

GUIDED *by* HEART



2026-2027



BERRIEN
RESA

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book expands on the ways we are Guided by HEART.

Use this guide to help you learn more about HEART during all your days, weeks, months, (and even years!) in your role. It will provide a comprehensive overview of our organization and culture.

And, it's meant to be used actively— so take notes, engage in the activities, and refer back often. Our hope is that you feel informed and empowered to thrive. We're so glad you're here, and thankful that you are part of the Berrien RESA family!

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

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A MESSAGE FROM ERIC

We exist to grow people within our household mission to “Optimize student outcomes through collaboration and transformation.” This pursuit drives what we do and how we interact within the organization and with those we serve. As we foster these healthy relationships, we provide services that enable inclusive, high-quality learning opportunities, enriching the lives of all involved. Through collaborative relationships, we transform the educational experience. It is exciting and very fulfilling to be involved in this work!

In our Berrien RESA family, we behave with HEART – we look for it, we teach it, and we expect it in everything we do. On the following pages, you will find out more about what this means.



You are part of this Berrien RESA family because we see these prized qualities in you. Thank you for being part of our family.

Sincerely,

- Eric Hoppstock, Superintendent

Eric's dad joke of the year...

5/4 of people admit that they're bad with fractions.

If you see Eric throughout your day, be sure to ask him if he has a dad joke to share... and feel free to share your own favorite!

Our Mission:



Optimizing student
outcomes through
collaboration and
transformation

Our GUIDING PRINCIPLES —

Our guiding principles are non-negotiable. They determine how we live as a team, how we work with one another, and how we serve our students and the community.

WE ARE SERVICE-ORIENTED

This means that...

Everything we do is connected to our mission. It is a universal belief.

Our services change based on the needs of our students and districts.

We put students first, then our local districts, followed by our Berrien RESA team.

We consider all others' needs before our own.

WE ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This means that...

Berrien RESA takes interest in its employees and promotes their individual strengths.

Collaboration is encouraged.

Staff are encouraged to be risk-takers and are expected to grow from mistakes.

WE VALUE TRANSPARENCY

This means that...

We communicate with intention. We check for understanding, get feedback, and are active listeners.

We are clear about the goal of decisions being made.

Everyone's voice needs to be heard and valued.

We respect employee privacy and rights. We do not share personal information.

WE ARE RESULTS DRIVEN

This means that...

Everything we do is based on a thoughtful feedback process.

We focus on our work using a strategic plan.

Regular evaluation and fine-tuning help us reach our goals.

WE SUPPORT BALANCE

This means that...

Balance is defined by the individual. We work to get to know each other so that we can support a positive work life balance.

Everyone has family/outside commitments. Those obligations are respected.

It is okay to reevaluate, prioritize and let things go.

WE PRACTICE TRUST

This means that...

Berrien RESA's leaders trust all employees to make good decisions.

Staff work together to create a collaborative environment.

Leadership seeks out staff members' abilities and provides opportunities to grow.

Trust allows staff to work on new ideas and develop best practices.

WHICH OF THESE
PRINCIPLES MEAN
THE MOST TO *you*
AND WHY?

“

"For values or *guiding principles* to be truly effective they have to be verbs. It's not "integrity," it's "always do the right thing." It's not "innovation," it's "look at the problem from a different angle." Articulating our values as verbs gives us a clear idea of how to act in any situation."

- SIMON SINEK

Our STRATEGIC PLANS

Goal #1

DECISION MAKING

Constituent groups will be involved in relevant decisions made by Berrien RESA.

Why is this important?

Berrien RESA is a service agency that provides educational services to ALL public school students and education personnel in Berrien County. The choices we make affect many people. Our decisions should be informed by those we serve.

Goal #2

DATA SKILLED

All staff will be data skilled for reassessing and reframing our actions.

Why is this important?

Sometimes adjustments are needed in our work to ensure we are moving in the right direction. Staff continuously evaluate their work to best support student success.

Goal #3

EQUITY

All staff will participate in fostering an environment that provides equal opportunity for all.

Why is this important?

Everyone deserves to have a fair chance to learn, grow and thrive in school and the work environment.

Goal #4

INNOVATION

We will improve outcomes through groundbreaking strategies.

Why is this important?

Using data and creativity allows us to be innovative to best support student success.

Our **COUNTYWIDE GOALS**

In addition to Berrien RESA's Strategic Plan goals, staff also work to support **3 countywide goals** that were developed collaboratively by the public school districts in Berrien County:

1 READING } We are building educator capacity around common literacy standards, the Science of Reading, and delivery of explicitly foundational skills and strategies.

2 MATH } We are building educator capacity around common math standards, the 8 Mathematical Practices and delivery of explicit foundational skills and strategies.

3 BELONGING & ENGAGEMENT } We are building educator capacity around fostering belonging and engagement where ALL are connected and accepted.

"We aim *above* the mark
to hit the mark."

- RALPH WALDO EMERSON

LIVING, SERVING & WORKING

Guided by Heart



Being part of the Berrien RESA team means living by our guiding principles through the work we do and the lives we touch. We are **Guided by HEART**-- which means each of us are:

Humble
Empathetic
Adaptable
Remarkable
Transparent

Each of these qualities help us to make progress on achieving our mission, guide us to make our strategic plan and countywide goals become reality, and motivate us to deliver the outstanding services our students and communities deserve.

Let's explore each quality that goes into showing **HEART...**

We are **HUMBLE**

Be purposefully respectful.

We embrace feedback and learn from our experiences, valuing growth for everyone.

HOW HAVE you lived it?

Share an example of how you or your team members demonstrated this guiding principle in action.



"Being *humble* means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others"

- GORDON B. HINCKLEY

We are **EMPATHETIC**

Understand and acknowledge others' feelings and perspectives.

We act with compassion by respecting diverse experiences, actively listening, fostering inclusivity, and supporting others.

HOW HAVE you Lived it?

Share an example of how you or your team members demonstrated this guiding principle in action.

“

"If you aren't humble, whatever *empathy* you claim is false and probably results from some arrogance or the desire to control. But true *empathy* is rooted in humility and the understanding that there are many people with as much to contribute in life as you."

- ANAND MAHINDRA

We are **ADAPTABLE**

Adjust to change.

We welcome new ideas and embrace opportunities/challenges with flexibility and understanding.

HOW HAVE *you* Lived it?

Share an example of how you or your team members demonstrated this guiding principle in action.



"No matter what twists and turns your life offers you, your ability to be *adaptable* and flexible will help you to stay open to all of the hidden gifts that difficulty may offer."

- MANDY INGBER

We are **REMARKABLE**

Make an exceptional difference.

We produce results that positively impact others while surpassing expectations.

HOW HAVE *you lived it?*

Share an example of how you or your team members demonstrated this guiding principle in action.



"Hire people who are better than you are, then leave them to get on with it. Look for people who will aim for the **remarkable**, who will not settle for the routine."

- DAVID OGILVY

We are **TRANSPARENT**

Communicate clearly and honestly while fostering trust and inclusivity.

With respect to privacy, we share updates, decisions, and relevant information concerning both successes and challenges.

HOW HAVE you lived it?

Share an example of how you or your team members demonstrated this guiding principle in action.



"We believe that *transparency* is needed to create trust, and it's also needed to create a dialogue."

- JULIE SWEET

WHY BERRIEN RESA?

When we live by and lead with HEART, we can't help but want to share the love – why *wouldn't* everyone want to be a part of this team? Take a moment to share what makes you excited for others to join Berrien RESA family!

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Now that you know why everyone should live by HEART, it's time to craft your "Why Berrien RESA" elevator speech. Think of it as a 20 to 30 second pitch (no longer than a short elevator ride) packed with all the reasons Berrien RESA is amazing. Make it exciting, specific, and full of energy!



Don't forget to share your speech with a team member or your Onboarding Buddy and check it off your Live by HEART Challenge! ♥

Our **IMPACT**



For the 2025-26 school year, Berrien RESA assisted 26 employees to complete over 162 college credits, **reimbursing over \$44,380 in tuition costs.**

Since the inception of the Employee Referral Program in 2023, our staff have helped recruit 43 new employees with HEART, **receiving bonuses totaling \$21,500.**

Our Early On and Parents as Teachers programs **served 501 children and their families** in the 2025-26 school year.

We have 134 employees who have worked for the district for over 10 years – that's over **38% of our staff!**

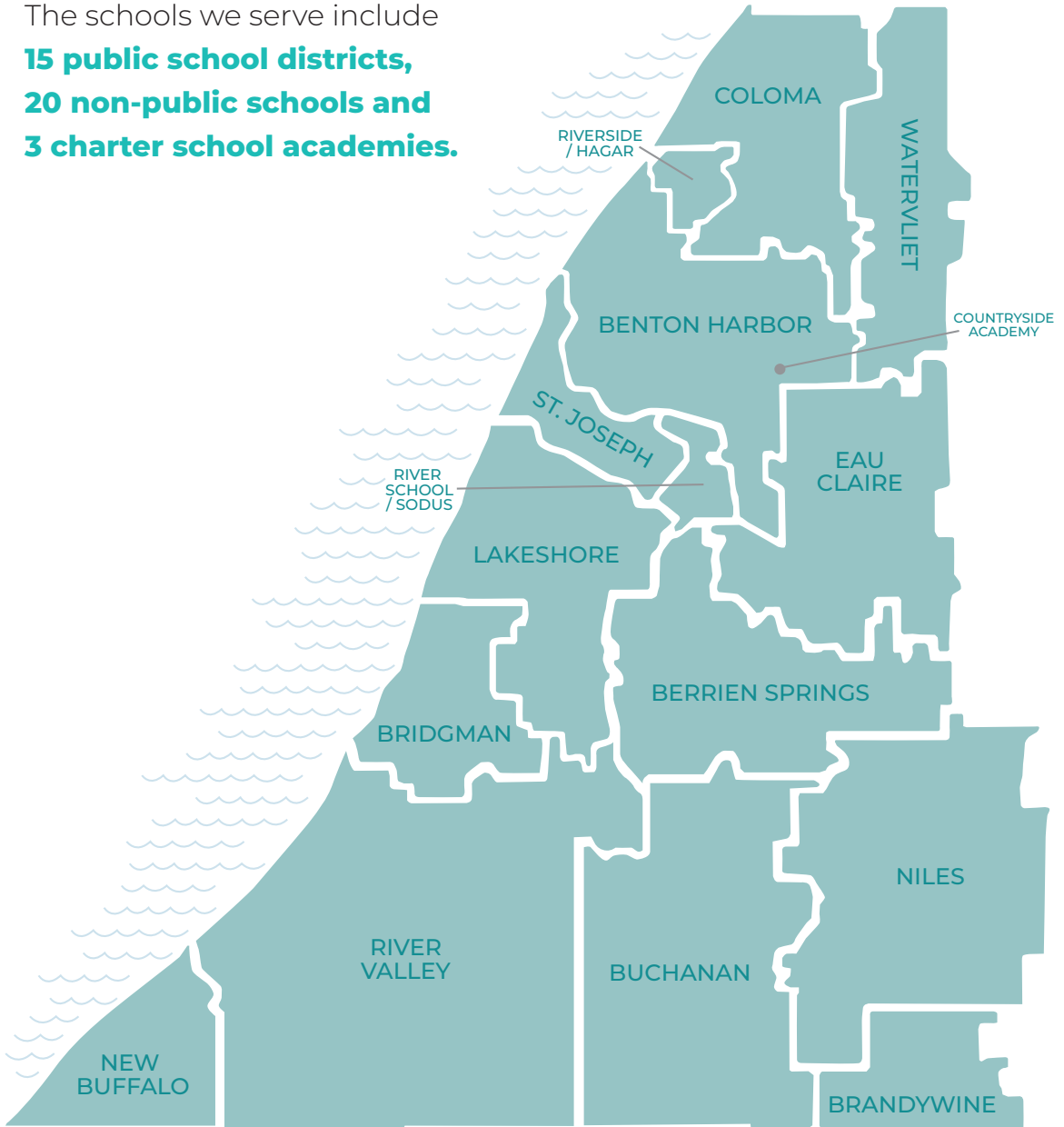
For the 2025-26 school year, the district offered **74 Professional Learning opportunities, hosting over 1,900 attendees.**

Berrien RESA staff members have supported the United Way's Rake A Difference Day **for seniors in our community since 2017, raking leaves for an average of 20 residents each year.**



Berrien RESA serves nearly
25,000 students in Berrien County.

The schools we serve include
15 public school districts,
20 non-public schools and
3 charter school academies.



Make the **CONNECTION TO YOUR IMPACT**

Berrien RESA encourages employees to connect with their purpose, find meaning in their work and embrace passion as a driving force for success!

How does your role contribute to the success of Berrien RESA? How do you impact or add value to the lives of our students, our colleagues, and our community members?

"Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called *passion*."

- SIMON SINEK





Project RESA is a district-wide think tank that addresses climate and culture topics impacting the organization.

Project RESA is founded on two overarching principles; candor, and the concept of no authority. This means that all conversations had by Project RESA members will be honest discussions. No authority means that while the group is not a decision-making entity, it will make suggestions on ways in which issues may be resolved. Those ideas will be shared with Berrien RESA's Impact Team. It will be up to the Impact Team to make decisions for the organization.

Share Your Ideas!

You are encouraged to share your ideas and suggestions with the Project RESA team. Contact us via email at projectresa@berrienresa.org or you can fill out a Google Form (there is a link in the staff portal-- have your onboarding buddy show you where!) that will allow you to submit your thoughts without anyone knowing who submitted the comment. Please be assured, Berrien RESA cannot identify who submitted comments through the form.

Join the Team!

In the fall, look for an email inviting staff to join the Project RESA team! Participants commit to Project RESA responsibilities for one year. They are released from work duties to participate in monthly virtual meetings and task committee assignments (as approved by their supervisors).

Questions?

Contact Karen Heath in the Communications Office to learn more!

Stay CONNECTED

Ways to stay in-the-know and learn more about all the things we do!



Look for our employee newsletter, **"Our Neighborhood"**, sent out every other week to all staff.



Follow BerrienRESA on social media!

facebook.com/berrienresa
[@berrienresa on instagram](https://www.instagram.com/berrienresa)



Explore the Berrien RESA Staff Portal!

You will find tons of helpful information at berrienresa.org/staff-portal

"Face your deficiencies and acknowledge them; but do not let them master you. Let them teach you patience, sweetness, insight... When we *do the best that we can*, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another."

- HELEN KELLER

Our HISTORY

1962

Intermediate school districts were created in Michigan as a result of the 1962 Constitutional Convention. There are 56 intermediate school districts in Michigan which cover the 83 counties in the state. The Berrien County Intermediate School District was formed in 1963.

1968

Construction begins in the summer of 1968 on the new Berrien County Intermediate School District Administrative Center building.

In the photo: Board members Mr. Lehman, Mr. Dick, Mr. Peachey, and Mr. Patterson with Mr. Corican, Mrs. Barkmeier, and Mrs. Lehman.



1977

Construction begins on Blossomland Learning Center.

2003

Lighthouse Education Center is built.

2008

Berrien County Intermediate School District is renamed Berrien Regional Educational Service Agency to more clearly reflect our mission and purpose.



SUPERINTENDENTS:

Doyle Barkmeier 1959 - 1974

Raymond M. Sreboth 1974 - 1987

Jerry Reimann 1987 - 2002

Jeff Siegel 2002 - 2010

Kevin Ivers 2010 - 2020

Eric Hoppstock 2020 - present

Only 6 superintendents in 66 years!



**BERRIEN
RESA**



The Administrative Center, circa 1970s

Construction of
Lighthouse Education
Center, 2003



First class of students visiting
Blossomland Learning Center
on June 2, 1978

Our LOCATIONS —



711 St. Joseph Avenue, Berrien Springs



BLOSSOMLAND
LEARNING CENTER

Provides positive learning environments and experiences that advance the well-being, academic success, and lifelong achievement of students with moderate to severe cognitive impairments, ages 3 to 26.

Located in Berrien Springs, with offsite classrooms in Niles and St. Joseph.



LIGHTHOUSE
EDUCATION
CENTER

Provides a positive learning environment, enabling students with severe emotional impairments and Autism to achieve and enhance their confidence, self-esteem, independence, social acceptance, intellectual and personal growth.

Located in St. Joseph, with additional offsite ASD classrooms located within local school districts throughout Berrien County.



379 W Glenlord Road, St. Joseph

Administrative Center



711 St. Joseph Avenue, Berrien Springs

This is Berrien RESA's hub of offices including the Superintendent, Human Resources, Business Services, Communications & Print Shop, Special Education Services, Early Childhood Education Services, Instructional Services, Ancillary Health Services, Diagnostic Services & Compliance, Technology Services, and more.

The Admin Center also has a Conference Center and other meeting spaces.

Located in Berrien Springs, in front of Blossomland Learning Center.

Bertrand Innovation Center (The BIC)

The BIC building provides a centralized landing spot for multiple department staff members. The facility actively hosts several Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs as well as dual enrollment opportunities, including the Early Middle College (EMC) program. Looking ahead, the building is poised to expand its impact through strategic collaborations with community partners, transforming the shared space into a dynamic training and community hub for the entire south county region.

Located in Niles.



1905 Foundation Drive, Niles

Our ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

BERRIEN RESA SCHOOL BOARD

Andrew Robinson

Daniel J. Buckenmeyer

Jackie VanHorn

John Proos

Nancy Kiernan

SUPERINTENDENT

Eric Hoppstock

ASST. SUPERINTENDENT & DIRECTOR OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Chris Machiniak

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Medicaid
Coordinator

Ancillary/Health
Services

Diagnostic/
Compliance

Blossomland
Learning Center

Autism Spectrum
Disorder
Programs

Lighthouse
Education Center

Juvenile Center/
Jail

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Literacy
Support Team

Math
Support Team

Mental Health
Team

Belonging &
Well-Being Team

Professional
Learning
Coordination

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Birth to Three
Services
(Early On, Infant/
Toddler Programs)

Preschool
Services/Great
Start Readiness
Program

Early Childhood
Programs (Parents
as Teachers,
Playgroups)

Region 8 Family
Engagement &
Literacy Hub

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Technology
Consultants and
Specialists

Math & Science
Center

REMC

Student Activities

BUSINESS & FINANCE SERVICES

Business Services

Food Services

Truancy



"I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; **together** we can do great things."

- MOTHER TERESA

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Generalists

Berrien RESA Payroll

Reception at the Administrative Center

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

FACILITIES & SECURITY

Building Safety

Maintenance

Custodial Services

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Career & Technical Education Programs

Early Middle College Programs

Berrien Talent Collaborative

Apprenticeship Programs

McKinney Vento Regional Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

District Communications & PR

Print Shop

Berrien RESA Website Management

Graphic Design

Social Media

How WE ARE FUNDED

Berrien Regional Education Service Agency (Berrien RESA) is one of 56 education service agencies in the state of Michigan. RESAs are the only educational entities with 100% access to every public school to ensure implementation of 6 core services: early childhood education, student services, administrative services, teaching and learning, technology services and developing partnerships. Berrien RESA is an autonomous, tax-supported public school district governed by Michigan general school laws.

Total Annual Budget: **\$89.2 MILLION**
for year 2025-2026

OUR FUNDING SOURCES

Local Revenue

\$33.5M

Includes Millages and Local Grants
General Fund .1745 Mills • Special Ed 2.1954 Mills

State Revenue

\$42.1M

Includes State Aid and State Grants

Federal Revenue

\$14.5M

Includes Federal Grants

Income for Services/Other

\$1.5M

Includes internal transfers and billing to other districts

Note: Total may not equate to \$89.2 million due to rounding.
Reflects 2025-2026 budget amended June 8, 2026.

Complete the **LIVE BY HEART CHALLENGE!** (FOR NEW EMPLOYEES)

Start your **HEART**

- _____ ☐ Meet with your assigned Onboarding Buddy ♥
- _____ ☐ Complete your new hire paperwork ♥
- _____ ☐ Elect your benefits via the EASE Portal ♥
- _____ ☐ Review your retirement plan options ♥
- _____ ☐ Sign up and log in to Red Rover (if needed) ♥
- _____ ☐ Visit the Staff Portal section of the website ♥
- _____ ☐ Visit the Berrien RESA Resource Hub site ♥
- _____ ☐ Log in to Qmlativ ♥
- _____ ☐ Complete your Safe Solutions Training ♥
- _____ ☐ Order your business cards (if needed) ♥
- _____ ☐ Sign up and log in to Ulliance EAP ♥
- _____ ☐ Chat with your supervisor about how performance is measured ♥
- _____ ☐ Sign up for a Berrien RESA newsletter (in the Staff Portal on the website) ♥
- _____ ☐ Explore the Berrien RESA Branding webpage ♥

Show your **HEART**

- _____ ☐ Complete all “How Have You Lived It?” questions in this booklet (page 11 to 15) 
- _____ ☐ Send a colleague a HEART card 
- _____ ☐ Volunteer for a Berrien RESA event or activity 
- _____ ☐ Be featured in the Employee Spotlight 
- _____ ☐ Tell a “dad” joke to the superintendent 
- _____ ☐ Write your elevator speech (page 19) and share it with your team 

Share your **HEART**

- _____ ☐ Follow Berrien RESA on Facebook
- _____ ☐ Follow Berrien RESA on Instagram
- _____ ☐ Update your LinkedIn profile and connect with five Berrien RESA team members

Accomplish all exercises in this challenge within your first year and receive a prize! See the HR team for details and review when you're ready.

SIGN OFF KEY

-  = Supervisor signs off
-  = HR signs off
-  = Superintendent signs off

HR Review by: _____ Date: _____

Live by Heart

BINGO!

Go out of your way to say hello and introduce yourself to a new employee	Log in to check your "Time Off Balances" in Qmlativ	Chat with your supervisor about how performance is measured	Tell a "dad" joke to the superintendent	Send a colleague a HEART card
Be featured in the "Employee Spotlight"	Delete ALL old (Version 1.0) Berrien RESA logos from your computer and Google Drive folders.	Complete a "well-being" assessment in Ulliance	Rep the Berrien RESA brand at work (wear the gear!)	Attend a Fall or Spring MARSP retirement seminar
Write your elevator speech and share it with your team (see page 19)	Read the latest issue of the Our Neighborhood newsletter		Explore the Staff Portal section of the website	Follow Berrien RESA on Facebook
Volunteer for a Berrien RESA event or activity	Complete the "Handbook Verification Form 2026/27" in Qmlativ	Update your email signature using one of our templates	Complete your Safe Solutions/ Vector Training before October 30!	Follow Berrien RESA on Instagram
Follow Berrien RESA on LinkedIn	Write your connection statement and share with your supervisor (see page 20)	Post a photo of a Berrien RESA mug on FB/Insta using #BRESAheart	Pay a simple compliment to a fellow employee	Share an idea or suggestion with ProjectRESA@berrienresa.org

Welcome to a new year at Berrien RESA! You have a shot to win a prize... Complete the Live by HEART Bingo Challenge (vertical, horizontal, or diagonal rows all count). Review what you completed with your supervisor, get their signature, and then see HR to collect your prize. Must be completed in the 2026-27 school year!

A few hints...

How do you update your email signature? Find our email signature templates by going to BerrienRESA.org/branding and click on the Staff Resources tab. Need help? Email Heather Shelby in the Communications office.

Need a HEART Card? Come see us in the Communications or HR offices.

Want to be featured in the Employee Spotlight? Check with Charlotte Jones, or Laura Tidey in the Communications Office.

Where do I get Berrien RESA Wear? We have a Berrien RESA Store with Land's End! Go to business.landsend.com/store/berrienresa/

Have other questions? Just ask your supervisor! Or, you can find the answers to many of your questions by exploring the Berrien RESA website - especially the Staff Portal.

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

HR Review by: _____ Date: _____

NOTES

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NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The first two steps are relatively straightforward. The third step involves identifying the specific components of the system that are most likely to cause problems. This can be done by reviewing the system's architecture, identifying potential failure points, and conducting a risk assessment. Once the components have been identified, the next step is to develop a plan to address the issues. This plan should include a timeline for implementation, a budget, and a clear assignment of responsibilities. Finally, the plan should be implemented and the results monitored.

NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

A large rectangular box with a thin black border. Inside the box, there is a very faint, light gray watermark logo centered horizontally and vertically. The logo appears to be a stylized emblem or crest.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.[illegible]

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.[illegible]

NOTES

[illegible][illegible]

NOTES

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NOTES

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical margin lines, text, or other markings on the page.[illegible]

ASK FOR HELP

whenever you want it.

HELP OTHERS WHEN YOU CAN

even if they don't ask for it.

MAKE THE DECISION

you think is the right decision to make.

START SOMETHING

that needs to be started.

TAKE TIME OFF TO DO SOMETHING

that inspires, excites and energizes you.