

THE TORNADO CONNECTION

Keeping the Lines of Communication Open



STUDENTS SOAR INTO SUMMER

by Grace Calvin

Butler Intermediate's PBIS Program, SOAR, finished the year strong with some exciting events, which included the end of the year assembly and the end of the year gold ticket winners. The assembly was held on May 27, and grand prize winners were announced on June 2 during Tornado Time.

The students were engaged by playing a Virtual Kahoot game with their class, and the winning student from each classroom went to the auditorium and participated in a live competition while the rest of the school livestreamed the assembly. "PBIS is all about modifying behavior through positivity, and the assembly is a culminating celebration of everyone's positive behavior this year," Mrs. Waseleski stated.

The PBIS Program is doing a great job of keeping the students engaged while still taking Covid protocols seriously. "Everyone needs a reminder sometimes of what is expected of them. Teaching the expected behaviors gives students a chance to learn or revisit those behaviors as needed," Mrs. Sheatz said. Teachers award 1-2 gold tickets a week to students who display proper behavior.

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The gold tickets nominees are then entered into a monthly drawing, where students win snacks and gift cards. At the end of the year, though, every gold ticket winner was entered into a drawing for the grand prizes of Kennywood tickets or AirPods. David Graef, Jackson Morgus, Zach Tisdale, and Gavin Tressler won the tickets, and Chris Biondo won the AirPods.

In addition to the gold ticket drawing, the PBIS program held a basketball game of "PIG" at the beginning of May, that most of the student population watched virtually. The students who played in the basketball game were selected based on the gold ticket prize wheel. "After meeting with Mr. Cochran and Mr. Rock to plan this idea out, we thought adding students' friends to help the gold ticket winner would be fun," said Mrs. Waseleski. "Then, we brought in Mr. Niederberger and Mr. Lewandowski as basketball all stars!" she added.

According to Mrs. Waseleski, the PBIS program has significantly decreased discipline cases, and it allows teachers to take control and ownership of student discipline in a positive way. PBIS also allows constant data monitoring so when certain behaviors spike, the team is able to plan effective interventions to lessen behaviors.

As part of the next phase of implementing the PBIS program at the Intermediate, a new student committee is ready to take on the 21/22 school year. The student committee involves eighth and ninth grade students that were nominated by their teachers. The role of the new SOAR student committee is to seek student input to make our school a better place.

"The main goal of a PBIS Student Advisory Council is to get student input on initiatives, assemblies, rewards, etc. We want our students to have a voice in what we do," said Mrs. Crissman. Teachers were asked to nominate a variety of students who come from all walks of life, and would be a vocal, honest, and productive participant in the committee. The team will meet on a regular basis next year (at a minimum each quarter) to help plan assemblies, brainstorm initiatives and programs, come up with ideas for staff appreciation, help to refresh our prizes, and find ways to improve our school climate. Nominated student Julia Mason said, "I wanted to be a part of the student committee to be in a positive environment and help the school."



BUTLER SAYS GOODBYE TO TWO RETIRING TEACHERS

by Sutton Stoner

As the school year comes to a conclusion, the Butler Intermediate High School says goodbye to two long-term teachers, Mrs. Blashford, and Mrs. Heinack.

Mrs. Blashford began teaching at Butler in 1989, which makes it 32 years that she has taught in the district, mainly as a science teacher for seventh and eighth grade. She stated that she decided to get into the field of education in her second year of college. She knew that she wanted to teach either German, science, history, or philosophy. In the end, she ultimately decided to do science. She said, "My dad was a teacher, and I loved to play in school as a kid. The hardest decision wasn't whether or not to teach, but which subject I wanted to teach."

Mrs. Blashford explained that her education began at the University of Michigan, and then finished off her degree at the University of Pittsburgh. During this time, she wasn't just focused on school, but she was also working at a flower shop/greenhouse to make some extra money. Once she finished her degree, she got her first teaching position as a chemistry teacher at a small town on the Allegheny River, called Springdale. Once she left that job, Mrs. Blashford came to Butler. This is where she began her new career.

She stated that the things she will miss most about her job are definitely the kids that she taught. In fact, she even said, "Later on as a teacher, I enjoyed every day of my job as long as it involved working with kids." Her advice to new students and new teachers is to stay on task and not fall behind, to make good use of your time, ask for help when you need it, and to learn something new and learn how to demonstrate that knowledge.

She said that she decided to retire in October, but before she left, she had to do two things. First, she had to make sure that her students had the easiest transition to a new teacher as possible, and second, she wanted to leave behind any resources for her colleagues that they might need or find useful. By January, she felt that both of her goals were met, and she could move on to retirement. After her retirement, she relaxed for a little while until she decided to go back to work in a flower shop/greenhouse.

According to Blashford, she feels that she was born to teach. Some of her earliest memories are of teaching her siblings, or trying to learn more that she could teach others. Even now, she is still teaching and learning about different types of plants at her work.

One of Mrs. Blashford's friends/colleagues, Mrs. Sankey, had many positive things to say about her. "Mrs. Blashford was always looking for creative ways to help teach her students. Over the summer, she would read about new ideas for creative teaching. She would go to flea markets and garage sales to find simple home items to use in her classroom, like tea kettles, matchbox cars, and kids' meals toys. She enjoyed collaborating and developing meaningful projects for her students. She is very energetic and truly loved her career."

Mrs. Heinack has been teaching in Butler's school district for the past 22 years as a pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, math 7, math 8, and a coding teacher for ESP. According to Mrs. Heinack, "I've always been teaching math; that's always what interested me."

Mrs. Heinack got into teaching when she was 28. She said that at the time, she didn't know what she wanted to do with her life, but her son was in school at the time and she liked what was happening in the schools. This motivated her to become a teacher.

She said that once she decided what she wanted to do, she started to get the degrees she would need through college. She earned her associates degree at BC3, she did a year of secondary education and mathematics at Slippery Rock, and she finished off her college education with three years at West Chester University. During this time before she could actually teach, she said that she was working as a cashier at different grocery stores.

Mrs. Heinack's favorite part of teaching and the part that she is going to miss the most is being in front of the class and being able to interact with the students. However, the thing that she said she is not going to miss about teaching is the big piles of papers that she has to grade. Her advice to any new teachers is that they "make sure to take their time to enjoy the students because that is one of the best parts of teaching." She also made it clear that if she had the chance to go back and change her decision to teach and do something else, she would not. In fact, she said that if she could go back, she would have started earlier.

She said that she has definitely "made peace" with her retirement. She said, "In my retirement, I plan on staying home and relaxing at least for the first summer." However, she plans to come back to substitute teach for the school district so that even through retirement she can still enjoy the wonders of teaching.

According to Mrs. Heinack, teaching gave her a purpose every day, that it made her much more creative and organized, more patient, and most of all teaching has made her much more confident. She said that everything that she learned from teaching she believes that she will still use for other things for the rest of her life.

One of Mrs. Heinack's colleagues, Mrs. Laska, had this to say about her friend's choice to retire: "Tracie Heinack has touched the lives of many students. She taught them how to succeed in math, but most importantly, she has given each of her students the courage, confidence, and support to be a successful person both inside and outside of school. I will forever cherish the countless laughs and joyful memories. Tracie, I wish you nothing but the best as you embark upon this next chapter in life."

Speaking for every student and every teacher that has ever worked with these teachers, we would like to thank you for everything. All of the hard work you put into your job every day has not gone unnoticed, and you will be missed. We all hope that you will look back on your memories here at Butler and smile, and that you enjoy every minute of your retirement. You have earned it.



SUMMER TRENDS AND FASHIONS

by Halle Karns

As most parents may think, the fads and fashions of today are not what you were expecting, but your kids love them. Summer is around the corner, and your teenager(s) will be wanting some new clothes soon. Well, it's time to get shopping, because who knows how long this trend will last!

Most teenagers are now into popular brands such as American Eagle, Hollister, Madewell, Forever 21, Lululemon, and Vineyard Vines. The baggy style is in, but so is the fitted style. It looks like another cycle of fashion is back. The style in the late 80's and 90's was pretty similar to the style now but with a few key updates. One student, Alexa Karns said, "They are way cuter now, and in the 90's they didn't have the nice brands and stuff, but now they sell things at nicer brands." Sophia Cornetti agrees. She said, "I think that back then the style was a little weird. Especially the pant suits and hair in the 70s. I am sure that I would have a different opinion if I lived back then though!" Although students think that the styles were interesting before, many parents often say they are just as interesting now.

Many are wondering if these style trends will last another year. Alexa Karns commented, "Maybe [the trend will follow another year]. I really think there will be a new style though." Some of this style's clothes are not school appropriate, but students often try to wear them anyway. Many are wondering if the dress code should change or stay the same waiting for the next trend to come. Adele Hohn said, "I think the schools should keep the dress codes how they are because a lot of the trendy clothing is very skimpy and not school appropriate. So the students just need to deal with it." Cornetti disagrees. She commented, "Personally I think that the dress code should change. I don't know why anyone would want to wear a swimsuit to school or anything like that. If someone does wear something like that, they will face the consequences of society by being embarrassed!"

Summer is a chance for a fresh and new trend to come in, but lately in the past two years the style has mostly been the same. Thinking back to the VSCO age in 2019, this was when the "new" style of crop tops, AE jeans, baggy sweatshirts, and everything in between came in. It is still in full swing. Even though the VSCO girls have lost their popularity almost completely, the style is still ongoing. It brings a summery and happy vibe to the table. Sophia Cornetti said, "I feel like all the trends leave a mark on the style, but VSCO is not full-on VSCO anymore!" Adele Hohn agrees. "I think people liked the more comfy clothing," she said.

Popular summer trends are what most teenagers think about. One very popular summer outfit that girls wear are tiny tops, with skirts from AE or Hollister. According to minifashionaddicts.com, skirts should be either jean, have tiny ruffles, or floral on them. Most outfits now aren't the playful, want-to-get-dirty type of clothing. Even boys are wearing much more casual clothing. Some of the top outfits are khaki pants from most loved AE, paired with a t-shirt or flannel from one of the popular stores. Shoes say everything. Boys and girls alike are pretty agreeable on shoes such as Nike Air Force 1's, Converse, Vans, and Crocs. Birkenstocks are the favorite summer shoes for girls

Accessories are what put your outfit all together. A new summer trend is bucket hats for at the beach or for anywhere. Another one is ribbon scrunchies, which are scrunchies with ribbons flowing off of them. Boys may want to add a watch or nothing at all, giving it a simple look. Other accessories are the same ones that have been for awhile such as sunglasses for girls and boys.

NINE PERIOD DAY HIGHLIGHTS SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR 21-22

by Ayla Werner

The administration has finalized that next year we will be operating on a nine period day. Students may feel overwhelmed or intimidated when first hearing this, but it will not change the length of the school day or classes. Having the nine period day will open up time in students' schedules for classes like band, orchestra, chorus, and other ESP electives without having to shorten the time of required classes.



Before the pandemic, school used to start at 7:30, but during the 2020-2021 school year, it actually began at 8:00. This upcoming school year, students will go back to starting at 7:30 a.m., once again regaining a normal school day feeling. The nine period day will change the 20-minute activity period known as Tornado Time into a stand alone period, it may also change some students' homerooms or other periods throughout the day. Students will still leave at the same times they normally would without the nine period day, so there will be no changes with those times. Lunches will be exactly the same, except for some slight changes on the times when they begin and end. According to Mr. Dobransky, "The hardest part about scheduling is making sure the lunches are not too early or too late and working within the limitations of the teachers' day."

As far as study halls, the seventh and eighth graders will only be allowed to have a maximum of one study hall, and the ninth graders can have two. Starting next year, the seventh graders will be required to take double-period English and math classes, whether students registered for ESP or not. This will allow for more enrichment and for a better understanding in those classes. The biggest benefit of doing this is that every student will have a fair academic experience. The school is doing this with English and math because those two classes seem to benefit students the most, and it will better prepare students for the harder classes they may take when they are older. New seventh graders likely will not notice the longer class times because it will be just like what they experienced in middle school.

Ninth graders will not have the double-period classes because they will have the opportunity to take more electives than they could in seventh or eighth grade. Their periods 1-7 will be 40 minutes long, and periods 8-9 will be 42 minutes long. For most of the day, the bell schedule for the IHS and the Senior High will match, even though the Senior High will still have an eight period day. There are plenty of students from the Senior High who actually come to the Intermediate to take shop electives and some other courses. Having classes 40 and 42 minutes long will hopefully help with this and benefit all students in the best way possible.

When scheduling for the 2021-2022 school year began in March, students were able to choose between three different learning pathways: virtual/livestream, cyber, or in person learning. Although not many students chose the livestream or cyber option, they were still available to every student.

Some courses will be challenging for students, so they should take the classes they feel most comfortable doing. When scheduling, students had to fill out the classes they want to take next year on a sheet of paper and turn it in to their history teacher. Having a seventh grade orientation before school starts is really helpful to the students. Mr. Dobransky hopes we can have an orientation this upcoming school year because practicing their schedule and meeting with some of the faculty will really benefit new seventh graders and older students returning from cyber or live streaming. They have never had to go from class to class and get to walk around the school on their own so this is a good thing for them to come to. "Orientation is typically held in mid-August," Mr. Dobransky said.

If students have any problems, concerns, or questions about scheduling for next year, they are encouraged to contact the guidance office.

WHAT'S SO COOL TEAMS IMPRESS JUDGES

by Lauren Bayer, Editor

The "What's So Cool About Manufacturing" eighth grade teams have been rolling out videos within the past three to four months for two incredible companies. Breit Cochran and Erin Snyder, the faculty advisors of the two teams, selected specific individuals to conquer this task, and they succeeded. Both teams won first place, winning Viewers Choice and Best Manufacturing Message.

These two teams were extremely focused and ready to win. On the first team, Zachary Slear, Eli Snyder, and Patryk Lyon worked with the company Mecco. The second team consisted of Adraya Baxter, Kaitlyn Mcguire, Ariana Morrow, and Brielle Pinto. This team worked with Ellwood City Forge. Two supervisors assisted both teams, Lauren Bayer and Maura Penrod, answering any questions each team had.

This had not been Mr. Cochran or Mrs. Snyder's first year with students competing in the contest. Mr. Cochran worked with winning teams for the past four years, and this is the second year that Mrs. Snyder has been involved. According to Mrs. Snyder, "We have always been interested in manufacturing, and it is a good way for students to realize that there are careers out there that involve manufacturing, which is evolving daily." Each teacher wanted the students to be able to socialize, work together, and find a way to create a winning video on their own within a set deadline.



This year was challenging for the students. Both teams were not able to visit their companies, nor were they allowed to be closer than six feet while gathering interviews for their videos. Although this was tough, all students managed to create the videos following the Covid-19 guidelines. Mr. Cochran admitted that he had concerns during the first month, but he still had hope in both teams. "I was concerned about the companies being able to film the interview portions and send them, but both Ellwood and Mecco successfully transmitted amazing footage," said Mr. Cochran.

"Both manufacturing companies were well established and more than understanding," Maura Penrod said. She is "over the moon ecstatic" about what her team has accomplished this year. Ariana Morrow, who was more than thrilled to work on team two, commented, "We had a short deadline, but exceeded our goals in the end." Every student in the groups, as well as supervisors assisting the teams, are pleased with what they have done.

Although both teams experienced trouble creating these videos while school fluctuated between in person and remote, all of the students had a wonderful time learning and experiencing the new concepts that come with manufacturing. This may help them with their future careers, or even provide confidence in everyday life.



TORNADO ATHLETICS OFFERS SUMMER SPORTS TRAINING

by Carter Ekas and Jacob Feidt

This summer's sports training will be held at the Butler Senior High School field house for athletes in grades 7-12. To participate in the summer sports training, you can contact Mr. McElroy, and he will put out a separate schedule for each sport.

According to McElroy, "High school students can sign up for strength and conditioning class for phys. ed. credit during the year. For the summer, the hours are posted on the doors at the annex, and the athletic director emails every coach to let them tell their athletes." There will be training for almost every varsity sport. The varsity head coaches work with Mr McElroy to help organize a schedule. Classes will be during regular school hours in the summer. The weight room will be open from 7-9 am for all athletes, 9-11 am for high school football and 11 am -12 pm for junior high football Monday-Thursday. On Friday, the annex is open to all athletes from 7 am -12 pm.

According to Mr. McElroy, "There are typically 10-30 athletes training each hour." He is also letting college athletes participate, but on their own time. He said, "The weight room is open to all athletes." They will be doing lifting and conditioning drills during the training. The time for each training session varies for each sport. Football will do lifting for 45-60 minutes, then conditioning for 15-20 minutes, and finally they will do install. Other sports will do their workout lifting but then go to the sport to do conditioning.

For now, there will be regular COVID-19 restrictions such as: wearing your mask properly at all times, sanitizing all equipment after using it, and taking temperatures before entering the training room. After 70% of the state gets their COVID-19 vaccines, Coach Mac is hoping that there will no longer be as many restrictions during the summer sports training.

According to Mr. McElroy, "A lot of athletes think that the season is the most important. In reality, it is the 8-9 months training to get ready for the sport. You develop strength through lifting which in turn develops speed and flexibility, all important to excel at your sport." There are also new training techniques every year, which he enjoys, and the most important thing is training three to four days every week and working extra hard to get stronger and faster while at the training. He added, "Also, make sure to try to eat healthy and stay fit all year around. Not only during the sports season, but also when your sports are done. So, you can train almost all year for your sport to become an overall better athlete."

This will be the fifth year he is running the summer sports training but his 15th year being involved with the weight room. "I designed the program for the class and have been involved with weight training since college which has been about 22 years," Mr McElroy said. His favorite part of the training is when he sees improvement and gains in strength and speed. What he doesn't like to see is when good athletes don't show up, and think that their own workouts work the same. He said, "A little secret, it never works."



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A NEW SEVENTH GRADER

by Rylee Jack and Kelsey Kennedy, Editor

This fall, new seventh graders will attend school in a larger building with more freedom and more expectations. This is bound to cause you and your child some anxiety, but rest assured, the principals and staff are carefully planning a smooth transition for all of the students this August. So hand this article over to your new seventh grader, and let us help you put them at ease!

When you arrive at Intermediate by bus or parent drop-off, you have to go through metal detectors just like you have in the past. Then, if you get breakfast, you will go there after metal detectors. Breakfast is held in Cafeterias A and B. After you get your breakfast if it's before 7:30, you will go to a holding room in a cafeteria. If you arrive at school after 7:30, then you can go straight to period 1. When the bell rings at 7:35, period 1 begins!

You should get to period 1 before or at 7:30, if you get to class later than that you will be tardy. If or when you are tardy, you'll need a late pass as your excuse. Your teachers will expect you to be on time for class everyday. Have materials ready for each day such as your charged chromebook, books for class, writing materials, etc. When you're doing your assignments, make sure you're turning them in on time and staying on task.



In the hallways, follow the directional arrows when on your way to a class. When you're going somewhere while class is in session, you may go opposite of arrows to get there faster. Always walk in the hallway to keep yourself and others safe. Lastly, when using the stairs, make sure to follow the "UP" and "DOWN" signs to eliminate conflict with other students.

To keep all of the students safe here at the IHS, we are required to follow these protocols: keep your mask on properly all day, try to stay as far apart from others as possible, and wash/sanitize your hands often. During the day, you need to keep your mask on. Make sure that you are wearing your mask properly, which means keeping it over your nose and mouth. The only time you can have your mask down is during lunch or while getting a drink. Since there are so many students at the Intermediate, it isn't easy staying far apart from others in the hallway. Your teachers should assign seats in your classroom to be spread out, but try your best outside of a classroom because it will keep everyone safe. If the guidelines change this summer, these policies will be updated.

In between periods, you will have four minutes to get to your next class. That seems like not enough time at first, but after the first week or so of school, it will get easier to manage your time. In the 2020-2021 school year, we only had eight periods in a normal school day. In the 2021-2022 school year, it's changing to nine periods a day. The school day will still end at 2:45, but it will begin a half hour earlier.

To leave class, you need a pass that your teacher gives you after you complete the sign out sheet posted in the Google Classroom for that period. Take the pass with you and keep it until you get back to class. You must throw the pass away as soon as you get back to class to prevent students from reusing passes when they don't have permission to be in the halls.

Whenever you enter the building, make sure your phone is completely turned off. Security guards check over phones in the morning when they are checking in your lunch or if it's just laying on the table, so turn it off before metal detectors! If you're on your phone, you'll automatically get three days of detention. Although your phone might be off, you still need to have it in your backpack at all times during the day.

Next school year, all seventh grade students will eat Lunch C following period 6. This lunch is from 11:59-12:29 each day. You will have your sixth period teacher tell you where your class eats. Sometimes the lines are long during the first few days of school, but don't worry! Everyone will have a chance to sit down and eat before continuing on with the day.

The students at the Intermediate have full year classes, semester, trimester, and quarter classes. Core classes that stay the same include math, English, science, history, and full-year music courses. On the last day of a quarter, trimester, or semester class, your ninth period teacher will give you your schedule for the next days' new class. If you do not know where you are going, make sure to ask one of your teachers.

Just like the middle school, the IHS has different bus waves. This includes wave one through wave four. On the first day of school, your last period teacher will go over which wave you are and which buses are on each wave. If there are any bus or sport/club changes, they will tell you over the announcements right before wave one is let out, but if it affects you, you will be notified ahead of time. Make sure you memorize what your bus number is. You should also know where your bus is located so you know where to wait. Don't leave your class with a different wave just because your friends are in that wave. You'll get in trouble because your teacher has a list of students and their wave. If your parent or guardian is picking you up from school, try to locate them as fast as possible so that other people aren't waiting on you. All parent pick-ups leave on wave 1.

If you play a sport for the Intermediate High School at any point throughout the year, you will have to use the locker rooms to change. There are two sides to each room with showers connecting in the middle. In a situation where you have to share with another team, make sure you take turns sharing the different sides. Make sure you clean up your things, so that the next people using the locker rooms don't have to. When you need to use the locker rooms after school, make sure your team leaves with wave four at dismissal time.

Unlike the Middle School, a regular day at the IHS ends at 2:45. If you don't leave with the first wave, you may quietly work on other homework until it is your dismissal. Students should wait to pack up their belongings until after the wave one bell rings. Also, if you're being dismissed early from school, know what time you need to leave, have a pass, and make sure your teachers know.

Transitioning from the Middle School to the Intermediate High School isn't as scary as it seems. Once you get through the first week of school, things will get easier; you'll get used to your schedule, and the year will fly by!



DISTRICT TO PROVIDE SUMMER MEALS FOR STUDENTS

by Leonard Leinenbach

Summer food service will begin feeding students starting on June 7. Families will need to pick up the food on Wednesdays between 11 am and 1 pm. This program will provide food to the families for the following seven days.

The summer food service started because the school district, especially the board of directors, felt it was important to provide an opportunity to continue giving the students' families a chance for free meals during the summer months. District families can pick up food at these designated locations: the Senior High School, McQuiston Elementary School, and Broad Street Elementary School. Information about how to sign up for the food service will be sent to parents' emails the last week of May. Additionally, information will be posted on the school website. They also share updates on their twitter and instagram accounts: @tng_butlercafe. The Summer food service is still deciding if they should hold events or other possibilities of gatherings. Unfortunately, there will be no option for delivery this summer; the food must be picked up at the appointed locations.



The food comes in seven-day food bundles, so you only have to pick up your food bundles once a week. Many foods given out this summer will be students' favorites! Each student will be eligible to receive a free breakfast and a free lunch in a bundle for seven days. Each breakfast will have an entree, fruit or juice, and milk. Each lunch will contain an entree, vegetable, fruit, and milk.

If families don't have an option of transportation, they may carpool with other families. Butler Transportation Authority also has bus routes that pass near all three designated pickup locations. Feel free to call the terminal office at 724-283-1783 or email info@butlertransit.com to receive more detailed information.

So far, roughly 143 families have expressed interest in this year's program which benefits children across the district. The summer food service is expected to give out food until the first day of school. That final pick-up day is expected to land on August 18, when families can secure meals that should last from August 18 to August 25. Without access to a summer program, many students may not be able to eat nutritious meals, and good foods like fruits and veggies.

According to Daphne Hiles, Food Services Director, organizing meals for so many is a huge undertaking with just summer staff. She said, "Anyone over 18 interested in volunteering would need to reach out to the Butler Administrative Office in order to acquire the appropriate clearances and approval."

Some families may still be struggling financially from COVID-related obstacles; the summer food service is designed to provide nutritious meals to students free of charge. Students participating in Butler School District specialized programs will be able to receive free breakfast and lunches. If you're not sure if your child's summer camp is included in this list, please contact Julie Hopp or Aaron Royhab for more information.

MARCHING BAND PLANS FOR CAMP AND DISNEY

by Brendon Holmes

Band camp will run as usual this year from July 29-August 13, but percussion and sequinettes will start on July 26. This will run for about two weeks, but percussion will have started an extra week early. Usual camp days begin at 7:30 in the morning and end at 3:00 in the afternoon. The process will run as usual, and current Covid guidelines and vaccinations will be taken into consideration while students participate in band camp.

The band directors are planning to play outside with the students, so the students will be able to take their masks off when needed. During band camp, students will need lots of water and sunscreen for being outside. When thinking about joining band camp, bring sunscreen with lots of water, bring an open mind, with thoughts like "give it a try" and "try not to block it out." The students' main prioritized task is to learn basic drills and concepts. The expectations for the students are to come with the music as good as they can get it and keep an open mind so that camp is fun. According to Mr. Karenbauer, one of the band directors, "The happiest moment for the students is when their pride and confidence shows after the show is done."

Band camp will not interfere with school, grades, or school work. The band directors are working with sports coaches, discussing the topic of students who want to do both sports and marching band. Also, the directors work around school work and school. When selecting music, the band directors go through the process of accounting for strengths and weaknesses, a challenge for students, but something overall fun. In the band director's opinion, the best part of band camp for the students is "being with their friends... no... their 'band family.'"

Next school year, the marching band tentatively plans to go to Disney from Dec. 27-Jan. 2. The trip's pickup times will be around 11:00 in the morning, but not locked in based on the bus company. Before the Disney trip happens, there will be a fundraiser to help with the expenses. When driving to Disney, the bus drivers will switch halfway through. The dates of everything may vary based on Disney and the pandemic.

The trip will last a week, and will consist of the first day in Animal Kingdom, second day in Hollywood studios, third in Magic Kingdom, fourth day in Universal Studios, and the marching band will perform at all of these places. "The most fun part of marching band is performing in Magic Kingdom with Cinderella's castle in the background. It always brings tears to my eyes," Mr. Karenbauer stated.

ONLINE PSSA FEEDBACK

by Julia Neff

This spring, students at the BIHS completed the PSSA assessments online. Overall, students and staff favor the online version, although there are some concerns with it.

The students found that the online PSSA was easier and less stressful than the paper PSSA. Not having to fill in the bubbles made it go faster. The teachers also liked the online version better. They didn't have to pass out or collect as many things, and they didn't have to spend as much time cleaning up after administering the test, which meant classes could resume more quickly.

Some students have mixed opinions about the PSSA being online this year. Many felt the exams were less stressful and easier to focus on. Instead of students coloring in a bubble, they just selected their answer choice.



"In my opinion it was easier on the computer to just select the answer, and you can flag a question so that it is easy to come back to. When the test was on paper, there really isn't any of that," said Raegan Dittmer. Flagging the question is good because when students reach the end, the test will show which questions they flagged for possible reconsideration, making it easy to go back to them.

"Doing the PSSA's online was a lot less stressful. It was less work and more focus. I personally was more focused because I had nothing else to do but the test. With the paper and pencil version, there is drawing, adding stickers, and erasing. With the computer, there was none of that," said Grace Calvin. Some even mentioned the lack of distracting pencil sound, which was traded for the less-annoying clicking of keyboards.

This year has been crazy with going from in-person, to online, to the cohorts, to some coming back fully. It was difficult for teachers to make sure that each of their students felt prepared and ready for the test. "I felt prepared for most of the questions, for some I was confused, but I think I was prepared," commented Raegan.

"I felt very prepared, and it was honestly (to me) easier than the other years. I did feel that the English test was easier than the Math test though," Grace added.

The teachers mostly agreed that the online PSSA was easier. It didn't take as much time to distribute and clean up the test, which let the students have more time to work. But because of this change, the teachers had to also make changes in their lessons because of the PSSA. "The only difficult part was seeing some classes everyday and other classes only one time within testing days," said Mrs. Lesjack. Certain periods had to go to math and English every day, while others only were able to go to those classes only one of the three days that were dedicated to PSSA testing.

"Testing should be done at the end of the school year, when grades are posted. It will give more time to teach the curriculum," said Madame Lepage. Typically, the testing window is short, but due to the pandemic, the test window closes in September.

The PSSA might go back to the traditional paper and pencil, or they might keep them online. Some teachers don't care if they are online or on paper next year. "Overall, I don't mind either version from my perspective, but I think we need to consider which version is preferred overall by the students," stated Mrs. Lesjack.

"I am flexible, and the test version doesn't matter to me. I think it is a question to evaluate when results are back and when we can see if the online version had more mistakes," said Madame Lepage. Student scores will take longer this year because of the extended testing window.

ALPHABET SOUP GROUP PROMOTES ACCEPTANCE

by Mara Szurek, Editor

The Alphabet Soup Group, a gay-straight alliance club, is sponsored by Mrs. Chwalik and Mrs. Neely Aldridge and involves roughly 50 members. Anyone who wants to support their friends and other students may attend the meetings, which have been held in the JROTC room. This year, there wasn't a specific schedule for meetings, so all members were alerted via Google Classroom. This club discusses different topics every meeting, and the meetings are mainly run by club officers that are established at the beginning of the year. The Alphabet Soup Group provides an accepting place for LGBTQ+ youth in our school.



The club began in the 2018-2019 school year when an eighth grader--now tenth grader--Lucas Bruno sought to create a safe-space for those younger than them and to inform people about the LGBTQ+ community. Though they are now at the senior high, Lucas still is involved in activities similar to the Alphabet Soup Group. Lucas was the president of the club for two years, before they had to move on up to the senior high school. According to Lucas, "It gave me a sense of leadership and family because everyone who came knew they were in a safe space, which is exactly what I wanted, and it was amazing." They sadly have not been able to do much with the Alphabet Soup Group this year, but their younger sibling, Emma Bruno, who is involved with the club at the moment, keeps them up to date with what is going on in the club. Lucas stated, "The only improvements I would want to make would require that they had more time for meetings." Lucas Bruno has had a huge impact on the Alphabet Soup Group, and the BIHS is thankful that students can feel supported.

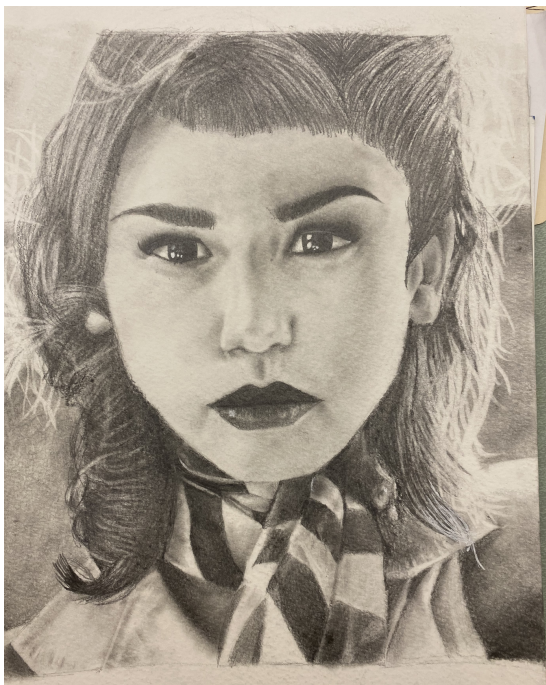
Mrs. Chwalik and Mrs. Neely Aldridge always attend the club meetings and show their support. They wear pride shirts and accessories, attend the pride parade, and participate in the Day of Silence. The teachers expressed that they would like to have after-school activities but worry about if students will have a ride home. Other teachers show their support by putting up rainbow stickers outside of their classroom doors. These stickers let the students know that the teacher is supportive and is always available to talk about LGBTQ+-related issues or concerns. Mrs. Chwalik stated, "We just wanted to have a place where everyone felt welcome."

The Alphabet Soup Group has functioned differently this year due to Covid-19. According to Mrs. Chwalik and Mrs. Neely Aldridge, it was tough because of the six-foot restriction rule. Also, the two teachers expressed that they weren't the most skillful when it came to technology. Later in the school year, while the cohort schedule was happening, they planned to have two different meetings since the school was split in half, but before that plan had gone into action, the whole school went remote. Thankfully, whenever everyone came back, meetings were able to happen again, and they took place in the JROTC room so that the members could socially distance themselves.

The president of the Alphabet Soup Group, ninth grader Michael Erickson, expressed his feelings about the club this year. He stated, "It's awesome. Kids are awesome. It feels like I kind of adopted all of the members." Mike is the main organizer of the club, and he loves it. His favorite part of the club is just being able to hang out and talk with the members and using attention grabbers such as "Go Beyond!" "Plus Ultra!" from the famous anime My Hero Academia. Mike said that he feels like the club's therapist, and he's totally okay with that. He said, "It's a safe place for people. You don't have to be scared."

The club has come a long way since it originally started. With the Alphabet Soup Group, the LGBTQ+ students at the BIHS are able to feel supported and heard. Hopefully as the years go on, it will stay and improve as a club in the school.

Artwork by Naomi Eberle



VIRTUAL FAB EVENT SHOWCASES STUDENT WORK

by Lily Stenman

As the weather became warmer and the 2020-2021 school year approached its end, staff members in the Butler Area School District began preparations for this year's annual FAB showcase. The Fine Arts and Beyond Showcase is a signature event within the school district that began in 2004 and continually grows with every year. It provides a platform for both artistically and musically talented students to showcase their work not only to our school district but to the community.

Unfortunately in March of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic ultimately changed the world. Gathering restrictions forced the FAB Showcase to be held virtually for the first time. Staff hoped for this year's showcase to be back to normal and in person again, but due to nearly the same regulations, the 2021 FAB Showcase was held virtually again.

In early March, the Golden Tornado Scholastic Foundation and the Art and Music Departments began preparations for the showcase. They gave students of all learning pathways from March 1 to March 21 to submit their artwork and music videos to the 2021 Virtual FAB Show. From there, the Art and Music Departments selected the student entries to be displayed on the FAB website. On Saturday, April 10, the FAB Showcase went live for their virtual show. On the Golden Tornado Scholastic Foundation website, people could see all different kinds of artwork and music. The website was set up into five different subcategories: paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, and music so that anyone could easily access the online display.

Overall, the online showcase turned out to be better than originally anticipated by the producers. The amount of art submissions were just under the average amount that the in-person show would have presented. Although the staff and students would have much rather have held an in-person FAB showcase, they were pleased with the result. Teachers and other staff members are thankful that the showcase was able to be presented virtually rather than no show at all. Staff members have been told that their students feel a sense of pride and accomplishment whenever they get to share all of their hard work with their peers, teachers, and overall community.

For students, art is a way to explore and build life-long skills in creativity, decision making, attention to detail, craftsmanship, problem solving, and most importantly, self confidence. Art introduces students to different ways of self expression and helps them to bring out their creative side in a fun and enjoyable way. All forms of art allow students to reach inside of themselves and use their own feelings, thoughts, ideas, and emotions to create beautiful things. Throughout the school year, students have the opportunity to take time to create their own masterpieces in their art and music classes. The FAB showcase gives students the ability to show off all of the art that they have made throughout the year to their community. Piper Curry, who had two pieces of art in the showcase, said, "It was a true honor to have my art in the FAB Show. My art teacher had to select it from the group of applicants, and it was nice to know that he thought it was quality art. I felt very proud."

UPPERCLASSMEN GIVE ADVICE TO YOUNGER STUDENTS

by Julia Mason

It is very important for students going into high school to know what to expect. Is high school more strict? Will my extra-curricular activities interfere with my school life? Do I need to try harder in school? Do I need to start caring about my grades more? Whatever your teenagers' questions are, upperclassmen have the answers! Natalie Mason and Christian DePolo have answered some questions to help younger students know what to expect in high school.

Natalie Mason is a current junior, and if Natalie were to be able to go back to seventh grade, she would pay more attention and try harder than she did. "If I could relive my junior high school years, I would focus more in school and try harder because it really does matter." She knows that not caring about her grades has affected her negatively, but she started caring more about her grades in ninth grade, which she feels was almost too late.

As far as advice to freshmen, she said, "Based on my past experience in junior high and what helped me overcome the consequences, I think students should always pay attention in class and realize how important school actually is." According to Natalie, as of now, students should focus the most on algebra. Algebra keeps building on top of what you have already learned and is a huge part of everyday life. When going into high school, Natalie thinks students should focus on what they want to do in their future. It doesn't even necessarily need to be a job; it could be an idea of a college major.

In the future, she said she might want to work in real estate, which means she would most likely go to school for business administration. Activities have been a big part of her high school experience, but she feels soccer has had the biggest impact on who she has become. Natalie said, "Soccer really helps me to reduce stress and take my mind off of things. It has taught me to be a bigger and better person in general." Although she says it has been a positive experience, soccer has been painful at times for Natalie. As a freshman, her legs started hurting very badly after pre-season, and she was later diagnosed with Chronic Exertional Compartment Syndrome, which occurs when excessive pressure builds up inside an enclosed muscle space in the body.

Natalie thinks that Butler is a really good school and very unique because it has a lot of clubs/activities that most schools don't have. A teacher once told her that she was proud of her and knows that she will be very successful in her future. It has stuck with her since and she continues to work hard.

Christian DePollo is a senior involved in Student Council and theatre. If Christian could relive the days he spent in junior high, he would change how he saw himself and other people. He stated, "Sometimes it is hard to not have a preconceived opinion about someone when you are in school. It might be a good or bad presumption, but either way you should see people for who they are, not how you would want to see them." The only thing that he would have done differently in Junior High, is pushing himself to study for tests more often.

Christian wants freshmen to know that when they come to the senior high, they need to stay positive and motivated to work hard and interact with school activities. For now, Christian thinks that students should focus on having good habits and managing their time. He feels that students should have a good time, while still being productive in their classes. "You only can go to high school once and you will regret not joining that one activity in the long run," said Christian. When asked how school has changed during his time in Junior High, Christian said that it's changed by not having most of the teachers willing to plan or participate in fun activities.

In his future, Christian plans on going to either Chatham or Arizona State University to study secondary education, child psychology, and hopefully get his child life specialist certification. Christian believes that the Student Council at the Senior High has taught him how to manage his time better. "Student Council just isn't a club; it's a family where students want to help the school. It has taught me to be a better person," Christian stated.

He went on to say that "Butler education is so unique because there are so many different classes you can take and clubs to join for after school." According to Christian, students don't just get the standard teaching most schools give you. "Butler goes over and beyond when it comes to student interaction," he said.

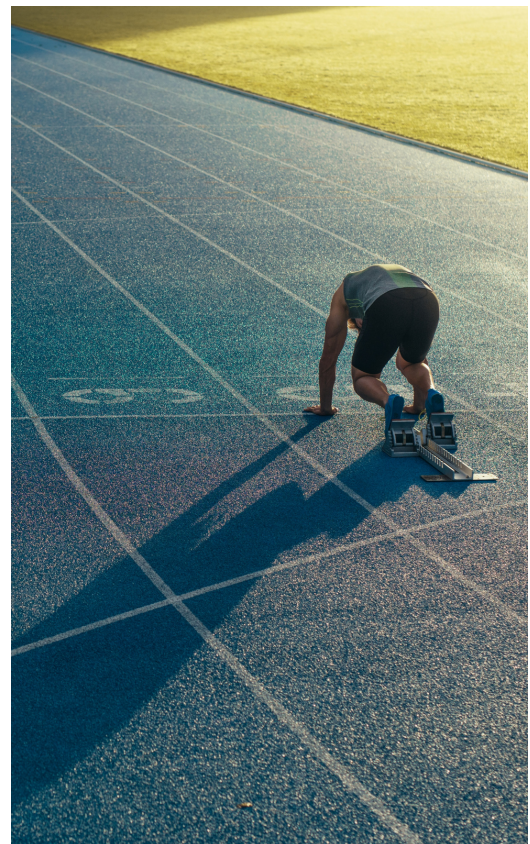
ATHLETES CONCLUDE SPRING SEASON

by Ella Nichols

Butler's spring sports teams competed with pride this season, concluding their season at the end of May.

Gabbi Catifano is a softball player for Butler's Junior High softball team. She stated, "Everyone gets along really well, and we all play well together." Everyone on the team got closer as time went on and they kept texting and hanging out. When asked about what her favorite part was, she replied, "One time we all went to Dairy Queen." She mainly plays the positions second or outfield. Gabbi also likes batting more than catching because it is more exciting and the crowd cheers more. Gabbi estimated only two losses.

Andrew Slaughenhoup is on the boy's volleyball team. He is a very social person, so he loved hanging out with friends and playing games with his teammates. When playing, he said that his strongest positions were a hitter and blocker, and his least strongest would be back row considering his height would go to waste. He really liked scrimmaging and messing around, but all the restrictions with Covid-19 made it hard. This is his first year playing, starting because the sport sounded interesting.



At the end of the season, they ended up only losing twice, to North Hills and North Allegheny. When asked about the worst part of playing, he said "Warm ups are hard because I was sore after the previous practice or game." In the end, Andrew Sloughenhoup loved playing volleyball and will be playing for Butler next year.

The players on the varsity Butler's track team are really impressive. Competing for Butler is always fun. Grace stated, "It's fun to just hang around friends and mess around, but I still work hard." When competing, she does high jump, long jump, the 4 by 1, and hurdles. Grace has been on the track team for three years, and this was her first year on varsity. She first decided to join track when her best friend did. They started together, and she has loved it ever since. Butler won every meet, and she never got under fourth place and has won first multiple times. She finished off her season great, and will be continuing next year.

Last but not least, Andrew Lucas on Butler's baseball team, stated, "Everyone got along really well." He liked playing, especially with his friends. He plays second base and pitcher, and has been playing for six long years. He has helped the team win 10-7. He didn't enjoy early practices but loved "hanging in the dugouts with the boys." He got into baseball when he was young because his dad wanted him to play a sport. "Who knew that I would fall in love with the sport?" he said. He is very excited to play next season.

Congratulations on a great spring season to all Butler athletes!

BOOK DRIVE FOR BROAD STREET A SUCCESS SCHOOL TO REOPEN THIS FALL

by Piper Curry, Editor

Books for Broad Street

Students and staff at BIHS participated in a contest to assist Broad Street Elementary School stock the library for the school's fall reopening. In true Butler spirit, students, staff, and families searched their shelves and even purchased new books for grades K-4, so that the library would be full upon reopening. During Tornado Time, seventh period classes participated in a friendly book drive competition. From Thursday, April 22 to Thursday, May 6, students could donate books to the school, and the top four classes with the most books received an ice-pop party.

Ms. Crissman, one of the assistant principals, came up with the idea of the competition. She said, "We were directed as a district to put out a Books for Broad Street donation drive. We were instructed to put out a bin for the drive, but I thought, 'who doesn't like a friendly competition,' so I came up with the competition idea."

Ms. Boyd, the new principal at Broad Street Elementary, was very thankful for the books. She said, "Our Library supplies were dissolved when our doors closed, so we are in need of replenishing the library. As a community school, we felt it would be great for the community to play a role in the restocking of our library."

Many students joined in for this worthwhile cause. Maggie Bodamer donated 32 books. She said, "They needed books, and it is the best way students could help." Natalie Lesterlang donated about 50 books and commented, "It is important; it was so the kids going there could learn to read." Maura Penrod added, "Just giving them a good environment for the students is helpful."

Thank you to all the students who helped out with the drive, and congratulations to the top four winning classes. In fourth place was Mr. Rock's class with 245 books, and in third place, Mrs. Lesjack's and Mrs. Sroka's Cafe C Study Hall collected 347 books. In the top two, we have Ms. Hooks' class with 375, and Mr. Krack's class took first with an amazing 484 books! Those top four classes received an ice- pop party. IHS and Broad Street thanks all the students who participated in donating books.

Broad Street To Re-Open

Due to consolidation, Broad Street closed in 2015, but they are re-opening in the 21-22 school year. When they closed, they gave away most of their equipment to other schools in the Butler area. Because of this, they didn't have enough school equipment for the school year. So, the Butler Area School District directed their schools to put out a drive for equipment.

The new principal, Ms. Boyd is very excited to start on Broad Street's next chapter. She has a ton of experience with school and teaching. Boyd was a Math Teacher, Student Affairs Liaison, Enrollment Director, and Community School Manager, as well as a basketball, softball and volleyball coach. She said, "I look forward to the collaboration opportunities of the community, parents, staff and administration. When the entire village works together, the rewards can be celebrated by all."

According to Boyd, "My vision for Broad Street is to provide a forward-thinking, enthusiastic educational environment, focused on preparing students and families for the future through a community-centered approach led by an inspired faculty and staff." One of her main goals is to have a good relationship with her students. "I hope that all my Broad Street Scholars have a clear understanding that I am an agent working for them. My doors are always open, and I am full of joy and compassion. I would wipe their tears when needed and I hold their chin up when needed. I want them to see me as an example of an adult they would like to emulate." Another goal would be, Staff readiness for the Broad Street Model. "The staff's readiness for each scholar based on the school's model is of utmost importance."

Broad Street is very excited for their re-opening, and they are very happy for the donations from the school. Welcome, Ms. Boyd, and best of luck to the students and staff of Broad Street!

MUSIC PROGRAM PLAYS ON

by Latisha Bruno

Butler offers one of the best music programs in Pennsylvania, boasting outstanding band, orchestra, and chorus classes, as well as many music-related electives. Although the restrictions this year have been difficult on the music department, students continued to learn and share their talents.

Mrs. Waseleski and Mrs. Tepper are the chorus directors at the IHS. Both have adapted their classes for the COVID guidelines all year. According to Mrs. Waseleski, her choir has not been able to do any live concerts, but she was able to record three videos to put together for a virtual concert on May 28. The link is available on the district's website and social media accounts.

Mrs. Waseleski has been working in the music department for 11 years and this year may have been the most difficult. While the guidelines have changed many times, the size of the seventh grade chorus has always remained constant. "My students have thrived this year. Learning to sing socially distanced, masked, and with long periods of remote learning should have lowered the development of their singing. Instead, the singers sound as talented as ever," observed Mrs. Waseleski. The seventh grade choir has definitely improved. They recently recorded the seventh grade concert, and Mrs. Waseleski was thrilled to hear all of the students sing together for the first time this year.

A typical chorus period consists of a warm-up, rehearsal and then repeat it everyday for the period. Some songs are reused but only if past students liked the song. "I try to always program a diverse repertoire and align it with current student interest specific to the current singers in my choir." According to Mrs. Waseleski, good teachers are evolving their teaching style based on previous experiences.

Mr. Karenbauer is the band director. He's been teaching in the music department for 24 years and during those years, he has learned new ways to teach, especially the 2020-2021 school year.

When the second wave of COVID hit, the band members were doing a lot of smartmusic recordings, music theory apps, and less practice time. Since we have all been back at school, the band concert was unfortunately canceled. "It was canceled because there has to be social distancing while on stage and without our masks on, it's too difficult to spread everyone out and still have room for everyone," Mr. Karenbauer said. But even with the covid guidelines, the band continued to progress throughout the year, especially in the last nine weeks. "I am proud of the progress from the students because it's why I love teaching music," he said.

The music choices are based on strengths and weaknesses of the band as a whole and student interest. Usually a normal class period consists of warming up, rhythmic exercises, reading, and working on tone production and articulation. Musicianship also happens daily in band class. During the 2020-21 school year, there have been so many memories made from scaring the student teacher with a rubber chicken to hearing the seventh grade progress over the course of the year.

Mrs. Black is the orchestra teacher. She has been teaching in the music department for six years. She teaches orchestra, piano, and general music for the Butler Area School District. According to Mrs. Black, "When I first started teaching, I tried to be like everyone else and quickly realized the only teacher I can be is me. We all have different talents and strengths as teachers and that is what makes us all unique - The school day would be pretty boring if everyone taught the same way!"

She went on to explain her teaching philosophy: "My philosophy for teaching is that music is for everyone and should be a class you enjoy coming to every day. Sometimes it will be challenging, sometimes it won't be easy, but in the end if we all work together and have a positive attitude we can accomplish anything. This year more than ever, my students have shown me that."

Luckily for the orchestra, the COVID restrictions impacted them a little less than the other music courses. Because orchestra students can perform with their masks on, their concert could still occur, just with socially distancing in place. Since there was a limited number of people in the audience, on the Butler Orchestra Facebook page, there was a livestream of the concert for people at home to enjoy.

When the schools went remote for a few months, remote learning was different for everybody. According to Mrs. Black, "Remote orchestra was...interesting. Because you cannot play at the same time due to internet lag, we had to either take turns playing or keep our mics off entirely. I did breakout rooms by instrument, various music theory kahoot games, and had a recording due weekly so I could assess everyone's learning." When the Butler Intermediate High School went from remote to cohort, Mrs. Black felt as if she had "mini orchestras." Each cohort would work on concert music in hopes that the two groups would be able to play again. There were some challenges, but the cohorts actually helped the orchestra grow and improve individually. Even with the year's challenges, Mrs. Black still gave them complicated music and expected a high level of musical excellence, and they did it! Mrs. Black is so proud of what they have accomplished. They put on a fantastic performance during their concert and ended the night with a standing ovation. To overcome the many challenges this year and still put on a great performance is a testament of their perseverance, dedication, and passion for music. Mrs. Black could not be more proud of them.

Class typically starts with tuning and a few warm ups - scales, rounds, sight reading. Then the orchestra works on their concert music by cleaning up rhythms, fixing intonation, balance, and dynamics. In a typical year, the orchestra performs three concerts. Mrs. Black selects classical and holiday music for the Winter Concert, pop and rock for the Pops Concert in February and a mix of jazz, fiddle, and modern music for the Spring Concert. She teaches a wide variety of music so there is something for everyone to enjoy.

