

Together, inspiring each student to think, learn, achieve and care in a global community.

Shamrock Connection

DISTRICT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

2025-2026 Newsletter Volume 15, Issue 2

Berrien Springs Public Schools



Celebrating graduation were Philip Seo, Jacob Constable, and twins Olivia and Madison Spenner.

BSHS Class of 2026 continues the *Shamrock Way* tradition of academic excellence and achievement

**By Charles Richards
Principal of Berrien
Springs High School**

Graduation for the Class of 2026 was a memorable celebration of achievement, perseverance, and tradition. This year, we proudly recognized 122 high school graduates, along with six Certificate of Completion graduates, six graduates from our Virtual Academy, and six graduates from our Discovery Academy. As a class, these students demonstrated a commitment to excellence that was reflected in more than \$1.9 million in academic, athletic, and service-based scholarships and awards earned by our graduates.

The academic accomplishments of the Class of 2026 were particularly noteworthy. Among the graduating class, one student earned Summa Cum Laude honors, 19 earned Magna Cum Laude honors, and 18 earned Cum Laude honors. These distinctions represent years of dedication, perseverance, and hard work, supported by outstanding teachers, staff, and families who have encouraged and guided our students throughout their educational journey.

Adding to the significance of this year's ceremony, we were honored to welcome 35 members of the Class of 1976 as part of their 50-year reunion



Several seniors decorated their mortarboards to convey special messages at their May 21 graduation ceremony.

celebration. The Class of 1976 graduated with 110 students and distinguished themselves with four co-valedictorians and one salutatorian. Their presence served as a powerful reminder of the enduring traditions and strong sense of community that connect generations of graduates. On behalf of our entire school community, thank you to everyone who helped make this year's commencement such a special occasion. We are incredibly proud of all 136 graduates recognized during the ceremony and look forward to the positive impact they will make in the years ahead throughout our community and the world.

BSPS pays off Sylvester Stadium debt early to save \$1.5 million in future interest

Berrien Springs Public Schools remains committed to being good stewards of taxpayer dollars while investing in opportunities that benefit its students, families, and the community.

This school year, the district had \$8 million in debt

service expenditures. This included \$2.5 million in regularly scheduled debt payments and a strategic one-time payoff of a bond using their General Fund balance. The debt was associated with the construction of Sylvester Stadium.

As interest rates changed,

district leaders including the members of the Board of Education carefully evaluated the best financial approach. When investment earnings were higher than borrowing costs, it was advantageous to keep funds invested. As interest rates declined, paying off

the debt became the most fiscally responsible decision.

By retiring the debt early, the district will save approximately \$1.5 million in future interest costs, reducing long-term expenses and strengthening our financial position for the future.



Field Day was celebrated with students, staff, parents, and volunteers to mark the end of the school year.

Expanded Professional Learning Community time for teachers helps improve learning and growth opportunities for students at Mars

By Jake Skelly
Principal of Mars Elementary

This year, our Mars Elementary school teachers have begun exploring a new approach to collaboration and student support through expanded Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. For many years, kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers have met during their planning periods for PLC meetings. While this time allowed for some collaboration, it often felt rushed and limited the depth of conversations and planning that could take place. With the new schedule adjustment, we are now able to combine PLC time back-to-back with specials, creating a dedicated block of time for collaboration. Although we have only recently started implementing this structure, we are excited about the possibilities it brings and look forward to seeing how these ideas and collaborative efforts continue to develop over time.

Having longer PLC meetings has already begun to strengthen teacher collaboration and student support. The additional time allows teachers to analyze student data more thoroughly, share

instructional strategies, and better align curriculum expectations across grade levels. During this collaboration time, students participate in grade-level Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons that focus on skills such as self-awareness, relationship building, and emotional regulation. This structure supports

both teacher growth and the social-emotional development of students. This is just one example of how Mars Elementary School is bringing in in-

novation and out of the box thinking to provide teacher growth and an exemplary student experience.



Hands-on experiences at Camp Eberhart showed students how classroom learning is connected to the world around them

By Micah Lambert
Former Sylvester
Elementary Principal

Our 5th graders recently had the incredible opportunity to attend an overnight field trip to Camp Eberhart, and the experience left a lasting impact on everyone involved. Throughout the trip, students stepped outside of their comfort zones, built stronger friendships, and participated in hands-on learning experiences that connected directly to both our **ROCKS** values and **STEM** learning goals.

During their time at camp,

students explored survival skills, practiced canoeing, learned how to safely shoot a bow and arrow, discovered the physics behind roller coasters, participated in team-building activities, and challenged themselves through rock climbing. These activities encouraged students to think critically, solve problems, work cooperatively, and persevere through challenges.

ROCKS Values

The trip also brought our **ROCKS** values to life. Students demonstrated *Respect, Ownership, Compassion,*

Knowledge, and Success as they worked together and supported one another throughout each activity. Many students showed courage and determination while trying new experiences that they may have once thought were impossible.

STEM Connections

In addition, the camp activities provided meaningful **STEM** connections. Students applied scientific thinking, explored physics concepts, and engaged in real-world problem solving in ways that made learning exciting and memorable. These hands-on

experiences helped students see how classroom learning connects to the world around them.

Most importantly, this trip created memories that our students will carry with them forever. The excitement, laughter, teamwork, and sense of accomplishment were evident throughout the entire experience. Camp Eberhart provided our students with opportunities to grow academically, socially, and emotionally, and we are so grateful that they were able to be part of such a meaningful experience.

SUMMER FACILITY PROJECTS

Multiple summer facility projects are underway across the campus of Berrien Springs Public Schools

While students and staff enjoy the summer break, Berrien Springs Public Schools is hard at work completing several facility improvement projects designed to enhance learning environments, safety, and operational efficiency across the district.

This summer, crews are making significant upgrades at multiple buildings. At **Central Office**, the technology department area is being remodeled to create additional offices, cubicles, workstations, and storage space to better support district technology operations.

At **Berrien Springs Middle School**, Phase 3 of the ceiling and lighting replacement project is underway in the library, restrooms, classrooms, and west-end corridors. Additional improvements include new lockers in the boys' physical education area and the installation of new exterior doors at five building entrances.

At **Berrien Springs High School**, Phase 2 of the interior door and frame replacement project is taking place, along with flooring replacement in five classrooms.

Sylvester Elementary is experiencing the largest number of summer improvements. Projects include a roof replacement, HVAC upgrades in south-end classrooms, a remodel of the Special Education office, and a renovation of the Makers Space classroom. Five classrooms, the library, and the PBIS room are also receiving new flooring, paint, whiteboards, cabinetry, shelving, and furniture to create refreshed learning spaces for students and staff.

In addition, paving work is being completed in the parking lot at **The ROCK**.

Due to several of these construction projects, some offices will have modified locations and summer hours. The Sylvester Elementary office will



Joe Ludwig of Pearson Construction works on one of two offices being created for the Technology Department at the Central Office. Ludwig is a 1985 graduate of Berrien Springs High School.

temporarily operate from Mars Elementary during construction. Families are encouraged to review the Summer Building Office Hours Schedule before visiting a school office. Summer office hours include Central Office (Monday–Thursday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.), High School (Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.), Middle

School (Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.), Mars Elementary (Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.), and Sylvester Elementary services through the Mars Elementary office (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. and Friday, 9:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.)



Graduate
Meghan Alonso



Graduate Alton Kinchen high-fived several students as he and the other seniors walked through the schools during the graduation walk for the Class of 2026.

District celebrates graduates Meghan Alonso, Alton Kinchen, and Savannah McCree who have been accepted into "Project SEARCH" at Corewell Health Lakeland

By Mary Masciovecchio
Director of Special Education

Berrien Springs Public Schools is proud to celebrate three recent graduates, Meghan Alonso, Alton Kinchen, and Savannah McCree, who have been accepted into the *Project SEARCH* program at Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital - St. Joseph for the upcoming school year.

Project SEARCH is a highly respected transition-to-work program designed to support young adults with disabilities in developing employability and independent living skills through immersive, real-world job training experiences. Through a partnership between local schools, community agencies, and employers, participants complete a series of internships while building communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and workplace readiness skills in an

authentic employment setting.

Program provides hands-on experience towards employment

Throughout the program, students gain hands-on experience in a variety of departments within the hospital setting while receiving individualized support and instruction focused on long-term competitive employment outcomes. *Project SEARCH* provides participants with the opportunity to strengthen confidence, independence, and vocational skills as they prepare for adulthood and future employment opportunities.

We are incredibly proud of Meghan, Alton, and Savannah for this accomplishment and excited to see them continue growing through this next step in their educational and vocational journey. Their acceptance into *Project SEARCH* reflects years of hard work,

perseverance, and personal growth.

Dedicated staff, supportive relationships plays a critical role

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, transition staff, administrators, and families who have supported these students throughout their time with Berrien Springs Public Schools. The impact of dedicated staff members and supportive relationships plays a critical role in helping students achieve success both inside and outside the classroom.

Congratulations again to Meghan Alonso, Alton Kinchen, and Savannah McCree on this exciting opportunity. The entire Shamrock community is proud of you and looks forward to seeing all you accomplish in the future!



Graduate
Savannah McCree



All eighth grade students participated in mock interviews with community members, staff, and local professionals. Students practiced communication, personal presentation, and interview skills while receiving valuable feedback. Pictured above: Berrien Springs Public Schools Board of Education Secretary Stephanie James interviewed Caiden Shafer as he “applied” for a part-time job at Culver’s and Honor Credit Union Community Development Officer Karol Behrle interviewed Jeremy Ealy as he also “applied” for a part-time job at Culver’s.

BSMS launched state-leading *Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates StepUp* curriculum

**By Amanda Barrett
Extension Teacher
and Curriculum
Specialist**

This year, Berrien Springs Middle School partnered with Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates (JMG) to bring the *StepUp* curriculum to all seventh and eighth grade students. Berrien Springs Middle School is the first middle school in the state of Michigan to implement the *StepUp* program schoolwide for an entire grade level.

The *StepUp* curriculum helps students build skills for success in high school, careers, and life beyond the classroom. Through engaging lessons and activities, students explore career interests, leadership development, communication, teamwork, goal setting, financial literacy, and future planning. The program focuses on helping students develop the transferable skills employers value most, including collaboration, problem solving, professionalism, and self-advocacy.

In addition to *StepUp*, Ber-

rien Springs Middle School is also participating in Foundations, a complementary career development program through Youth Solutions. Together, these programs help create a whole-building approach to career development and future readiness for students. Recently, the middle school was recognized by Youth Solutions with a Transformational Award for the systemic work being done to support career readiness and student development across the building.

Throughout the school year, students have participated in several real-world career readiness experiences. Students explored Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways through visits and presentations from Berrien County CTE programs. They also attended job and college fair opportunities alongside Berrien Springs High School students, giving them early exposure to future educational and career opportunities.

Most recently, all 8th grade students participated in mock

interviews with community members, staff, and local professionals. Students practiced communication, professionalism, and interview skills while receiving valuable feedback in an authentic setting.

While JMG programs have traditionally focused on high school students, Berrien Springs Middle School is proud to expand these opportunities into the middle school

years. By introducing career awareness and leadership development earlier, students are better prepared to make connections between their education and future goals.

We are excited to continue building opportunities that help all students discover their strengths, explore future pathways, and prepare for success beyond middle school.



Retired Berrien Springs Public Schools Superintendent David Eichberg interviewed Arianna Easter for a “part-time position” at Bath & Body Works.



Mary Masciovecchio



Sloan Testerink



Alli Hoskins



Andi Lemon

BSPS welcomes new leaders and celebrates leadership transitions for 2026-27

As we look ahead to the 2026-2027 school year, Berrien Springs Public Schools is excited to introduce a dynamic group of administrators joining our leadership team, as well as several new staff members dedicated to our students' success. We are excited to welcome these professionals to the Shamrock family as we continue our mission of providing a robust, engaging experience for all students.

Mary Masciovecchio – Director of Curriculum and Special Programs: Transitioning from her current role as Director of Special Education, Mrs. Masciovecchio will lead district-wide teaching, learning, and curriculum alignment.

Sloan Testerink – Special Education Director: Mrs. Testerink brings extensive experience in resource room teaching and administration, supporting students with diverse learning and behavioral needs.

Alli Hoskins – Principal of Sylvester Elementary: Mrs. Alli Hoskins brings a wealth of experience in educational leadership, instruction, and communications.

Cassie King – Sylvester Elementary Assistant Principal: With over 20 years of experience in classroom teaching and school admin-

istration, Mrs. King joins Sylvester Elementary dedicated to building a positive learning environment and supporting student success.

Andi Lemon – Berrien Springs Middle School Principal: A Berrien Springs High School alumna and former BSHS assistant principal, Mrs. Lemon brings a wealth of experience in classroom instruction, school administration, and building positive relationships with students, staff, and the community.

Jenna Covert – Mars Elementary Dean of Students: Having served as Dean of Students during the second semester and previously as

MTSS Coordinator, Mrs. Covert will continue supporting students, staff, and families at Mars Elementary.

Joe Testerink – Berrien Springs High School Assistant Principal: Mr. Testerink brings a wealth of experience in educational leadership and student support to this role, and he is currently working on his doctorate in Educational Leadership.

We are pleased to welcome several new educators to our buildings for the upcoming year:

Isaiah Eisel: Middle School Assistant Principal

Becky Ponka-Lokey: Elementary MTSS Coordinator

and Curriculum

Jason Rimmel: High School Science Teacher

Wendy Costonzo: 1st Grade Teacher, Mars Elementary

Kristen Pfeffer-Eversole: Special Education Teacher, Mars Elementary

Anna Vanderbeck: DHH Teacher, Sylvester Elementary

Merideth Gacek: Kindergarten Teacher, Mars Elementary

Carolyn Kodis: Kindergarten Teacher, Mars Elementary

Julie Rush: MTSS Interventionalist, Sylvester Elementary

We are grateful to have these educators join our team and look forward to the positive impact they will make!



Cassie King



Jenna Covert



Joe Testerink

BSPS celebrated more than 1,200 graduates across Michigan during the 2025-26 school year

Berrien Springs Public Schools celebrated more than 1,200 graduates across Michigan during the 2025-26 school year. Featured here are graduates from several of the district's off-site programs, which provide flexible and personalized learning opportunities for students throughout the state. Through programs such as Discovery Academy, West Michigan Virtual Academy, Link Learning, and Success Virtual Learning Centers, students are able to earn their high school diploma while preparing for college, careers, and future success.

Discovery Academy: Graduates celebrate during Discovery Academy's Spring 2026 Commencement Ceremony at the Arts & Athletic Center. The academy recognized 18 graduates this spring. Discovery Academy is a non-traditional education program that provides a supportive, personalized learning environment and career-focused opportunities to help students earn their high school diploma.

West Michigan Virtual Academy: Approximately 80 students from West Michigan Virtual Academy celebrated a significant milestone this spring as they received their diplomas during the academy's commencement ceremony. Graduates were recognized for their hard work, perseverance, and dedication to achieving their diploma. The ceremony took place at the Kellogg Center on May 27, 2026.

Link Learning: Students from Link Learning's Three Rivers and Schoolcraft locations celebrate graduation during this year's commencement ceremony. Link Learning graduated more than 650 students across Michigan during the 2025-26 school year. The program serves students through 15 locations



Discovery Academy 2026 Graduates



West Michigan Virtual Academy 2026 Graduates



Link Learning: Three Rivers & Schoolcraft 2026 Graduates



Success Virtual Learning Centers: Port Huron 2026 Graduates

statewide, including sites in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, providing flexible pathways to help learners achieve their high school diploma and prepare for their future.

Success Virtual Learning Center: Success Virtual Learning Centers graduates celebrate during the program's 2026 commencement ceremony. Success VLC recognized

more than 350 graduates from 10 locations across MI during the 2025-26 school year. Featured in this photo is Success Virtual Learning Centers of MI Port Huron location.



Discovery Academy Workforce Coordinator DeVonte' Jones, Career Technical Education Director Brian Terry, and Berrien Springs High School Counselor Jennifer Moore worked together on the Career, College, and Opportunity Fair that was held at the Arts & Athletic Center.

Career Fair builds partnerships between students and employers while providing job opportunities

By Chiquita Adams
Director of On Campus,
Non-Traditional
Programs

In March this year, our Jobs for Michigan Graduates (JMG) program through Discovery Academy hosted and expanded the annual Berrien Springs Public Schools Career Fair.

It was an engaging and impactful day, designed to help students explore the many pathways available to them after graduation. The event aligned with the district's commitment to supporting college, career, and life readiness by exposing students to real-world workforce opportunities and helping bridge the gap between education and future careers.

The Career Fair welcomed 34 organizations from across the region, including local businesses, community partners, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, colleges, and representatives from the armed services. Approximately 450 students participated throughout the

day, including middle school students who attended to gain early exposure to potential career fields and begin envisioning their futures.

Students had the opportunity to interact directly with professionals, ask meaningful questions, and learn firsthand about careers they may have never previously considered. Representatives shared valuable insights about educational requirements, job responsibilities, career growth, and workplace experiences. The strong engagement from students at all grade levels demonstrated a growing curiosity and excitement about future opportunities.

Featured career pathways and CTE programs included phlebotomy, nursing, law and public safety, fire services, law enforcement and corrections, construction trades, banking and finance, cosmetology and beauty services, and military careers. The diversity of opportunities helped students see how their current education connects to future goals, motivation, and direction.

More than just a career fair, the event served as an opportunity for students to see what is possible for their futures. By connecting students with employers, skilled professionals, and educational programs, the district continues to strengthen the connection between classroom learning and long-term success.

Berrien Springs Public Schools plans to continue

hosting the Career Fair annually while also building ongoing partnerships between students and employers beyond a single day event. Through opportunities like these, the district remains committed to preparing students not only for graduation, but for meaningful careers, lifelong learning, and success in an ever-changing world.



Erica Molden and Erin Moberg from 1st Source Bank talked with students Kilah Hafley and Keana Smith about the different employment opportunities offered in banking. Mrs. Molden is president of the Berrien Springs Board of Education.



Heather Morton
Volunteer of the Year



Gail Bannister
*Support Staff
Member of the Year*



Melissa Beregsasy
*Teacher of the Year
Mars Elementary*



Amanda Barrett
*Emerald Award
BSMS teacher*

Congratulations to Berrien Springs Public Schools Shamrock Way Award winners & retirees!

Berrien Springs Public Schools recently recognized its 2025-2026 Shamrock Way Award winners during the annual End-of-Year Staff Celebration. The Shamrock Way Awards honor employees who consistently demonstrate the values, dedication, and commitment that help make Berrien Springs Public Schools a place where students think, learn, achieve, and care in a global community.

This year's honorees included:

Volunteer of the Year – Heather Morton.

Support Staff Member of the Year – Gail Bannister.

Team of the Year – Eng-

lish Learner (EL) Team: Whitney Emeigh, Laura Gonzalez, Givan Hinds, Sarabeth Horton, Mary Lubbers, John Ladwig, Iris Middaugh, Melydia Rogers, Jaynee Shamenda, and Michele Tucker.

Teacher of the Year – Melissa Beregsasy, Mars Elementary, Second Grade teacher.

Emerald Award Recipient – Amanda Barrett, Middle School Extension Teacher and Curriculum Specialist.

The district extends its congratulations to all of the 2025-26 Shamrock Way Award winners for their outstanding service and commitment to the Shamrock community!

Sonja Cullings
*Retiree
Dean of Students
Sylvester Elementary*



Retirees honored at the End of the Year Staff Celebration on June 2nd were as follows: Jacklyn Bukovick, Sonja

Cullings, Sarah Shembarger, Gail LoveLady, Jeff Yauchstetter, and Tracey Jaggi.



Team of the Year: EL team members Laura Gonzalez, EL paraprofessional; Jaynee Shamenda, EL High School teacher; Givan Hinds, Adult EL Director/teacher; Michele Tucker, EL teacher; Sarabeth Horton, Sylvester Elementary EL teacher; Melydia Rogers, EL paraprofessional, and Iris Middaugh, EL paraprofessional. Whitney Emeigh, EL teacher; Mary Lubbers, EL paraprofessional; and John Ladwig, EL teacher, are not pictured.

GO SHAMROCKS--It was a spring to remember for Berrien Springs High School athletes!

By Joe Stephens
Athletic Director

The spring 2026 athletic season was another outstanding chapter in the proud tradition of Berrien Springs Athletics. Across multiple sports, our student-athletes represented our community with excellence in competition, the classroom, and through sportsmanship.

Team accomplishments included the following:

Boys' Track & Field: The Shamrocks continued one of Michigan's premier track and field traditions by winning their 10th consecutive Lakeland Conference Championship and capturing a Regional Championship. The team also finished runner-up at the Shamrock Invitational and had athletes compete at the MHSAA State Finals.

Girls' Track & Field: The Lady Shamrocks also earned their 10th consecutive Lakeland Conference Championship while competing against some of the state's top programs. The team produced multiple state qualifiers and All-State performances while continuing a decade of conference dominance.

Girls' Soccer: Despite fielding a young roster, the Shamrocks finished with a strong 10-7 overall record, earning a 2nd place Lakeland Conference finish. The team defeated Bridgman 1-0 in the *Under the Lights* Tournament and continued to build momentum for the future.

Softball: The Shamrocks posted a 10-17 overall record and won the River Valley Invitational. Led primarily by freshmen and sophomores despite carrying nine seniors on the roster, the team continued to develop while competing against a challenging schedule.

Baseball: After a difficult early-season schedule that featured numerous state-

ranked opponents, the Shamrocks finished strong with a 10-21 record, including victories over 20 win opponents, Walkerton John Glenn, South Haven and Coloma. The team advanced through the district opening round, avenging a regular season loss to St. Joe. They came up one run short of defeating fourth-ranked Niles in the district semifinals.

Girls' Tennis: The Shamrocks were 7-7 in duals this year. They improved all year and ended up finishing tied for third in the regional. They came just a few points short of qualifying for states. The doubles team of Angie Pangelman and Piper Perez were runners up at both the conference and regional tournament. The team lost to eventual champion Allegan.

Boys' Golf: The team won both the *Our Lady of the Lake Jamboree* at Lake Michigan Hills and the *Buchanan Jamboree* at Orchard Hills while finishing their season at a very difficult Regional at Coldwater. The Shamrock golfers did battle to finish as the runner-up in the seven school BCS golf conference.

ALL-STATE RECOGNITION

TRACK AND FIELD: Zion Ellis 300 Meter Hurdles (7th place); MHSAA Runner up Girls 4x100 Relay Team: Adeline Weber, Zion Ellis, Felicity Lall, and A'Noah Hamilton.

MHSAA Runner Up Boys 4x100 Relay Team: Isaiah Belizaire, Walter Williams, Zi'Merian Jones, and Braelin Hurst.

LAKELAND CONFERENCE FIRST TEAM HONORS

Girls' Soccer: Layla Nearpass, Sierra Zencka, and Uriah Andriantsoa.

Softball: Addison Wattles.

Girls' Track & Field: Adeline Weber (4x100, 4x200), Felicity Lall (4x100, 4x200),
(Continued on Page 11)



Members of the All-State Shamrock 4 by 100 relay team are Braelin Hurst, Zi'Merian Jones, Walter Williams, and Isaiah Belizaire.



The Berrien Springs High School Shamrock golf team finished as the runner-up in the seven school BCS Golf Conference. Pictured above are Cade Mihalic, Kameron Sill, Luke Hildebrand, Jordan Cook, Carson Tripp, and Philip Seo.



Members of the All-State Shamrock 4 by 100 relay team are Felicity Lall, Adeline Weber, A'Noah Hamilton, and Zion Ellis.

New home is nearing completion through the efforts of students in the CTE Construction Trades program

A new home on Mechanic Street is nearing completion thanks to the work of students in the Berrien Springs Public Schools Career Technical Education (CTE) Construction Trades program.

The 1,150-square-foot home features three bedrooms, two full bathrooms, a kitchen, living room, first-floor laundry room, and a wrap-around porch. An unfinished basement with nine-foot ceilings is designed to accommodate two additional bedrooms and a bathroom in the future. Once completed, the house will be listed for sale by the district.

More than 100 students from across Berrien County have contributed to the project over the past three years. Participants have included students from Berrien Springs, Eau Claire, Niles-Brandywine, St. Joseph, Bridgman, Buchanan, Lakeshore, and home-school programs.

"This is the first house our Berrien Springs CTE Construction Trades students have built from the ground up," said CTE teacher Larry Jackson. "The most rewarding part has been watching students develop confidence, learn lifelong skills, and see a vision become reality."

Students completed much of the construction work them-



Pictured above on the wrap-around porch built by the Construction Trades students are Larry Jackson, CTE Instructor for Construction Trades; Parent Partnership student Joshua Ruble, and Brian Terry, Director of Career Technical Education programs at Berrien Springs Public Schools.

selves, including framing, roofing, siding, cabinetry, drywall, and porch construction. Local contractors partnered with the program to provide specialized services, including Gray Electric and Five Star Heating and Cooling.

In addition to hands-on experience, students earned valuable industry credentials. All students completed OSHA 30 Safety Certification, Department of Labor Carpenters Pre-Apprenticeship Certification, and CPR/First Aid training. Many graduates have already entered careers in the skilled trades, working

with construction companies, unions, and apprenticeship programs.

Safety remained a top priority throughout the project. Jackson said, "I'm proud of our students' commitment to safety and teamwork."

CTE Director Brian Terry said the district invested approximately \$200,000 in the project and noted the tremendous educational value it provided.

"This project gave students the opportunity to work alongside industry professionals, solve real-world problems, and develop leadership skills on

an active job site," Terry said. "Students take great pride in knowing they helped build a home that will serve a family in our community."

Funds generated from the sale of the home will be reinvested into the Construction Trades program to support future projects and expand opportunities for students interested in skilled trades careers.

"We are proud of what our students have accomplished," Jackson said. "Years from now, they'll be able to drive by this house and proudly say, 'I helped build that...'"

It was a spring to remember for BSHS athletes!

(Continued from Page 10)

100m, 200m), Zion Ellis (4x100, 4x200, 100m Hurdles), A'Noah Hamilton (4x100, 4x200), Emily Ott (4x800, 800m, 1600m), Evelyn Weigand (4x800), Ella Penney (4x800), Allison Ott (4x800), Katheryn Bergan (Shot Put, Discus), and Aubrey Fitting (Pole Vault).

Boys' Track & Field: Zi'Merian Jones (4x200, 200m), Braelin Hurst (100m, 4x200, Long Jump), Louis Rome (110m Hurdles, 300m

Hurdles), DeMare'a Robinson (400m, 4x200), Khrist Reid (4x200), Connor Beebe (1600m, 3200m), Darrin O'Dell (Pole Vault), and Jacob Constable (Shot Put, Discus).

Baseball: Tye Robinson and Larsen Kibler.

Boys Golf: Ethan Tripp
HONORABLE MENTION
ALL-CONFERENCE

Girls' Soccer: Vivienne Kittleson, Viviana VanPlew-Cid, and Thandie Nhoro.

Softball: Brianna Wolff and Isabel Hoover.

Girls' Track & Field: Zion Ellis (300mh), Tamiya McKnight (High Jump), Myiesha Tyson (Long Jump), and ShaNiyah Valentine (Shot Put).

Boys' Track & Field: Leslie Hamilton (110mh and 300mh), Joel Quao (High Jump), and De'Jarryon Pullen (Shot Put).

Baseball: Dylan Ferry and Kellen Blasko.

Boys' Golf: Cade Mihalik.

LOOKING AHEAD

The success of Shamrock athletics continues to be built upon the dedication of our

student-athletes, coaches, families, and community supporters. From conference championships to individual honors, spring 2026 demonstrated the strength and depth of our athletic programs.

Thank you for supporting Berrien Springs Athletics. We look forward to building on this momentum as we prepare for another exciting year of Shamrock competition.

GO
SHAMROCKS!

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Thank You--Staff, Students, and Families for an Incredible School Year of Academic Growth and Community Accomplishments!

**By Dr. Thomas Bruce
Superintendent**

As we close the 2025–2026 school year, I want to pause and celebrate what has made this year so exceptional for Berrien Springs Public Schools. As I shared with all staff at the closing meeting, *“Take a breath. Look around. We made it to the finish line of another incredible year, and today is entirely about celebrating you.”* That spirit captures exactly how I feel about our staff, students, and families as we wrap up another year of growth and accomplishment.

Celebrating What's Working:

This year, the outside world continued to take notice of the excellence happening across our district. From national recognition in *U.S. News & World Report*, to state level honors in MTSS implementation, to outstanding performances in robotics, performing arts, and athletics, our students and staff continue to

shine. We are creating world-class options for our students every day.

Our academic data tells the same story. Student growth remains one of our greatest strengths year after year, with strong gains in ELA, math, science, and social studies across multiple grade levels. This progress is not accidental—it is the result of consistent, focused work by our teachers and support staff.

What's Not Changing Next Year:

One of the most important messages heading into 2026–2027 is simple: we are staying the course.

We are not shifting direction, adding new initiatives, or introducing new philosophies. Our focus remains on the core strategies that are already working:

- **Attendance**
- **Engagement**
- **Achievement**

And inside the classroom, we will continue to deepen our

work in the Four Pillars, not replace them. Next year is not about doing more things; it is about doing what we already do with greater focus, greater depth, and greater peace of mind. Consistency will be our superpower.

The Shamrock Professional Profile:

This year, we also took an important step in defining who we are—and who we aspire to be—as a professional community.

We sent surveys to all parents, students, and staff to help us create the draft Profile of a Shamrock Professional: the shared values and characteristics we seek in every person who joins Berrien Springs Public Schools.

We used your input to build the draft, and then we put it to work immediately during our spring and summer hiring cycles. Candidates consistently told us how meaningful and refreshing it was to see a district so clear about its

identity and expectations. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and this profile will continue to guide our hiring and culture building efforts moving forward.

Looking Ahead With Excitement:

With construction updates progressing across campuses, continued momentum around always thinking of ways to show, “Unreasonable Hospitality,” and the upcoming release of our Shamrock Exemplars, we are entering the fall with clarity, stability, and purpose.

Most importantly, we are entering next year with confidence—because what we are doing is working, and because our staff continues to show extraordinary commitment to our students.

Thank you for everything you poured into this year. Enjoy your well earned summer, and get ready: Fall 2026 is going to be an incredible chapter for us.

Go Shamrocks!