
FALL 2023

THE TORNADO CONNECTION

KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN



Matilda Jr. is Sure to Make You Smile

BY DONALD WALTERS AND ROWAN ZEHRMISCH

On Tuesday, November 21 at 3:15 and 7 p.m., the BIHS Drama Club will entertain audiences with their production of Matilda Jr. Both shows will take place in the auditorium, and although admission is free, the club would appreciate a donation at the door.

In Matilda Jr., based on the story by Roald Dahl, Matilda Wormwood, a gifted girl with mean parents, enrolls in a school with an evil headmistress. While at the school, Matilda discovers she has extraordinary powers and uses them to defend herself and her classmates. The funny show features more than a dozen songs and a great script to entertain the audience.

Mrs. Tepper, the director, selected the show and has taken care of all parts of the production with the help of her co-director, Ms. Cirelli, and show assistant, Ms. Hartle. The students auditioned in September for the show, which is the Jr. version to allow for the script to be manageable and keep it age appropriate. Students interested in the crew signed up through a Google form.

The theme of Matilda is anti-bullying, and it shows good conquering evil. "The message stresses the importance of discipline, commitment, and responsibility," Mrs. Tepper said. To choose a show, she takes a poll and looks at the budget. This is the third year that she has directed a musical at the IHS.

Jocelyn Ward, an ensemble member in the show, explained, "The actors usually rehearse Monday through Thursday from 3-4:30, and sometimes only some people are called."

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When Jocelyn found out that she had a role in the ensemble, her celebration was going out for ice cream, and her dad made her dinner. In addition to being an ensemble member, she earned a little part in some of the songs, dance moves, and talking scenes. She usually practices from one hour to three hours, five days a week, and sometimes on the weekend. The music helps her memorize things, as she has to memorize the songs, talking, and dance moves. "It has been a lot of work, but it has been really fun!" she said.

Natalie Rivers is an eighth grade crew member for the show. Last year, she was in Mrs. Tepper's Stagecraft ESP. She likes everyone that is in the musical. She commented, "The musical is an escape from the world, and it is a way to have fun after school." The musical affects her academic growth positively. "It impacts my social life because I meet new people," she said. When she is backstage, she usually moves sets and assists with lighting or sound. Natalie likes being backstage because she doesn't want to sing or dance, but she likes to take part in the musical.

Bryce Schreffler is an actor who plays Nigel in the musical. Bryce said, "I am good at monologues, but not so good at singing, so Nigel is a good fit for me." He practices the songs for about an hour each day. Bryce likes to perform because he can show his talents to the audience. He feels that the memorization he does for the musical could help him in his future career. After he auditioned, he was worried about getting a call back, and when he did, he made a blueberry blast smoothie. He didn't care what part he was given, as long as he was in the musical.

Zoe Green is an eighth grader who plays Rudolpho in the musical. She auditioned for Miss Honey originally, as she had a lot of screen time and some solos. However, when she was given the role of Rudolpho, she was so excited to have the role that makes the audience laugh. According to Zoe, "The musical helps with time management and memorizing skills." She has met really cool people and made new friends.

The whole production has been a total group effort! In addition to Mrs. Tepper, Ms. Cirelli, and Ms. Hartle, the student show assistant is Isabelle Colonna, and the student directors are Olivia Cornish and Alexis Glenn. The stage crew manager is Claire Landon. Additionally, all of the sets were designed by the ESP Stagecraft class and members of the stage crew!

The cast includes: Braylon Campbell as Eric, Grace Pfender as Tommy, Addison Dumbaugh as Amanda, Isabella Jackson as Bruce, Lyric Pappas and Lavender, Beatrix Medved as Alice, Grace Roberts as Hortensia, Bryce Schreffler as Nigel, Abigail Colonna as Matilda, Genevieve Garrido as Mr. Wormwood, Adelynn Bushre as Mrs. Wormwood, Bryson Myrli as Michael, Charlotte Doverspike as Mrs. Phelps, Ava Gerber as Escapologist, Sienna Stutz as Acrobat, Alayna Kennedy as Cook, Maranda Horstman as Miss Honey, Kateyn Hankey as Agatha Trunchbull, Isabella Florentine as Mechanic, Zoe Green as Rudolpho, Troy Cherry as Sergei, Camryn Rivers as Big Kid 1, Harlee McKain as Big Kid 2, Maddalyn McConahy as Big Kid 3, and Preston Mottern and Jordan Zier as Russians.

The ensemble is: Kendall Adams, Savannah Andres, Katelynn Brosius, Kendra Buckshire, Penny Cherry, Nanci Christie, Olivia Cornish, Alicia Coyne, Jameson Curran, Riley Davis, Peyton Diamond, Mackenzie Erdos, Hallie Fagan, Kerrington Fleeger, Adalee Froilan, Sydnee Fuchs, Alexis Glenn, Audrinna Harris, Eva Hibbs, Elizabeth King, Lyric Kuminkoski, Khloe Kummer, Callie Marzolf, Emmalee McCandless, Maci McCloskey, Edin Ottinger, Isabella Personett, Rhannon Rearick, Riley Rittersdorf, Corrin Rodgers, Cheyenne Sherrouse, Mya Souverin, Anaya Spohn, Jocelyn Ward, Julianna Ward, Natalie Weyandt, and Isabella Young. The production also includes many stage crew members.

Come see Matilda Jr. on November 21 and support these young actors!



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Long-Time Bus Drivers Passionate About Students

BY RILEY DAVIS AND ABBY POLLOCK

Quite a few bus drivers have been driving Butler students for many years, and they feel very committed to the job that they do. Four of those drivers are Chrissy Kerr, Kelly Laux, Cheryl Lind, and Bill Outly, all of whom have become close friends over the years. They all work very hard for students' transportation and help out our district in many ways.

Cheryl loves her job and has been doing it for 24 years. "I became a bus driver when I was 35," Cheryl said. Chrissy added, "I enjoy my job. I love that I get to do it every day. I have been doing it for about 22 years and wish to continue it." Bill was 39 years old when he became a bus driver. Kelly is usually the mechanic for the bus line, but he drives a route often too.



All four bus drivers have driven a bus at different local schools. Cheryl has driven in West Virginia as well. Weather is a major factor when it comes to driving a bus. Kelly and Bill have been in a rather icy place. Bill has driven kids to school in a blizzard with "ice and lots and lots of snow." On the other hand, Chrissy has driven in a tornado! She said, "I have driven in severe weather conditions, but the worst of all was a tornado." Cheryl and Kelly have both driven in a snowstorm or in icy conditions.

To drive a school bus, the drivers must have a commercial driving license and pass a series of tests and obtain clearances. To maintain their certification, they have to complete coursework and take additional driving exams every so many years. The safety of the students is always a top priority.

The part they enjoy the least about their jobs is having to turn students in for discipline. Chrissy gives the students a "verbal warning," and if they continue, the students are written up. Bill has a bit of a different method; he assigns seats for the whole bus if there is a behavior problem. Kelly's way of punishing a student is by putting them in the front seat. Cheryl says she is more of a "first impression" person, so she ends up giving the whole bus assigned seats.

According to Chrissy, "I love driving my bus, and I love the kids I get to see every day." Cheryl and Chrissy look forward to seeing the students come onto the bus every day. Chrissy said, "I love being behind the wheel, and I'm so grateful for my friends and this job." Kelly loves getting up early before the sun rises. He specifically enjoys driving the country routes. Bill said, "I love kids and can't wait to see them every day, before and after school. I have been driving for a long time, and I want to continue as long as I can."

All of these bus drivers have put their heart and soul in their job and have dedicated their time to get students to school and home.



Musicians Prepare for Winter Concerts

BY NATALIE RIVERS, EDITOR

Many students, families, teachers, and community members look forward to seeing the young musicians dedication and hardwork in the music program at their annual concerts. The Winter Concert Series kicks off on December 5 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium with the band's performance. The next concert will be the sixth grade chorus at 7 p.m. on December 11, followed by the seventh and eighth grade chorus at 7 p.m the next night. Orchestra finishes the series with their concert on December 14 at 7 p.m. in the IHS auditorium.

Mrs. Black, the BHS orchestra director who has been teaching for 9 years, reports that, "I enjoy watching the kids grow from sixth grade to 12th grade, musically and just as people in general." In their upcoming Winter Concert, sixth graders are playing *Rockin Ol' St. Nick* and *Angels We Have Heard On High*. The combined seventh and eighth graders are playing *Joyful Christmas*, *Believe* from the *Polar Express*, and *Rest ye Merry, Rock ye Very*. Then, the Senior High Orchestra will perform, followed by the Rock Orchestra. The Senior High has just performed at the Spooktacular and have not started their Christmas songs yet. The Rock Orchestra is playing *Christmas Eve/Sarajevo 12/24*, *Rock the Halls*, *Siberian Sleigh Ride*, *The March of the Kings/Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, and *Wizards and Winter*.

Rock Orchestra, which is an audition-based group, meets every Wednesday from 3:00 - 4:15. They will go on tours to elementary schools in Butler, have community events like performing at Missing Links, and also play at the orchestra concerts. The group ranges from eighth-12th grade students. The instruments include keyboard, bass, guitar, drums, violin, viola, and cello.

Jude Perhacs, a seventh grade viola player, loves orchestra because it is a way for students to express themselves, have fun with friends, and have a nice break from the school day. According to Jude, "My favorite song is *Believe* because it is a more graceful song compared to our other songs, *Joyful Christmas* and *Rest ye Merry, Rock ye Very*." Jude feels that other students should be in the orchestra because "you can create music, and everyone becomes like one big family."

In band, students are learning many different songs like *Buckets Full of Christmas Joy*, *Deck the Halls with Bells and Whistles*, *A Christmas Tale*, *Hanukkah*, and some other holiday songs. Mr. Karenbauer picks out the songs for the students by trying to get the students to the next level, which means not using the books, but instead picking things that will be more educational. "I am very proud of my students, and I love hearing them make music as a group," he said. Concerts in this coming school year are the Winter Concert and the Spring Concert, which he prepares the students by having practice everyday at school. He added, "But it is also a student's job to prepare for the concerts independently by practicing at home." All of his eighth grade students have earned a spot in the Butler Marching Band.

According to Kyra Olivares, an eighth grade French horn player, "My favorite part of being a part of the band is learning the new songs and performing at the concerts." Her favorite song is *Buckets Full of Christmas Joy*. Kyra added that other students should get involved in band because there are so many cool opportunities (like marching band), and you get to create music with your friends.

Mrs. Erevia, one of the chorus directors, has been teaching for 12 years and started singing and dancing at a young age, which has inspired her to teach chorus. She enjoys watching the students perform and grow in music. She said, "I love making the connections with the students and watching them work together as a group." In class, they do a variety of warm-ups and then sing the songs for the day.

Mrs. Tepper, one of the other chorus directors at the Intermediate, has been teaching for roughly 30 years, and has been performing on stage for a long time. She said, "I love seeing the students become more well-rounded people through music, and watching all the students work as a team." They do many different warm-ups and depending on the day, they do some rounds, music literacy, and then get into the songs.

Jacob Szul and AnnaBelle Witt, eighth grade chorus members, say that their favorite part of being in chorus is doing the warm-ups with everyone. Jacob's favorite song is *Africa*, but Annabelle's favorite song is *Here Comes the Snow*. They both say that other students should join chorus because it is something unique compared to band or orchestra, and if you like it, you can stick with it.



Science and Math Departments Welcome New Teachers

BY ABBY POLLOCK

New IHS teachers Mr. McCool, Mrs. Freehling, Mr. Deaven, and Mrs. McElroy joined the faculty this fall. Some of them are new to Butler, and some transferred from other schools within the district.

Mr. McCool is an eighth grade science teacher who has a wife and two sons, as well as two dogs. His sister is a stay-at-home mom, and his brother is a mechanical engineer. Mr. McCool has been in the building for two months, but before he came here, he was at McQuiston and the Middle School.



Before school, he makes himself some coffee, does some yoga and meditation, and makes sure all the materials are ready to go for his classes. He likes to get here every morning at 7:05 a.m. to prepare for his morning classes and to feed the trout in his classroom tank.

When he was younger, he didn't want to become a teacher, instead he wanted to be a truck driver. According to Mr. McCool, "Students learning about how science connects with the world around them is the best part of my day."

Mrs. Freehling is another new eighth grade science teacher. She has a sister who does medical coding for hospitals. At a young age, she wanted to be a doctor and to study the human bones, but then she realized how she wanted to, "...see people have fun and smile science and the world around us."

When Mrs. Freehling comes into her room at 7:10 a.m., she gets the daily question ready to go, then reviews homework, videos, and textbook questions. According to Mrs. Freehling, "For me, teaching is more student-centered than anything else. I love observing how my students find out information by working together. I want them to see how science works in the real world."

Mr. Deaven is a seventh grade mathematics teacher in room 230. He has one brother who installs windows and doors. This is his first year teaching in Butler, and he has found the rest of the staff very friendly and welcoming.

Mr. Deaven arrives around 7 a.m. to make sure his lessons are ready, and does a warm-up before every class. His favorite part of teaching is "seeing the smiles on my students' faces as they walk in." He added, "My students' energy makes school fun and exciting. Seeing them work hard everyday is the best thing I can ask for."



Mrs. McElroy is a sixth grade math teacher. Her husband is a teacher at Northwest, and her sister is a pharmaceutical receptionist. Ever since she was little, her dream was to become a teacher or even a principal. According to Mrs. McElroy, "I love math and like when students finally understand the concept of math."

She enjoys having her students working together to help each other grow, learn, and have fun in her class. "Watching all of the students have more freedom and being able to grow to their full potential makes me excited to see what they can do in the future," she said proudly.

Please join us in welcoming these new teachers to the Intermediate!

Academic Games Challenge Students

BY JOSH NORONHA, EDITOR

The Academic Games are a set of games that encourage students to out-think each other in the areas of mathematics, language arts, and social studies. Although some games are open to all interested students, the games are mainly tailored for students with gifted IEP's. These games include Onsets, Propaganda, LinguiSHTIKs, Presidents, and Equations. Two competitions have already taken place this school year, Onsets and Propaganda. LinguiSHTIKs, Presidents, and Equations are slated to be played later this school year.



Onsets, the first of these games, was held on October 18. To play the game, one player sets out six to ten of the cards face up. These cards are called the universe. Another player rolls the cubes and sets a numerical GOAL (such as 5). The object of the game is to figure out and name a specific group of cards that matches the goal. This is called the set name. Special rules called Variations are used in each division and serve to challenge a player's higher-order thinking skills according to their grade level. Before the cubes are rolled in a "shake," each player selects one Variation from the list provided for that division. In subsequent "shakes," players may select different Variations.

A 35-minute match may involve two to six "shakes," allowing many different mathematical concepts to be applied. At the end of the tournament, the head judge then announces who earned Undeclared, which is the best a competitor can do. Players are considered undeclared if they either won two games and tied for first on one game, or won all three games.

The second game, Propaganda, took place on November 1 for grades 7 and 8. Sixth grade competed on November 15. Propaganda is a question-and-response game. While playing Propaganda, students learn to recognize techniques of persuasion that are often used by advertisers, politicians, editorial writers, and in everyday conversations. Players increase their ability to discern the truth from "smokescreens." They learn to figure out the reality of situations rather than getting duped by any illogical arguments which greatly improves their reasoning skills. The benchmark for undeclared in this game varies based on the top 10% of scores.

Third, on December 11 and 13, the students will compete in LinguiSHTIKs. This name is also often shortened to Ling. LinguiSHTIK is a cube game that challenges players to improve their grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and writing skills. Players learn to compose better sentences with proper grammar application. They also use richer vocabulary as they compete against others and are rewarded.

All grade levels play with the same set of procedural rules. However, each division level of competition introduces increasingly more difficult grammatical concepts for the players to use. Competitors are challenged to enhance their vocabulary and grammar skills in increasingly creative ways. Players usually learn more from applying their knowledge in the competition than they do in their normal classroom studies. The undeclared scenario is basically the same as Onsets.

The last two games that Butler students in grades 6-8 participate in are Presidents and Equations, which take place later this school year. Presidents is a question-and-response game that challenges the students' knowledge of United States presidents. For each question in a round, a central reader reads a series of three clues about one of the presidents, pausing after each clue. A player who can identify the president after the first clue scores 6 points. A player who waits and can identify the president after two clues earns 4 points. A player who waits until all three clues are read and then answers correctly scores 2 points. A round consists of 8-10 questions. Students are provided some assistance in identifying the presidents. While listening to the clues, players may study AGLOA's approved chart which lists each president's name, political party, dates in office, year and state of birth, and year of death.

Equations is a game of creative mathematics. It teaches Algebraic concepts, ranging from the six basic operations at the

beginning to very sophisticated math at the high school levels. A numerical goal is set by one player using a few of the cubes rolled. Each cube contains four digits and two operation signs. Each match involves three players from different schools. Many such matches occur simultaneously and last for 35 minutes. Depending upon the time scheduled, two or three such matches can take place on a given day. The undefeated is the same LinguisHTIKs.

There are stages of each academic game that the students can advance to, such as Tri-Bowl and Nationals. According to Dr. DeThomas, "You have to be undefeated in at least one game or be on a first place team in at least one game to advance to the state competition of Tri-Bowl. And then, you have to either be undefeated in two games, or a combination of undefeated or first place team in two games to be eligible for Nationals." Usually, 10-20% advance to Tri-Bowl, and out of those people, only a handful of them qualify for Nationals.

The students really enjoy these games. Isabella Young, who is participating in Propaganda, LinguisHTIKs, and Equations said, "I just think it's a fun experience. You get to get out of the school and have fun with your friends playing these games, and it's just a really cool experience."



Fond Memories of 225 East North Street

BY ANDREW BENJAMIN AND BRADY PETSINGER

The sale of the school building found at 225 East North Street was the end of an era for many people in Butler. Fond 225 East North Street memories touch Butler Intermediate High School teachers and students as they are reminded of the camaraderie and freedoms of the old Middle and Junior High School.

A building itself can't have feelings, but most of the teachers from IHS that once taught at 225 E. North agreed that the old Junior High had a homey feeling, and it fostered a community that was like a family, with everyone looking out for each other. According to Dr. DeThomas, an eighth grade math teacher who moved to the IHS when it transitioned to a fifth and sixth grade building, "Everyone was happy. Students and teachers had a strong sense of community."

Mrs. Sankey also taught eighth grade science there for 20 years. When she left, she missed the space that she had and the close proximity of a specialized science lab. Most importantly though, she would miss the history. "I miss the classroom because my father was taught in that exact room, so it was special to me," she said. Even though Dr. DeThomas preferred the Junior High School, she still enjoys the current Intermediate. "We brought the family feeling with us, but it sometimes feels like we don't see people from the other parts of the building."

Seventh grade teachers, Mr. Rock and Mrs. Bodamer agreed that the old building was special. "The community was caring,

kind, compassionate,” Mrs. Bodamer said. Mr. Rock added that it had a good culture and good people. Although the size of the Junior High had benefits for their teaching, they enjoyed the fact that they got the experience of both schools. “I prefer either one as long as I’m making students happy and teaching them,” Mr. Rock proudly said. Mrs. Bodamer taught on the third floor and also on the sunny side, so she was constantly hot. Even with the heat being considered, she said, “I would go back in a heartbeat.”

Finally, sixth grade teacher Mrs. Hovancik had the honor of teaching the last sixth grade class in Butler Middle School. According to Mrs. Hovancik, “When I found out they were closing the middle school building, I felt sad and nervous.” Mrs. Hovancik taught science and social studies there, and her favorite part was getting to collaborate with the teachers and truly making learning fun for her students. Although she was excited for the new journey, she would miss working with Team Seven. “I miss the staff, the closeness of everybody, and the atmosphere,” she said. She does like the current school because of the flexibility and the layout although she wants “...to go back.”

There are numerous things that the teachers agreed on. To start, teachers were pleased with the addition of air conditioning, as the old building had none. “Air conditioning was key,” Rock said. As mentioned earlier Bodamer was constantly hot, so she was obviously excited. The most common drawback mentioned was the lack of windows in the current building.

One common theme that emerged with all of the teachers was their dedication to the students and the importance of making school a place where everyone feels they belong, even when the physical space is changed. They spoke fondly of the projects they did in the old building to foster that interest in learning and sense of community. Mrs. Bodamer said, “We did a project called ‘Bungee Barbie’ in the Cinderella staircase. That was really cool.” Mrs. Sankey added, “Teaching labs was my favorite. It really engaged the kids in the subject.” Mr. Rock was disappointed to leave because he couldn’t teach on the stage, “On the stage, I was able to teach Guerilla tactics, which the kids enjoyed.”

Additionally, eighth grade students, Lukas Olexsak and Rowan Zehmisch, both had similar opinions as to what grades they liked at the old Middle School. “I liked sixth grade more because I got to be in person in the building rather than just online,” said Lukas. Rowan said she had the most awesome school year during sixth grade because of her amazing teachers. “Miss Miller and Miss Yeager are the best,” she said. Both of them agreed that the history of the building was special to them as their parents went there. According to Lukas, “It was cool knowing that my family went there.”

Seventh grade students, Evan Ordy and Asher McKee, both prefer the IHS over the old middle school. Asher stated, “The changes affected freedom in a good way.” Evan agreed. “This school is bigger. It is helpful to have the seventh grade wings, so students don’t get lost. It was harder to find all of the classrooms at the old middle school,” Evan said.

The old Butler Middle and Junior High school made thousands of memories in students’ and teachers’ lives and will always be remembered.

Eighth Graders Give Back in NJHS

BY ROWAN ZEHMISCH AND DONALD WALTERS

Eighth grade students who maintain at least a 3.6 GPA can qualify to join the National Junior Honor Society chapter at Butler Intermediate High School.

Herr Schneider has been the advisor of NJHS for the last three years. The advisor can be any teacher or principal in the school district, but in order to be an advisor, you must be passionate about making a change in the community and school, and supporting the students’ ability to do the same. According to Herr Schneider, “The NJHS was established to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to simulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership, to encourage responsible citizenship, and to develop character in the students of secondary schools.”

In addition to maintaining a 3.6 GPA, members must not have a disciplinary record and must complete 12.5 hours of service before May. If students do not meet the requirements, they are not inducted at the May ceremony.

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NJHS doesn't help students choose a career, but it helps build skills such as leadership and instills the importance of giving back to the community, which can be helpful after high school. It also teaches students how to balance work at the same time.

The NJHS is a nationally recognized organization that has been around for many years. Butler's chapter, The Stanley Saw Chapter, was named after the principal in the 1980-1990s. The IHS chapter has been around since 1983.

The induction ceremony is a nationally created ceremony that every chapter has to follow. In order to be a chapter, the chapter owes dues every year to the national organization. The NJHS requirements were established and orderly followed every year for decades. Induction ceremonies last about one hour, and a reception with refreshments follows the ceremony. The officers include president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

Natalie Rivers is the vice president of NJHS and plans to be officially inducted in May. "I try to be a good person and have good grades," she said. In order to earn the service hours, she will continue to participate in Starfish activities and look for additional opportunities to participate in service. She already has over eight hours of service. According to Natalie, "Herr Schneider is fun, and he schedules meetings so that we can all make it, even if we are involved in other activities."

Cleo Cirunay is also a new member of NJHS. She takes pride in her grades and tries to stay involved in school through clubs and sports. In order to earn her service hours, she plans to participate in the Broad Street after school program and possibly become a candy striper at the hospital. Although NJHS really just packs up her schedule more, she thinks it will make her more appealing to colleges, and she has already started planning for her future.

Michael DeDionisio had straight A's, and ESP is a great factor for him being in NJHS. According to Michael, "I will serve at church activities to complete 12.5 hours." His schedule is completely full, with orchestra and NJHS, plus academics, but being inducted into NJHS would look good on his resume and college application, as it shows responsibility and commitment.



Enrichment Courses Interest Students

BY SOPHIE EASTERBROOK

Outstanding students in seventh and eighth grade have the opportunity to enroll in the Enrichment Studies Program at the Butler Intermediate High School. Through a variety of enrichment opportunities, these students get to know the real world through the courses they study. The program offers a variety of classes for different interests, some of which include Forensic Science, TV and Video, Calcubot, and Mock Trial.

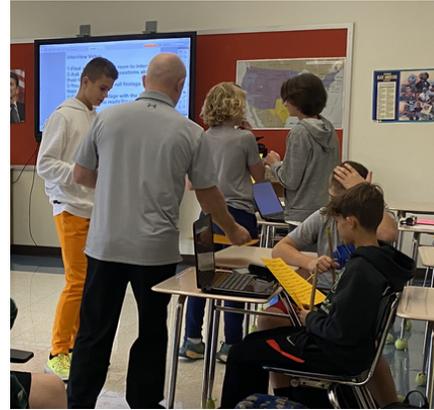
Forensic Science/Crime Scene Investigation is a course where students learn about the crime scene topic, practice a hands-on lab, and then tie what they learn together with a forensics files episode. Mrs. Swartz, a seventh grade science teacher, is the instructor for Forensics Science, one of the newest ESP classes. "I really enjoy the class, and I hope to teach it for as long as I can," she said.

Grades for her ESP class are based on the labs that the students complete, notes they take, and the project they create at the end of the trimester. According to one of her students, "Mrs. Swartz is funny, easy going, and the best ESP teacher." She has family who work in law enforcement, so she enjoys teaching her students more about how they work. "The biggest challenge," she mentioned, "is trying to meet every student's needs, and making sure that everyone is engaged in the lesson." Mrs. Swartz loves the freedom/creativity of teaching an ESP class because she can develop her own curriculum. If she were to select another ESP course to teach, she would choose TV and Video or Intro to Fashion because a lot of people want to take those classes. According to Mrs. Swartz, "Students who are interested in using reasoning and investigation skills in a mock crime scene should take this ESP class."

TV and Video Production teaches students how to create original video content for school-related purposes. In addition to learning a lot about technology, the students also use creativity, time management, leadership skills, and teamwork

everyday. Mr. Cochran, an eighth grade history teacher, facilitates the TV and Video Production course, which has been a part of his schedule for the last 14 years.

The students' grades are based on their proficiency using the software and technology, as well as meeting the deadline to create the video. Mr. Cochran can be described as an energetic and personable teacher who learns technology easily. "I was always really interested in video learning and the use of technology," he commented. According to Mr. Cochran, the biggest challenge he faces in ESP is the paperwork and trying to keep things relevant to the students. "Sometimes getting them to buy into things is a challenge. Kids change from year to year, and I have to find a way to teach that," he said.



He most enjoys when his students have that "ah ha" moment or when they use a different creative approach. If he were to teach another ESP class, he would choose It's Your World because he's a history teacher and likes geography. According to Mr. Cochran, "TV and Video Production is a great enrichment class for people who are creative thinkers, and I encourage everyone to take it."

In Calcutbot, students work on a team to program a graphing calculator to act as a robot. Mrs. Snyder, an eighth grade mathematics instructor, has been teaching Calcutbot for about eight years.

Grades for Calcutbot are based on class participation and work completion. Mrs. Snyder describes herself as a rule follower who likes to have fun and make connections with her students. According to her students, she should be described as funny and talented. Mrs. Snyder inherited the course from another teacher. "A friend of mine who moved to the senior high started the class, but when she left, I was asked to take it over. I love it!" she said. Mrs. Snyder feels the biggest challenge is motivating the students, but the positives outweigh that challenge. "I like that there is more freedom and time to be creative in ESP, and that the students get to do something different than anything else they have in the day," she said. If she were to teach another ESP, she would choose Forensics Science because she likes to watch crime stories on TV. "ESP is an awesome opportunity that the school offers to students. All of the courses are great," she added.

In Mock Trial/Public Speaking, students learn good speaking skills, posture, and then they participate in a mock trial. Mr. Kasperek, the Latin teacher, has been teaching the course for the last two years. He gives the class a fictional court case, usually a murder case, and then they work in groups to try the suspect using the packets, books, and questions they are provided. At the end of the second trimester, they compete against other schools.

Grades in this course are based on a rubric that evaluates their planning, performance, and speaking skills during the mock trial. Mr. Kasperek's students describe him as an "easy going, positive, helpful person who sees the good in others." According to Mr. Kasperek, he took over teaching public speaking when the ninth grade moved to the high school. "Mrs. Mahood taught the class before me, and she talked to me about teaching it when she moved to the Senior High. I am so happy that I did!" he said. The biggest challenge in this course is working with the students who are shy and trying to get them to speak louder and prouder, and the biggest like for him is the students and teaching them. If he were to teach another ESP, he would pick Makerspace because he likes to build new creations. Mr. Kasperek added, "If you want to be a lawyer someday, my ESP course is for you!"



FALL 2023

THE TORNADO CONNECTION

STUDENT SECTION



Athletes Finish Fall Season

BY ALAINA GARBINSKI, EDITOR AND KYRA OLIVARES, EDITOR

This fall, seventh and eighth grade athletes participated in cross country, football, soccer, and volleyball.

The Butler Cross Country team was led by Coach Carrie Smith and enjoyed a very successful season. The girls' team won one invitational and won all but three races. The boys team took third in an invitational and also won all but three races. Landon Slear commented on his experience: "The season was amazing. Everyone was encouraging, responsible, and willing to get better!" Annabelle Witt observed, "We could've improved on the mental part of it all because when we ran NA, no one had any hope. But other than that, the season was wonderful!"

The team definitely grew in speed, and they grew as a family. Coach Smith said, "Between the first day of practice and our last meet, obviously I saw growth and improvements physically." She also stated, "I also recognized growth into the team mindset as a whole." The runners believed Coach Smith was an outstanding coach. Landon said, "She helped us live up to our full running potential."

The next sport is football. Mr. Uncapher and Mr. Popovich were the coaches that led the boys through a challenging but fun season of football. Mr. Popovich said, "Even though our outcome of the season was not what we wanted, the boys still had a fun time playing a sport they love." A typical practice involved warmups, then the coaches divided the players by their positions for drills to work on position-specific skills. Finally, they would all come together and scrimmage, focusing on the skills they had practiced.

Coach Uncapher said, "I saw some major improvements, especially in the kids who just started playing." According to Mason Myers, "NA was by far the toughest team we faced." Noah Schooley stated, "I feel like the losses helped our team mentally get better." The team didn't have much of a chance to respond to a win, but they used the losses to motivate themselves to get better for the next game.

The boys' soccer team was coached by Coach Reges. The practices started off with a slower paced drill that warmed the players up. Next, they did a faster paced drill that always involved running. Finally, they scrimmaged for the rest of the practice. Jude Perhacs stated, "I'm pretty sad that the season is over, and I will miss just coming out of the classroom and playing soccer with my friends."

Coach Reges was a great coach for the boys. Jax Geibel stated, "The coaches were amazing!" The toughest teams that the boys played this season were NA and Pine Richland. Perhacs added, "NA was just a let down, but against Pine Richland, we tried our best. They were just the better team." The team responded to wins and losses well, but they were definitely in a different mood when they lost.

Keeping the soccer going with the girls' soccer team, which was coached by Mr. Leyland. The girls started their practice differently from the guys. They started with warmups which involved passing the ball and some stretches. Then they did some drills, and the pace would get faster and faster. Finally, they would end the practice off with a little scrimmage. Ava Delorenzo stated, "The season went really well, and we all majorly improved." Sydney also said, "I'm sad that the season is over but also relieved because I don't have to make up a bunch of work."

The toughest teams these girls faced were NA black and Seneca. According to Coach Leyland, "NA black was a challenging team that pushed us to be our best and now we know who could play where." The team responded to losses worse at the beginning of the season, but as they got more comfortable with each other, they started to create more plays and responded to the outcomes of games better.

Finally, volleyball was coached by Coach Hannah Williams and Coach Nichole Holt. They team enjoyed a very successful year, and all of the players learned a lot and improved. According to Leela Hyatt, "The coaches were amazing and made practice so much more fun and worth coming to." A typical volleyball practice started with warm-ups, which was setting and bumping the ball back and forth with a partner. Then they would split up into the seventh and eighth grade teams and work on different drills and skills to help them grow. Finally, the seventh and eighth grade teams would scrimmage each other. Coach Hannah said, "The girls improved in almost every aspect of the game throughout the season." Everyone claims that they saw a lot of growth and improvement within the team. The volleyball team won a lot of games but also lost some too. Rachel Smith stated, "It was definitely more fun to win, but losing helped us grow as athletes and volleyball players."

The BIHS thanks all of the athletes for maintaining the grades they need, as well as putting in lots of effort into the sport they love.





Who Am I? Sixth Grade Mystery Teacher

BY SYDNEY KARENBAUER AND KENDALL MILLER

The mystery sixth grade teacher went to college at IUP because it was one of the oldest colleges in Pennsylvania. His favorite place to eat is Red Lobster, and his go-to drink is Diet Pepsi. The weirdest thing he keeps in his car is a windshield breaker.

This teacher's favorite hobby outside of school is to go wakeboarding. He has one child who is 19 years old. His ideal choice of a clothing brand would be Nike. The biggest thing that inspired him to become a teacher was the one year he had the opportunity to coach the swim team, and he automatically fell in love with teaching kids.

If he were to win a million dollars, he would buy a snowy ski house and a big new boat. This teacher's favorite animal is a penguin, and he loves to see them at the zoo. His favorite part of his day is the advisory period. The first thing he does in the morning is shut off his alarm. He feels like school is a welcoming place. "I enjoy meeting people that are not from my team," he said.

Who Am I? Seventh Grade Mystery Teacher

BY SYDNEY KARENBAUER AND KENDALL MILLER

The seventh grade mystery teacher went to Slippery Rock University because it was known for teaching. Her favorite food is tacos, and her favorite drink is Coca-Cola. The weirdest thing in her car is "Probably dog treats and many dog bowls and leashes for my dog." One of this teacher's favorite hobbies is embroidery; she loves making gifts for her friends and family.

This teacher has no children, and her favorite brand is Vici because it has good style. She enjoys sharing her passion for the subject that she teaches to her students. According to this seventh grade teacher, "If I had a million dollars, I would buy clothes. Of course, I already have way too many!" Her favorite animal is a leopard, and the first thing she does in the morning is check her phone. This mystery teacher loves her job and said, "The best part is the students by far!"



Who Am I? Eighth Grade Mystery Teacher

BY SYDNEY KARENBAUER AND KENDALL MILLER

The eighth grade mystery teacher attended Duquesne University. "I felt safe and very at home there, and Duquesne offers an excellent education," she said. Her favorite food and drink is loaded french fries and caramel latte cold or hot. The weirdest thing in her car is a toddler toilet, which she said, "sounds very weird, but it makes sense for my family."

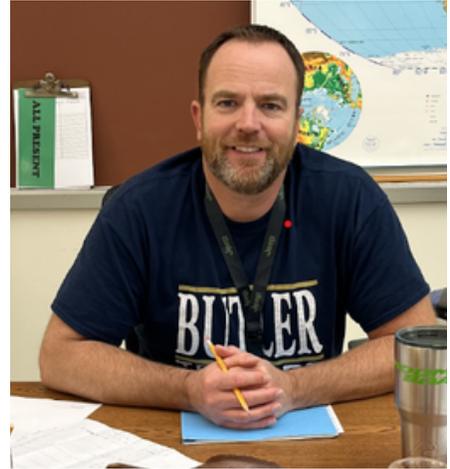
This mystery teacher has two little girls, one who is 3 ½ and another one who is 15 months. Her favorite clothing brand is Ann Taylor Loft. She became a teacher to build connections with students and make a difference. She also likes having the summer off. Her all-time favorite hobby is traveling and her favorite animals from the zoo are giraffes. The first thing she does when she wakes up is her makeup. According to this eighth grade teacher, "My favorite part of the day is just being in class and talking to my students."

Moving Up: A Look at the Differences Between Grades

BY MATHEW WIBLE AND ASHER MCKEE

Although the IHS only spans three grades, there are some distinct differences between the grade levels. Teachers and students point to work load, class organization and options, and expectations as the main adjustments from grade to grade.

Sixth graders adapted from smaller elementary schools to the large IHS building this year. Atticus English, a sixth grader, has spent only a few months in the IHS, but he has settled in well.



According to Atticus, he found the IHS to be more exciting, and he has no trouble finding his classes. One main change is the time the day starts because the secondary buildings start class more than an hour earlier than elementary. "It's not that bad because I have already gone to a catholic school before, and they start early," he said. The message that Atticus wants the fifth graders coming up to sixth grade to remember is: "Don't be scared, but be prepared."

Lily Gonzalez is also in sixth grade and new to the building. "The IHS is way bigger than I expected," she said. At first she had a hard time finding her classes, but she eventually found her way. One change she noticed right away was the lack of recess, which has been replaced by advisory. "I like advisory better because I have time to get my work done," she said. The message Lily would give to fifth graders coming up to sixth is: "Prepare for the work, but it's no sweat because it is pretty easy."

According to Mr. Starr, a sixth grader teacher at the IHS, the first thing his class does at the start of the year is a lot of get to know activities. Every morning, Mr. Starr tries to greet his students with a smile. According to Mr. Starr, he makes his class fun by using "well-timed humor." Mr. Starr likes his new sixth grade classes and says that they're a good group of kids. The most important thing that Mr. Starr tells his sixth graders is that they can always improve themselves and act more responsible. The message Mr. Starr wants the fifth graders coming up to sixth grade is: "Most of the sixth grade classes are in the same part of the building, so you won't have to worry about knowing the whole building."

Transitioning from sixth to seventh grade is even easier because students are already acquainted with the building. Greyson Steadman, a current seventh grader, said that the biggest difference between sixth and seventh is being upstairs rather than downstairs this year. Greyson also feels that the work is definitely harder for him this year, and the amount of homework is more than last year. According to Greyson, "Starting sixth grade was harder for me. I have had an easier time doing things, like finding his classes, this year." Greyson also has an ESP class, and he says that he likes having an ESP, even though it is more work. Greyson's message for new seventh graders is "be prepared for the work."



Donovan Morris, another current seventh grader, thinks his biggest adjustment was trying to find all of his classes around the school and harder work in ELA. According to Donovan, "Sixth grade was harder for me than seventh because I didn't know my way around, and I didn't know anyone." Now, he really likes the building. Donovan's message for incoming seventh graders is: "Be prepared for the workload."

Ms. Carlson is a seventh grade teacher who teaches history at the IHS. She tries to make her class fun by bringing her personality into it and being encouraging for students. According to Ms. Carlson, "We have high expectations of our new seventh grade students, but we are willing to work with them. We expect them to act like young adults, but I recognize that they are young teenagers too. They still should be respectful and kind." The message Ms. Carlson would give to potential seventh grade students is: "Be prepared for the work, but also have a lot of fun with it."

Eighth grade students have been in the building for the same amount of time as the seventh graders, but they still offered unique insights. Kalin Burek, a current eighth grader, said that she had no trouble finding her classes as there were maps and room numbers for her to find them. Kalin commented that the biggest difference between seventh and eighth grade is more homework and tests. Eighth graders also have a few different opportunities than sixth and seventh graders, such as the National Junior Honor Society. According to Kalin, "NJHS is a good opportunity to give back to the community, and it's good for your resume." Kalin also thinks that study halls are important for students and gives them a chance to get things like homework done. Study hall also gives some time for students to refresh for their next class. Kalin's message to seventh graders coming up to eighth grade this year is: "Do your homework, don't be late to class, and make sure you pay attention in class."

Michael DeDionisio said that the biggest adjustment this year going into eighth grade was higher expectations. "You have more advanced coursework, and you are expected to complete more work," he said. According to Michael, he thinks that the high school will go pretty well next year from being prepared this year. The message that Michael would give to the upcoming incoming eighth graders is: "Make sure your handwriting is good, and have excellent time management."

Mrs. Minch, an eighth grade ELA teacher, has taught in Butler for 29 years. According to Mrs. Minch, being approachable and fun is always appreciated by the students. "I like to let them work with partners as much as I can because collaboration is important." Mrs. Minch has always taught eighth grade. "Eighth graders can have deep class discussions, but they also still know how to have fun in a classroom setting. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else," she said. In order to prepare her students for the jump to the high school, Mrs. Minch works at expanding their analytical skills and improving their writing. Mrs. Minch's advice to future eighth graders is: "Attendance is so important. Show up and try your best, and you will be successful!"

Ninth Grade Electives Add Fun and Variety

BY LUKAS OLEXSAK

Attention eighth grade students: It is time to begin thinking about choosing electives for next year! Electives are not only a fun way to connect with other students and a great way to find a hobby, but they also count toward a student's GPA. The Senior High School offers around 90 electives, so there are many options. According to Mrs. Caton, a SHS guidance counselor, "Students have a certain number of required courses and electives they need to complete in order to graduate high school successfully."

Electives also give students something to look forward to in high school. Whether you like using your mind, getting up and speaking in front of a group, or working with your hands in a workshop-type setting, there's something for you. Some popular electives include ROTC, band, orchestra, choir, foreign languages, art classes, and workshops.

Foreign language courses are some of the more popular electives. You also might get the chance to go on special field trips only available to students that take language classes. They are not required to graduate here in Butler, but many colleges and universities require students to have taken two or more years of foreign language classes. "...it is a good idea to check out colleges you may be interested in to determine if it is the right choice for you," said Mrs. Caton. The languages offered are German, French, Latin, and Spanish. "Many parents want their students to take a foreign language, but there are so many choices - it's fun to explore!" Mrs. Caton added.

Electives are designed to show your interests. "An 'A' in one class is better than a 'C' in another class that you think looks better on a resume," Mrs. Caton said. When looking at your resume, the classes you have better grades in are likely going to be the one you care more about. Students are encouraged to take classes that play to their strengths, ensuring that they can be successful.

In February, when scheduling occurs, students look at the list of electives. They then review the curriculum, and look at the list of electives available that year. Students must also look to see what classes have a prerequisite. As far as adding electives, "They simply add that course into their requests," said Mrs. Caton. The process is quite simple, but it happens in four months. That doesn't leave much time.

If you have questions about the electives at the high school and want to start planning now, contact your guidance counselor!

Put a Face to the Name: Fall Student Spotlights

BY RAEGAN KRIEBEL

The fall eighth grade spotlight students include Madelyn Spencer, Jordan Ryan, and Mason Swidzinski. Starbucks is a favorite of all three students. Maddy said that her Starbucks order is a “dragon fruit refresher in the largest size.” According to Jordan, “I like the chai latte with the pumpkin stuff. It’s seasonal and definitely worth the try.” Mason chooses the pink drink.

School starts early, and all three admitted that it is difficult to wake up. “The first thing I do when I wake up is try to go back to bed and then go on my phone,” Maddy commented. Jordan heads to the shower and then gets dressed. Mason added, “The first thing I do is wake up, and the last thing I do is go to bed.”

Social media is a very popular subject in conversation today and is very impactful on teenagers. Maddy said she watches a lot of social media. Jordan isn’t allowed to have social media, so she watches more TV, and Mason said he watches more social media.



All three eighth graders agreed that when their teachers are calm, positive, lenient, and fun, the class goes a lot smoother. They are able to get their assignments done quickly, and it encourages everyone in the class to grow a little from the beginning of the year. The students all agreed that the rooms in the school are too cold. Overall, Maddy, Jordan, and Mason are enjoying this school year so far.

The seventh grade spotlight students are Sarah Rock and Patrick Kisoma. Patrick claimed that he doesn’t have a favorite food because he loves all food. Sarah’s favorite food is fettuccine alfredo, and her favorite restaurant is Olive Garden. When it comes to fashion, Sarah’s favorite store to shop at is Target. “They have nice clothes,” Sarah said. Her favorite outfit this year so far was her white skirt from Dick’s and her green sweatshirt from Branded in Butler.



School starting early doesn’t seem to bother the seventh graders that much. “I don’t mind getting up early because I like that it gives me a routine,” he said. Both students agree school is too cold. Patrick said, “Some of the rooms are so cold like my exploratory language classroom.” Classes can become overwhelming if there is too much work. Sarah thinks that there should be only one project a week so everyone can take their time and do their work. “That way, there isn’t too much work that things get overwhelming,” she said. Sarah and Patrick are both liking their school year this far.

We all have a favorite celebrity and even a celebrity crush. Sarah’s favorite celebrity is Adam Sandler and her celebrity crush is Sam from Sam and Colby. Patrick’s favorite celebrity is Robert Downey Junior, and he thinks Zendaya is “pretty bad.”

The sixth grade student spotlight fell on Hayden Michael and Mackenzie Erdos. Hayden’s favorite store is Dick’s. “They have good clothes,” he said. Mackenzie likes to shop at Target because that’s usually where she gets all her back to school things.



Hayden's favorite outfit this year was his long pants and his Butler hoodie. Mackenzie's favorite outfit was her black Nike hoodie, her Curry's from Under Armour, and her black leggings. Both students like to eat out at restaurants. Hayden's favorite food is Buffalo wings from Buffalo Wild Wings, and Mackenzie's favorite restaurant is Olive Garden. "I love their breadsticks," she said.

The two students agree that they prefer a class where rewards are offered for great work, and they both dread homework. Hayden thinks they get too much homework from math. He said, "Sometimes we get handed like four pages of homework," he said. Hayden doesn't currently do any sports but he plans on competing in wrestling and football next year because it seems fun. Mackenzie plays basketball. "It's nice to meet all those friends from basketball because then when you go to school, you have those friends there and have someone to talk to," she said.

Hayden's said his favorite celebrity was the guy from the Hot Pocket Commercial. "He has hot pockets, and I like hot pockets," he explained. Mackenzie's favorite celebrity is Carrie Underwood. Hayden's favorite movie is *Interstellar* and Mackenzie's favorite movie is *Creed 3*. They are both enjoying life at the Intermediate this year.

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**



FROM: THE TORNADO CONNECTION STAFF