideas include: leaving someone a kind note, writing a thank you letter, giving a compliment, holding a door open for someone, helping with chores and making dinner, sending care packages, donating books to a book drive or share box, bringing dinner to someone in need, smiling and saying hello to those you pass by, cleaning your room without being asked, telling family members how thankful you are for them and that you love them, picking up litter when you see it, volunteering, letting someone skip you in line, baking cookies for your local police and firemen, thanking Veterans for their service, tutoring, teaching someone a needed skill, donating clothes and food to those in need or a share box, giving a kind word, and so many more!

Below you will see teachers and students wearing their Kindness shirts, NJROTC putting kindness into action, and collecting donations. GSHS students were asked to submit names of peers who demonstrate acts of kindness each day for a Peer Helper Kindness Award! The winners were announced on National Random Acts of Kindness Day, February 17, 2023. The winners are: Sybilla Ramos (9th grade), Emma Steed (10th Grade), Alex Rippi (11th grade) and Lydia Dillard (12th grade). GSMS peer helpers worked hard preparing for World Kindness Day! They placed positive affirmations in the boys' and girls' bathrooms and wrote positive affirmations on the sidewalks for the students to see in the morning as they came to school. They were also in car line with their buckets to collect donations! GSES had peer helpers collecting donations in the car line and handing out stickers to all students. Kindness Day raised over \$6000.00 this year to go towards our Exceptional Education Programs.

"Let's not let the act of kindness be a designated week or day but a way of life."



Blue Cross Blue Shield Awards GSES and GSMS

2022 Winner of the BeHealthy School Grant Program



Congratulations Gulf Shores Elementary and Middle Schools. Teaching students how to stay healthy has earned both schools a \$10,000 Be Healthy School Grant award. The grants are for the implementation of school-based health and wellness programs that emphasize increased physical and nutritional education during the school year. Thank you Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama!

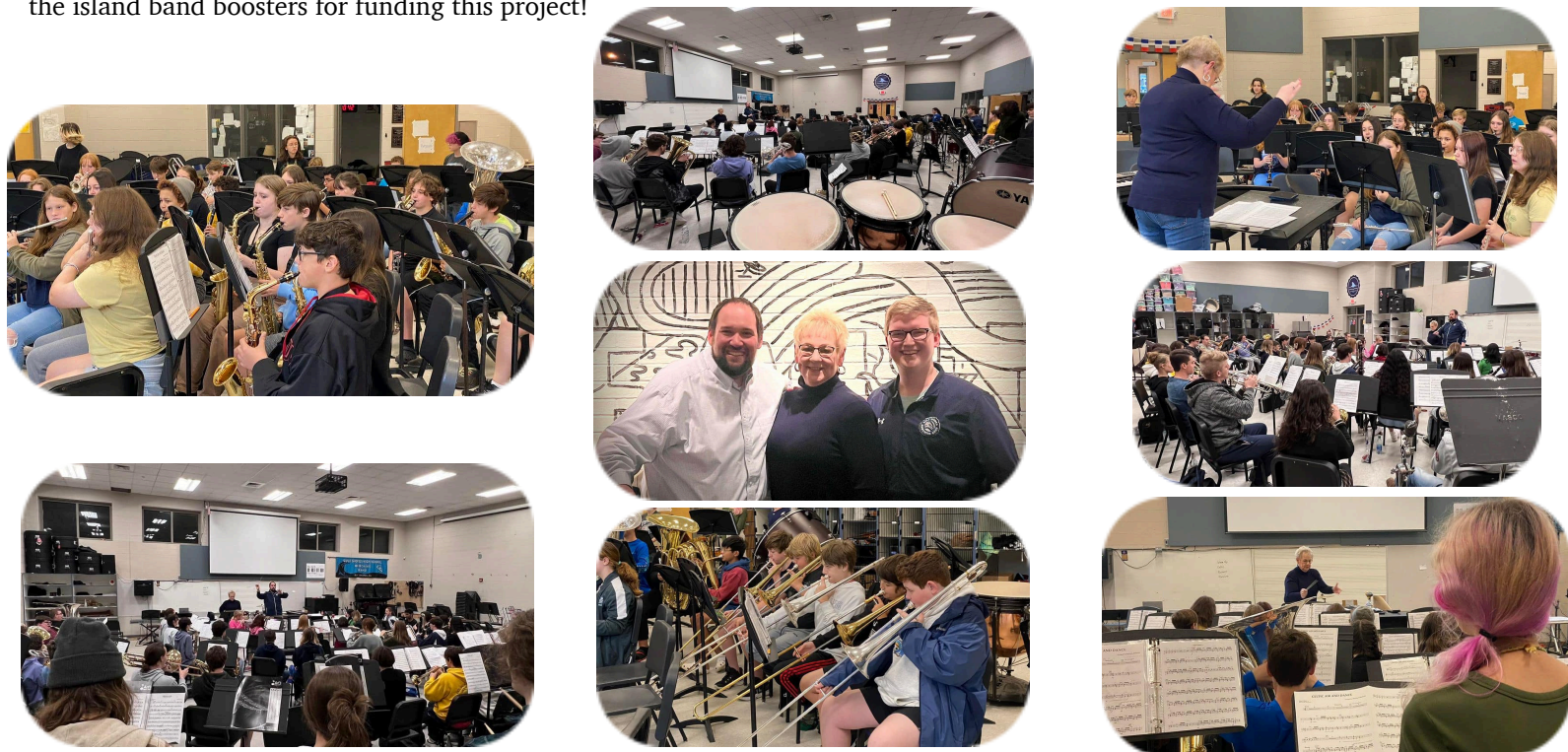
2022 Winner of the BeHealthy School Grant Program



/// MAKE WAVES!

GSHS and GSMS Concert Bands

The Gulf Shores Middle School and Gulf Shores High School concert bands had a wonderful music performance assessment band camp! President-Elect of the Alabama Bandmasters association, Lori Hart, spent the day with the bands working to help them develop their performance selections for state assessment next month. It was a long day but filled with lots of success and excitement! Many thanks to the island band boosters for funding this project!



GSES Heart Challenge

Join us in learning about heart health and raising funds to protect all hearts – especially other kids' like our own student Carson! Carson is our local Heart Survivor that is featured nationally on the Kids Heart Challenge program this year. Carson lives in Gulf Shores, AL and was born with a rare heart condition called Shone's Syndrome. He had surgery at 2 weeks old to help fix his heart and is thriving today!

Go here to join the GSES Heart Challenge:

<http://www2.heart.org/goto/GulfShoresElementarySchool>



With the help of GSCS students: Planting for Protection Dune Restoration

Day 1: The annual Planting for Protection Dune Restoration was a success! We are grateful that @gulf state park and @dunedoctors partner with us to provide this amazing service and sustainability-focused learning opportunity for our students! Students (including 170 fifth graders and 35 high and middle schools mentors) and teachers from all three district schools were on the beach planting over 3000 native plants to restore the dunes to the west of Gulf State Park Pier. Prior to planting, students will attend a rotation of on-beach classes (Coastal Dunes, Native Dune Vegetation, and Coastal Wildlife) taught by experts, Kelly Reetz, Frederique Berozet, and William (Bill) Lynn. Special thanks to partner, Gulf Coast RC&D, for funding this and several other sustainability-related projects.

Day 2: What an amazing day! Planting for Protection was a huge success! We had over 200 students from Gulf Shores City Schools participate in this dune restoration designed to help promote coastal resilience, and raise the next generation of coastal stewards.

GSCS in the News: [WKRG News](#) [MYNBC15 News](#)



GSHS and GSMS Awarded: CLAS School of Distinction Award

The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools has selected 32 schools, from across the state, as Schools of Distinction. Congratulations to **Gulf Shores High School for The Summer WAVE Program** and **Gulf Shores Middle School for Health & Wellness in Education**. The CLAS School of Distinction Award recognizes school programs that serve as outstanding educational models for other schools in Alabama. These exemplary schools/programs will be recognized at an awards luncheon in May. The CLAS Banner School program was created in 2001 to recognize schools in Alabama that showcase outstanding programs and services to students. 208 school programs were nominated for this prestigious recognition.



GSHS Career and Job Fair



Thank you to all the community partners who participated in our Annual GSHS Career and Job Fair! And a special thanks to all the teachers who brought their students to visit!



Meet Our Board: Dr. Nicky Gotschall - Vice President



Dr. Nichole (Nicky) Gotschall, Vice President, has enjoyed a wonderful career in post-secondary education. As an academic administrator, Nicky chaired the Department of Developmental Studies at Sullivan University from 2002 to 2007. There, she was the inaugural recipient of the Above and Beyond Award, Sullivan's Faculty Member of the Quarter Award. She joined Columbia Southern University in 2007 and has served in various positions including the Chair of the Department of General Education, Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dean of Undergraduate Programs. Nicky is an active member of the Gulf Shores community. As an advocate for the success of all students, she has served on the GSES Parent Involvement Planning Committee, the School Improvement Leadership Team, and the PTO. She is actively involved in GSCS' Light It Up Blue (Kindness Day) and the MS and HS Green Power Teams. Kindness Day raised over \$6000.00 this year for our Exceptional Education Programs.

Happening at GSCS:

[District
Elementary School
Middle School
High School
Virtual Academy](#)



**SAVE
the
DATE**

BOE: Work Session - 3/2 4:00pm
GSHS: Band Concert - 3/2 6:00pm Cultural Center
GSCS: Tuesday Tour at GSES - 3/7 9:00am
BOE: Regular Board Meeting - 3/9 5:00pm
GSES: PreK Lottery - 3/10 1:00pm (virtual)
GSCS: Early Dismissal all Schools - 3/10 11:30am
GSCS: End of 3rd Quarter - 3/10
GSHS: ACT w/Writing - Juniors - 3/14
GSES: 7 Habits with Admin - 3/14 8:30am
GSCS: Small Town, Big Garden Presents Farm to Table Harvest - 3/15 5:00pm
GSES: NEHS Induction - 3/16
GSCS: Spring Break - 3/27-31

Connect With Us:

[Matt Akin - Superintendent](#)
[Stephanie Harrison - Assistant Superintendent](#)
[Sandi Harris - Office Manager](#)
[Chad Green - CSFO](#)
[Marcelina Parrish - Human Resource Manager](#)
[Chezley Neth - Data Management & Reporting Analyst](#)
[Paul Wilson - Athletic Director](#)
[Joey Drews - Director of Educational Technology & Student Support Services](#)
[Beau Roode - Director of Operations](#)
[Connie McNab - Director of Exceptional Education](#)
[Carrie Barragan - English Second Language](#)
[Tanya Hill - Child Nutrition Program Coordinator](#)
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[Jessica Sampley - Career Tech Coordinator](#)
[Karen Pearson - District Testing Coordinator](#)
[Sara Parker - Mental Health Coordinator](#)

/// MAKE WAVES!

Do you have a
suggestion or comment
you would like to share
with us?

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[Joe McAleer-Social Media](#)

