

THE TORNADO CONNECTION



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Butler Offers New Learning Pathways

By Maura Penrod

Butler secondary students were offered four school options for the 2020-2021 school year due to COVID-19. According to Dr. White, the administration designed each pathway to meet the diverse needs of students and their families. In the traditional pathway, students attend school full time, five days a week, as long as the district remains in an “enhanced green” phase. For the flex learning pathway, students come in person two days a week, either Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday, and they stream their classes online the other three days. Hybrid learning is when students come into school for certain classes, then leave and do the other classes online. Cyber students do all of their schooling online and do not come in at all.

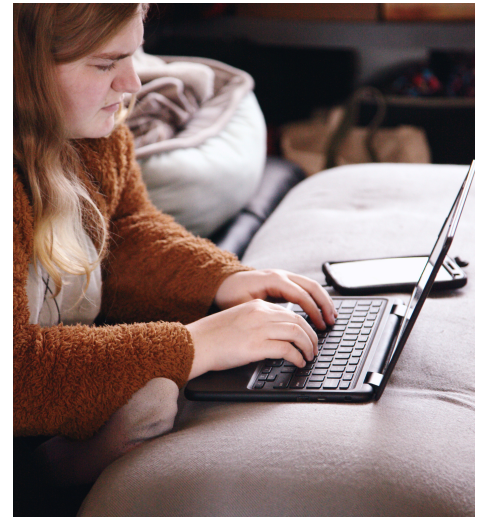
Many students chose to continue in the traditional pathway this fall, and with adjustments to traffic flow, lunch rooms, and classroom seating charts, the secondary buildings were

PATHWAYS CONT. PG.3

Chromebook and Google Classroom Tips Help Students Adapt

by Klayre Brown and Ivey Moore

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, Butler Area School District transitioned to a one-to-one technology environment, providing Chromebooks for students in grades 7-12. One-to-one technology has been a district goal for quite a few years, and students are quickly adjusting to using this technology for everyday classroom activities.



Chromebooks work a little differently than an iPad or other type of computer, so students and teachers had an adjustment phase to start the year. Chromebooks specifically use Google for internet access. The Google suite, including Gmail, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Google Docs, and other Google applications, is quickly becoming the students' best friend. The thought of moving to an almost paperless learning environment seemed overwhelming last year, but in a few short months, everyone has adapted and adapted well.

Ms. Eckert, the school librarian, has helped students and teachers during this adjustment phase, providing videos and additional tips for using Chromebooks more effectively. In order to prepare to help others, Ms. Eckert earned her Google certifications online and read two books on Chromebooks over the summer, in addition to researching online. To help the teachers out, she has created a website detailing the shortcuts for the new technology and the differences between a Chromebook and a laptop. Like everyone else, she had concerns about the wireless network supporting all of the technology, but after a few adjustments, everything has been running smoothly.

CHROMEBOOK CONT. PG. 6

Butler Takes On the Academic Games

by Deanika Jolly

Academic games allow students to compete against each other with their brains instead of competing in athletics. All gifted students can participate, but so can students who are not enrolled in the gifted program. Butler participates in many different games, including Onsets, Equations, LinguiSHTIKS, Propaganda, Presidents, and the Stock Market Game.

This year, AGLOA (the Academic Games League of America) altered the order of the games. In addition, some of the games themselves have been changed to limit students sharing the same game pieces, but that won't stop these smart competitors from playing. Butler ninth grader, David Krainbucher, has already created online versions of some games so that they students can practice without touching game pieces. In addition, advisors do what they call "reader" activities, where someone reads the question instead.

In the past, participants met regularly during the school day, often during lunch. Due to the pandemic, group practices have moved online. In addition, advisors provide practice quizzes and fun activities through Google Classroom. The first competition of the school year was a Propaganda tournament, held on Thursday, October 22. Students participated online from the Intermediate High School.

GAMES CONT. PG. 5

Pathways cont.

able to maintain this option through the first grading period. Currently, all classrooms are remote, but the hope is that students can return to some form of traditional model as soon as it is safe to do so.

The Flex option has been working for students like Tanner Pry. He goes to school on Mondays and Thursdays, and he attends classes virtually on the other three days each week. He joins google meets and does the lesson from home. He said that an average day of school from home is uneventful. "I basically just wake up, eat breakfast, then do classes; that's it," he said. Transitioning from being online to going to school is something that hybrid kids have to worry about. Tanner said that it's only challenging transitioning when he has to do a hands-on project. "I sometimes don't get all the details in the instructions unlike someone who is at school," he commented. He thought that it may be hard transitioning from school to online, but it was easy for him. He described hybrid as, "less stressful," and "relaxed." It may be hard for students that are online or hybrid because they do not see their friends as much as they would if they were traditional. According to Tanner, "Not seeing my friends is the hardest part of not going to school full time."

Hybrid learning is another option that Butler students could choose. Hybrid is when students come into school for certain classes, and for other classes, they stay online. Ninth grader Jonah Mechling comes into school for fifth through eighth period. His normal day looks different than to most students. He joins the google meet for his first four classes, and he does his work online. Then, he comes into school and is in-person for the rest of his day. He thinks that it is easier to be hybrid because he gets to come to school for the classes that he needs to be in, and he isn't here for more classes than what he needs. Jonah said, "It's just easier for me because I know what classes I need more help in and what classes I don't." Not being at school to see your friends may be the hardest part of not being traditional. He said, "Not having any social time with friends is hard on a student."

The teachers are learning how to adjust to the new way pathways. Jonah thinks that most of the teachers are doing well with what he described as the "new normal." The work has changed for him as well. He is experiencing more work than before, and that is very time consuming but isn't terrible. If Jonah was given the same option of being a flex student, he would. For the hybrid learning pathway, it is the responsibility of the families to provide transportation, making hybrid a non-option for some. According to Jonah, "As long as I have a ride, I will definitely choose hybrid again."

Due to the pandemic, more students than ever before are choosing the cyber pathway. Most classes are offered through Edgenuity, an online platform that Butler has customized to meet the needs of Butler students. Lily Stenman is one of the students that chose to do cyber learning. She has acquired a routine for her day. According to Lily, "A typical day for me includes getting up at 7:00 a.m, taking around 45 minutes to wake up and set myself up for starting the day, logging in at 7:45, and then starting my schoolwork." Lily had a few reasons for choosing to be cyber instead of going to school in person. "I chose to do full time cyber because that's best for me during these conditions. I cannot wear a mask for a long period of time, so my parents and I figured that it would be better to just do cyber," Lily said. It's best for some students that are high risk or have trouble wearing masks to do cyber full time.

According to Lily, her day does follow a routine, but each day is different. She described her day as "conflicting, active, and sometimes simple or complicated." Lily would choose to do cyber again because of the masks and requirements, which are a result of COVID-19. She keeps up with her classes by using different note books and taking notes in every single class. She thinks that cyber depends less on memory and more on organization.

Butler's new pathways may seem confusing at first, but everyone is adjusting to their learning choices. As the school year continues and cases of COVID-19 rise or decline, other options may become available. The hope is that those in the traditional pathway will be able to return to the classroom very soon.

Music Classes Continue During COVID-19 Pandemic

By Victoria Lauer and Kelsey Neff

Music classes continue to be offered this school year, even with new rules set for the pandemic. The three different music elective classes are band, chorus, and orchestra, taught by Mr. Karenbauer, Mrs. Waseleski, Mrs. Tepper, and Mrs. Black. In addition to these classes, students who do not select a music elective are enrolled in general music class.

Mr. Karenbauer is the head of the band department in the IHS. For the band, the concert is “up in the air” due to pandemic rules and regulations, but the students are working hard to improve their sound just as they have in typical school years. Some of the biggest challenges for Mr. Karenbauer and the band this year are six-foot social distancing and have bell covers over the instruments. Bell covers are similar to book covers, but go over the bell of an instrument to stop spit and saliva from coming out.

When students are in the building, the band classes have been practicing in the auditorium, spread out in the space. The new rules make it harder for the students to play and for the teacher to hear the students. According to Mr. Karenbauer, “With students spread out that far, it is hard for them to hear how their part fits into the whole scheme of things. On the other hand, it makes each student more accountable for their own part.” Many of the cyber students also don’t have their cameras on, or their mikes on, so it is also very hard to hear and see if they are participating with the rest.

Chorus classes, run by Mrs. Waseleski and Mrs. Tepper, have also changed a lot. As far as wearing masks while singing, Mrs. Waseleski stated that wearing masks while trying to sing is a little awkward, but that she and her students are doing the best they can. Due to COVID restrictions, the chorus classes are not able to perform live concerts; instead, they are going to be doing fun virtual things.

The chorus classes use Google Meet in class while remote learning. All of the students must have their mics turned off, but everyone in chorus is able to sing. A typical chorus class consists of taking attendance, then doing warm-ups, and then rehearsing daily. “The rules keep us focused and accountable for always doing our best,” commented Mrs. Waseleski. The songs that she is planning to have the students sing this year are from numerous genres, all in an effort to help the students become great singers, musicians, and music appreciators.

The orchestra classes have changed the least, but they still have changed. The orchestra classes and the Rock Orchestra are run by Mrs. Black. According to Mrs. Black, “All of the Orchestra students are doing a fantastic job with all the procedures and regulations due to COVID.” The Rock Orchestra still meets after school on Wednesdays and consists of some of the best players in the orchestras from grades 7-12. “It is amazing to me how quickly everyone jumped back in where we left off,” Mrs. Black said.

The safety procedures for orchestra include wearing a mask at all times and social distancing. The problem for the orchestra social distancing is like the band’s issue: the teachers have a hard time hearing the music put together. “COVID has definitely affected how we do performances, but as far as class, we are very lucky we can still rehearse pretty normally spaced out on stage in the auditorium,” Mrs. Black stated. “Playing-wise, I thought it would affect us more, but it seems like everyone practiced a lot when they were home because we jumped back into things!” she said proudly.

Cyber students login into livestream everyday for class, and if they have questions, Mrs. Black said that they just email or use the meet chat to ask. Their assignments are all on Smart Music, so that way she can hear them play and the progress they are making. For concerts, Mrs. Black is doing recordings of the orchestras and posting live streams of the concerts for everyone to watch. “We already performed the Virtual Spooktacular, and we plan to live stream the winter concert, and hopefully have a POPS concert and a spring concert in 2021,” she said.

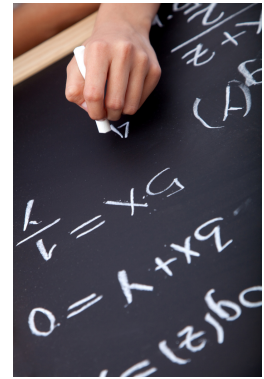
All of the music teachers are proud that the district has worked so hard to maintain the music classes during the pandemic. For instance, band helps students learn important skills such as memory, organization, stronger hand-eye coordination, and collaboration. However, the main reason why it is important to take music classes is because when it comes to life experiences, the lessons are priceless. “Band students become a part of a family because they are together playing music from fifth grade through graduation. When you are together with the same people for that long, you build memories that will last a lifetime,” Mr. Karenbauer said.



Academic Games Cont.

By Deanika Jolly

The second competition of the year, a Presidents competition, was rescheduled from November to December 14-15 due to the transition to remote learning in the secondary buildings. Following the Presidents competition, students will compete in LinguiSHTIKS on January 20.



Traditionally, the competitions were held at Slippery Rock University; now they are held at the school the students attend. To establish winners, school advisors submit scores so that competitors can be ranked. There are three levels of competition, including regional, state/tribowl, and national. According to Dr. DeThomas, one of the gifted coordinators, "We have participated in Equations and Linguishtik for decades. The other ones are newer games, so we started competing in those more recently."

Academic games allow students to use critical thinking skills beyond what they are learning in their regular classes. The Academic Games League of America creates all material for games and then sends them to schools so all students can compete. We have had students from our school win nationals as individuals. They win by either going undefeated in the games or by being a member of the first place team.

Each game is uniquely designed to enrich the players in different academic areas. For instance, LinguiSHTIKS is an English-based game that requires students to use grammar and sentence structure to meet given demands. Propaganda is about letting players become critical thinkers, as they learn to recognize techniques of persuasion. In the realm of mathematics, Equations requires students to create equations to meet a defined goal. Along the same lines, Onsets is a logic-based game that requires students to define groups of objects using set theory. One of the newer games, the Stock Market Game, allows students to invest a hypothetical \$100,000 in the stock market. Finally, Presidents is a trivia-style game where players show their knowledge of U.S. presidents.

Supporting Local Businesses in 2020

By Aeriana Pintell

Small businesses across the nation have struggled to keep their doors open this year. In towns like Butler, local businesses have a huge impact on the economy. According to Root and Bloom owner, Rachelle Reamer, "Small businesses in a community are paying people in that community, and so it's keeping money inside the community instead of funds going somewhere else."

Unfortunately, small businesses could not give their full potential over this pandemic. "The hardest thing on small businesses was making the decision on multiple occasions to cancel orders when I was concerned about the possible COVID exposure," said the owner of Bloom Bakery, Jessica Bluming. According to Bluming, it was also hard to meet their customers' needs. For example, national chains with many employees quickly implemented curbside pickup and online shopping, a service nearly impossible for small shops. "It was so hard to provide everyone with what they needed," said Rachelle Reamer.

In the very beginning and at the peak of COVID, people were unsure of what was happening and therefore, they stayed home. Later when people knew what was going on they started coming more often, but still took precaution. Covid will also leave long term effects on businesses.

Chromebooks cont.

According to Ms. Eckert, the WiFi has been working very efficiently overall. Google Docs has an advantage, which is the offline option, so if or when the school's WiFi or power goes out, students are still able to take notes on their Chromebooks. Then once the wireless network is working again, the notes will automatically sync to the Chromebooks. Chromebook batteries, if charged on a regular basis, can last up from 9-11 hours, which is enough time for a student to get their schoolwork and homework done for the day.

Students have many questions about their Chromebooks. According to Ms. Eckert, "My most asked question would probably be: Why is my screen black?" When this occurs, the Chromebook most likely just needs a hard reset. To complete a hard reset on a Chromebook, hit the power button (on the top right-hand corner) and the reload button (on the top left-hand corner) at the same time. When this happens, the light on the left corner of the keyboard shuts off. "Then, you would lift your fingers from the power and reload buttons, and hit the power button again. Your Chromebook should turn back on and return to normal," Ms. Eckert advised.

In an effort to keep Google Classrooms manageable and organized for students, many teachers date their assignments. Other teachers name assignments to correspond with the topics being covered in class. For example, if students in math class were learning about adding fractions, the math teacher could write the assignment as "Adding Fractions" on Google Classroom. In addition, students can check their "To do" for assignments that they still need to complete.

Two often asked questions Ms. Eckert receives from students are: How do I turn things in? How do I upload this and send it to my teacher? She advises that students click on the words that say view assignment, complete the attached document, and then click "Turn in" or "Mark as done," depending on what option is provided. If students need to add a file to the assignment and the teacher did not attach one for them, students can press the words, "+Add or Create," and then there will be the options of different Google attachments they can add. Students can choose which thing to click on or add to their assignment, complete the work, and then click "Turn in."

If students often forget their Chromebook passwords, Ms. Eckert suggests putting the password into the notes section of your phone. Another bit of advice she has is to turn off unnecessary notification emails from Google Classroom. To do this, students would go to the main page in Google Classroom that shows all of their classes. In the upper left-hand corner, click on the three lines (often called the "hamburger"). Next, scroll down and click "Settings." From here, you can choose what emails you would like to receive or not receive. According to Ms. Eckert, "Many students are struggling to keep up with their emails, and limiting notifications will help them to stay more organized."

If students are home and cannot stop to see Ms. Eckert, the helpline is a very good resource too. The community helpline center will help very well with all of these. To contact the helpline, families can call 724-214-3199 or email home_tech_help@butler.k12.pa.us.

During the summer, families will return Chromebooks to the school so that they can be wiped down on the inside and out. Chromebooks have a very small memory, so all of the chromebooks' memories will be wiped out and updated. Chromebooks will need to be updated for the upcoming year, so that students will get the full experience they want. Each Chromebook costs \$329 and a replacement screen costs between \$50-200, so the school is really trying to get students to understand that these are not toys. If a student forgets to charge their chromebook, or forgets their chromebook at home, that student will have to simply go without a chromebook for the day.

Ms. Eckert's last piece of advice is, "If you are wondering the best way to do something in Google Classroom or on your Chromebook, you can always Google it. There are a lot of great resources through Google and on Youtube to help you out."

Small Businesses Cont.

“Obviously, some businesses had to shut down, but also owners of stores that were able to keep their businesses open are getting really behind on debt,” said Rachelle Reamer.

On the bright side, the pandemic has opened the need for some new businesses locally, either due to the loss of some previous stores or a new need. In addition, small business owners have still been making people smile all around the community! “People had to change wedding and event plans, so we got business during the spring and summer months. There were several small weddings with just a couple bouquets and boutonnieres. We also take flowers and bouquets to the nursing homes,” said Rachelle Reamer.

With all of the stress with the pandemic, you may be wondering how you can show support of local businesses. “Mentioning local businesses that you visit on social media helps spread the word to more customers,” suggested Jessica Bluming. Plus, with the holidays approaching, people can look to purchase more local gifts. “Instead of buying an Amazon gift card, people can buy a small business gift card,” she added.



IHS Students Learn More in ESP

By Mackenzie Bain and Madison Wiltse

Butler seventh and eighth graders have the opportunity to apply for the Enrichment Studies Program, or E.S.P., if they are proficient on the P.S.S.A. and have earned a G.P.A. of 4.0 or higher. During fourth period every day, these students par-

ticipate in a variety of courses, some of which include: public speaking, Mission to Mars, and yearbook.

Mrs. Mahood, a ninth grade English teacher, has been teaching public speaking for five years. Her background in English and communications really drew her into wanting to teach this class. As an introductory speech course, the curriculum covers a wide variety of presentations, but the instruction of each section follows a similar pattern. First, the class talks about a speech format and the requirements of the presentation. Then, the class learns about the components that go into making up the speech. Finally, they have time to write and practice delivering that particular speech.

Mrs. Mahood's favorite activity during this course is the creative sales projects. The students have to create a commercial for a product that is either real or fictional, and they have to present that to the class with energy and enthusiasm.

Emily Cornish chose public speaking because she loves to argue and hopes to someday be a lawyer. According to Emily, “Because of remote learning, the course is a little different than I had hoped but I am still learning a lot about speaking.” The course has helped Emily in some ways, like being more confident speaking in front of a large group of people.

Mrs. Mahood loves that E.S.P. offers students the opportunity to get out of their comfort zone. “It allows students to experience classes that might interest them in a non-threatening environment,” she said.

Mr. Casher has been teaching the yearbook E.S.P. course for 27 years. During the year he loves to work on the layout of the yearbook with his first trimester class, with his second trimester class enjoys taking pictures and starting to build the book, and with his final trimester class, he looks forward to making final edits on the book before it is published. Regardless of the trimester, he takes pride in teaching students who have an interest in photography and other similar subjects how to create the yearbook.

Brynn Cornibe wanted to be in the yearbook class because she not only wanted to contribute something to the school but because she loves to design and put things together. She describes the environment to be very interesting. “Mr. Casher has high expectations and when he tells someone to do something, they do it!” she said. Because she is only in seventh grade, Brynn is not sure how much the course has changed from in years past, but she loves the course and looks forward to it every day. “Mr. Casher is the best part,” she said.

Mr. Casher, like Mrs. Mahood, never really has a typical day. "It all depends on what tasks we need to complete that day. The course is very hands-on," he said. When teaching, he wants his students to have fun while being productive and comfortable. According to Mr. Casher, the process of creating the yearbook has changed dramatically over the years. When the class was introduced, it had ten students a year, and now it has 54 students in grades 7-8. In addition, the book used to have 88 pages, and it now has 104. "The biggest change, of course, is that all of the work is now done digitally," Mr. Casher commented.

Mrs. Sankey has been teaching the ESP course Mission to Mars for 28 years. She actually got the idea from a simulation company. She also enjoys learning about space and the different things that NASA is doing. The course is most suitable for people who are interested in becoming an astronaut or people who are interested in space in general.

Students like Lily Maser joined the class because the course was about space. According to Lily, "The learning environment in the classroom is pretty good, and it gives me a break from the rest of my school work." In class, the students work in groups, and each person has a certain job they have to do. Mrs. Sankey gives each person a job, and they all have to work together to get that done.

Mrs. Sankey thinks that her E.S.P. course teaches some great life lessons, like not taking things for granted and also being a good problem solver when things get tough. "One way that I try to engage my class is by doing certain exercises during the class period to train them to be like astronauts." Over the years, the course has changed her teaching style from doing little to no teamwork, to now basing her entire class on teamwork. When it comes to the evaluation of students, she does it based on how much the students participate in class as well their performance on Google Classroom assignments.



COVID-19 Impact and School Nursing

By Deanika Jolly

Typically people get tested for Covid if they are exhibiting symptoms or if they have been exposed to someone who tested positive for Covid, although this is not mandatory.

People that are in the public a lot, such as the president, would be tested almost daily due to the high risk for exposure. Others that are considered high risk may be tested more often, but in general you don't need to be tested unless you have symptoms or have been exposed. Testing is done by inserting a swab up into the nasal cavity for 15-30 seconds. The swab is then taken to a lab to be tested. If tests come back positive, the test subjects are to self-isolate for at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms. It is important to note that if someone has symptoms and takes a test, they need to self-quarantine until the test results come back.

If you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, the PA Department of Health recommends that you quarantine for 14 days after the last known close contact with that person. The CDC defines close contact as being within six feet of someone for 15 minutes or more.

For school nurses, many things have changed this year. Teachers now have to call before any sick students come to their office so that a nurse can meet the student in a screening area. According to Mrs. Halter, "We have to use special PPE when students are sick, we have an isolation room instead of a waiting room, and everything has to be sanitized before the next student can enter the room. It's very time consuming."

All staff members, and especially the nursing staff, self-monitor for symptoms daily. They also fill out an online wellness survey to make sure they meet the criteria to be at work that day. The survey asks questions about symptoms, as well as contact with those who may have COVID-19. If they answer yes to any of the questions, employees are instructed to remain at home or to go home and consult with their doctor.

COVID-19 has seriously impacted our schools. Social distancing and wearing a mask is not fun and probably really difficult for teenagers to do and take seriously, but it's a must. Remember to wash your hands often for 20 seconds (sing the birthday song twice in your head) and stay away from others if you start feeling ill. We can get through this if we all work together to stay healthy!

PBIS Program Continues to SOAR

by Isabella Roskovski and Annette Woller

Just over a year ago, the Intermediate High School began implementing the PBIS program. The program is known to students as SOAR, which stands for Safety, Ownership, Attitude, and Respect. The IHS staff refers to SOAR on a daily basis to encourage students to be the best version of themselves.

Mrs. Crissman, one of the assistant principals, is the lead administrator for the program. According to Mrs. Crissman, a team of very involved teachers from all three grade levels worked hard to develop the program and implement it quickly. Their dedication has made her job much easier. The SOAR program has different components to it, some of which include education, rewards, and data collection. “The SOAR team collects data such as discipline data. Every month they break it down by infraction, such as being late, sleeping in class, etc,” she commented.



In the classroom, students are reviewing lessons that explicitly teach expectations for behavior in places like the hallways, the cafeteria, and the bathrooms. In addition, teachers reinforce positive SOAR behavior by awarding blue tickets and gold tickets. Students can earn blue tickets by completing homework, helping others, being respectful, and being a good student. Periodically, teachers provide prizes for blue ticket drawings in their classrooms.

Gold tickets are earned by going above and beyond teachers' expectations. When students were learning traditionally in the first grading period, gold ticket winners were announced during Tornado Time in seventh period. Then, a group of teachers would visit the winners' seventh period classes and allow them to choose a prize from the snack cart. Obviously, the drawing had to be adjusted for November. Now the drawings are virtual, and student winners are mailed Subway coupons.

Mrs. Waseleski, a chorus and ESP teacher, is also very involved with the SOAR program. She promotes SOAR by giving out blue and gold tickets daily. “It makes most of the students' behavior better, and the students listen better and are more respectful,” she said. One of Mrs. Waseleski's jobs on the PBIS committee is planning Tornado Time, which happens just before seventh period on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “During that time, students learn about expected behaviors and respect.” When they are not reviewing specific SOAR lessons, students use a program called Second Step to learn about goal setting and decision making.

Like anything else, the PBIS program has been impacted by the pandemic. “We cannot plan assemblies and other large group rewards right now, but we are adjusting as best we can,” Mrs. Waseleski said.

Overall, the students believe that SOAR is making a big difference in the school. Natalie Collins and Carly Lydon, two seventh grade students, agree that the kindness, respect, and responsibility students learn about in school can extend to their lives outside of school too. According to Carly, “It makes me think about how I can SOAR in the community, by maybe making meals for less fortunate people or helping out in some way.”

Procedures Change in Family and Consumer Science

By Addi Gatz

Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Veltri, and Mrs. Thomas teach BIHS eighth graders about important life skills in family and consumer science. Throughout the year, the students learn about personal finance, sewing, child development, and cooking.

When Mrs. Walker was in school, she was inspired by her family and consumer science teacher. She also wanted her students to use the skills they learn for the rest of their lives. She likes getting to see her students in the future and they can tell her what skills they still use today. Mrs. Veltri enjoys working with personal finance and all the other topics. She teaches new topics frequently, and isn't teaching the same topics daily. Mrs. Thomas was originally going to school to be a social studies teacher, and she was placed in a family and consumer science class. She really enjoyed what they did in the class, so she then decided to be a family and consumer science teacher. She likes getting to see all her students every day.

In family and consumer science, each day can be different than other days. Typically Mrs. Walker will order food for cooking labs, organize the labs, organize lesson plans, log into Google Meets, and teach her students what they are learning on that given day. "Even though my day changes constantly, I enjoy the chaos that comes with it," Mrs. Walker said.

Mrs. Veltri also likes the variety. "There is always something new," she commented. For example, some days she will make her lesson plans and other days she will prepare for the topic they will be covering that day. If she could change one thing, she would want to do more hands-on activities this year.

The first thing Mrs. Thomas does when she has students is ask them about their weekend or day before. Then they will start on their topic for that day, and sometimes they will get off topic about other things such as their lives. Most days for all of the teachers constantly change, and they always have something different to teach their students about.

In family and consumer science, the students learn about personal finance, sewing, child development, and how to cook. Mrs. Walker's favorite topics to teach are financial literacy and prenatal development. "I feel like the financial literacy unit is important because I want my students to be financially secure when they get older," she said. She also likes teaching prenatal development because it is a higher-level thinking class, and it is more in depth. Mrs. Veltri likes all the topics she teaches, but one she favors is financial literacy. Mrs. Thomas's favorite topic to teach is cooking because they get to do hands-on work. "The students are always engaged and excited because it is very different compared to what they do in other classes," observed Mrs. Thomas.

With the new rules in 2020, a lot has changed in family and consumer science. When the students cook, all the labs have to be individual. Before the changes, students would be put on different jobs such as dishes, spraying the countertops, or cooking. They also have to eat at least six feet apart. The students have to social distance themselves and find places to eat where they aren't by other people. They also can't do group work. However, there can be some positives with the new rules and guidelines. For instance, students have to cook their own food and clean their own messes. That means that they are responsible for their own work unlike the years in the past. Typically in this class, the topics are ones that students can relate to, and they are learning valuable life skills.

Fall Sports Athlete Proudly Represent Butler

By Donovan Heist and Landon Stevenson

Butler fall sports teams, including boys' and girls' soccer, football, cross country, and girls' volleyball, enjoyed great seasons. Each team had their ups and downs, but all of the coaches had a lot of fun coaching the teams and were excited to see the athletes improve over the course of the season.

The boys' soccer team finished the season with a record of 6-5-2. The coaches were Tate Mohny and Mike Zirpoli. According to first year coach, Coach Mohny, "The kids were amazing and so were the parents." The team was led by captains Landon Stevenson, Thomas Sheptak, Grayden Brown, and Mason Anderson.

Sports cont.

As a team, the boys scored 15 goals this season; the leading goal scorer, Landon Stevenson, had five goals. COVID affected their season in many different ways, one of which was they were not allowed the water buffalo.

Their season started off rough but then they started playing great. They said they would improve by getting more touches on the ball and getting more fit. The coaches favorite memory was watching Landon Stevenson score free kicks. The key things to make the team next year is to stay in shape and keep getting touches on the ball. The coaches strengths were making the kids feel comfortable and always listening when they spoke.

The football team had a rough season, finishing with an 0-6 record. The team scored a total of 12 points on the season. According to Coach McAnallen, "We had a lot of young first-time players that improved as the season went on, but it makes it harder to compete with more experienced teams." They are hoping to get 35-40 eighth graders next season, which should help with experience and depth. Leadership on this year's team came from Quin Haley and Jake Demuin. Jake Demuin was the team leading scorer on the season. Coach McAnallen said, "They did a great job offensively running the ball." All of the coaches are excited for next season, and they hope that the players will continue to improve their athleticism in the off-season by participating in other sports.

As far as adjusting to new rules, the team started its season late, but still got all of the games in. They also had to clean more often and keep the players more spread out.

The girls volleyball teams had a successful season, finishing with a 7-2 record in seventh grade and 6-4 in eighth grade. The seventh grade team was led by defensive stars, Leah Poskin and Audrey Sansom, and outstanding setters, Anne Acquaviva, Julia Mason, Taylor Simon, and Layla Wynn. On the offensive side, the hitters did a good job getting the ball over the net; top players included Amelia Aaron, Brynn Cornibe, Ava Davis, and Kendall Schnurr. The leaders of the team were Julia, Audrey, and Taylor who did a great job giving encouragement on the court.

Coach Hannah Williams said, "The season was fast paced, a little chaotic, but overall very fun and a great learning experience for myself and the girls!" She added that she will be coaching again next year, and she looks forward to coaching the seventh and eighth grade track and field team this year. Her favorite memory is when she would let the girls fire the team up before the games. Like the football coaches, Coach Williams encourages her players to participate in other sports, such as track and field, to prepare for the next season.

The cross country team felt that they were fortunate to have a season. The girls' team ran to a 4-1 overall record, and the boys' team concluded with a mark of 3-2. Everybody on both teams were stars by excelling on the course or by their leadership. The team had several students that stood out by scoring most of the points for the team. Coach Davanzati said, "I hope to continue coaching next year. It is always exciting to watch a young person discover new abilities and strengths. That awareness can transfer to other areas of life." His favorite memory on the season was when the team had a decisive win over Hampton.

COVID-19 made the team have fewer competitions, and all of the athletes had to wear masks. Also the parents were asked to maintain distance from the course. In order to be ready for next season, Coach Davanzati recommends that his runners active and continue to work on strength training.

The girls' seventh grade soccer team finished the season going 10-4-2. Even with COVID, the coaches still keep the team ready to go. They had to take temperatures this year and had to wear masks when not on the field. They also could not use the water jug this year. A typical practice included stretching, ball movement, footwork, and positional work.

Best Buddies Breeds Friendship

by Julianna DeMeio and Shayna Fleegeer

The Best Buddies program at the senior high school pairs up students with special needs and a typically-developing buddy to do fun activities together in and outside of school. With the help of other teachers and her student President and Vice President, Paris Brown and Maci Lineman, Ms. Yeager runs this amazing program. The hope is that the program will extend to the Intermediate very soon.



The Best Buddies program brings all the members of the school together and creates a sense of unity. According to Ms. Yeager, "There are three different types of members. We currently have 102 people signed up for this year." The three different types are Peer Buddy, Associate Member/Associate Buddy, and Buddy. A peer buddy is a member that is one-on-one paired with someone with a disability. These pairs participate in at least two monthly activities, as well as going to the weekly club meetings. An Associate Buddy is a member who is not one-on-one paired with someone else; however, they still attend the weekly meetings and activities whenever they can. A Buddy is a member with a disability that is one-on-one paired with another student participating in the club. Lots of students look forward to the Best Buddies program, and for some students, this is their favorite part about school.

The club offers many different activities. Many buddy pairs will participate in smaller outings like shopping, getting something to eat, or watching movies. The club offers larger events as well, like Friendsgiving, Match Party, Christmas Party, bowling, a day at Kennywood, a 5K, Friendship Walk, Game Night, Painting Night, and more.

Paris said, "Jaz and I were paired last year and we became extremely close friends. Our favorite activity to do together is get Starbucks and go shopping." Many buddies become very close friends after being paired together. Creating new friendships is one of the many things that make this program so great. This program changes lives for everyone involved. It has a huge impact on all students who participate.

The program focuses on making all students feel welcome and creating long-lasting friendships. Maci described it this way: "Best Buddies is a program that promotes inclusion throughout the school and creates a one-to-one friendship with students with special abilities and without. It is a club for everyone and anyone." She added, "Best Buddies is the most influential thing I have ever done in my life. It has opened my eyes to many things, brought me life-long friends, and has helped me to find my passion of promoting inclusion. The way this program has changed my life is indescribable. We welcome everyone! I can promise that joining this program will make a great impact for the good on your life!"

Everyone who is involved with the program speaks very highly of it. This opportunity provides many students with friends that always have their backs and always include them. There are hopes of starting this life-changing program next year at the IHS. Mrs. LeFebvre, a special education teacher at the IHS, is hopeful of starting this program next year because she thinks that all of the students involved are going to find great friends, and they are going to learn things about each other that they never would have thought about before.

Last spring the Butler Area School District had to close down, so a few adjustments had to be made to the Best Buddies program. Now, students may still participate in this program, but they have to choose to meet face-to-face or virtual. Paris said, "Covid-19 has made things more difficult for our club, but we are trying our best to make things work. As of right now we are planning to host virtual events once a month, as well as an in person, socially-distanced event. We have offered an all-virtual option for buddies and peer buddies who are not comfortable with being in person. We are trying to make this year as fun as possible!"

The best buddies is a unique program that many people want to spread throughout other schools. Hopefully, it will start at the IHS soon, so the students here can experience this life changing program too.

Butler Band Marches On

By Amara Dicerbo and Alexa Hetes

It has been an interesting fall season for the marching band. They started band camp in August, to prepare for their real performances. They have continued to stay positive throughout these difficult and chaotic times.

According to Mr. Kroner, who has been working with Butler's marching band for 29 years, "In August, camp was held outside to make sure students were safe." Masks and social distancing were required any time students were not practicing or playing their instruments. They had to follow these directions, even when they performed at the football games. When the group plays inside, they are required to sit six feet apart and also wear their masks when not practicing. The band hasn't learned a drill this year, due to the pandemic. Even though the students do not like to wear their masks or maintain social distance, they have been respectful and cooperative because they know it's for their safety.

The marching band consists of 190 members, all working as one towards a common goal. "The marching band is a group that takes pride in their work/performance," Mr. Kroner said proudly. In past years, they have travelled all over the country to represent the Butler community. "There are many friendships and memories made in the marching band," Mr. Kroner added. That is just one reason to join the marching band, out of hundreds.

The band is allowed to perform during home football games. The "inside ensembles" learn music and record the band to share to parents and people of the community. They are hoping by spring that the pandemic will slow down, and they can perform live again. The band was supposed to go on trips to perform, but it got postponed until 2021 due to COVID. "We are hoping to have a band senior trip that is safe," Mr. Kroner commented.

Music is an activity that teaches many valuable life lessons, such as team work, leadership, creativity, listening, and independence. According to Mr. Kroner, "Music teaches students to never be okay when someone says their music is 'good enough.'" If a concert gets a 10% error, it would be horrible to listen to, and most likely give your band a bad reputation. There are many challenges the students have to face, but according to Mr. Kroner, the students are handling them quite well.

According to Mr. Kroner, the music that is selected is chosen by the band's strengths, and many of the pieces the marching band learns help motivate the fans and football team. "The band members' favorite part of being in the band is seeing their football team win. It makes them excited, and boosts up their overall energy," he said.

Students Prepare for State Exams

By Mackenzie Thompson

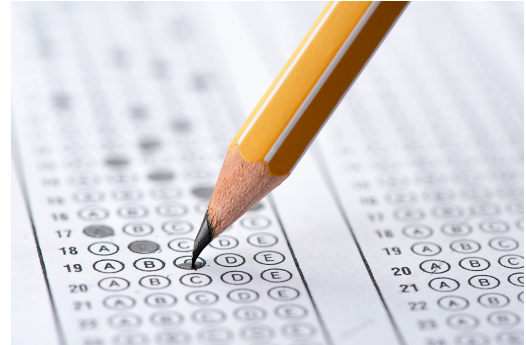
The pandemic has affected many aspects of a daily school day, one of those is standardized testing. Last spring, the state tests were canceled. This year, the plan at this point is to have students complete the exams. To be prepared, teachers at the IHS have been administering the necessary benchmark testing in class, and in addition, the principals have been making plans to move to online testing options.

The P.S.S.A. tests are scheduled for April 19-30, 2021. All students are required to be in school to take these state-mandated exams, including cyber and hybrid students. To help cyber students take the P.S.S.A., the school is offering a flexible testing schedule and after school testing to maintain small socially-distanced groups.

State Exams cont.

By Mackenzie Thompson

In eighth grade, students take the P.S.S.A. in math, reading, and science. Seventh grade students are tested in reading and math. In addition, seventh and eighth grade students also have to take Keystones tests if they are enrolled in Algebra. The school has scheduled two hours of testing for the exams; the rest of the day is run normally on an adjusted bell schedule to fit in missed classes. Most students take about 40-60 minutes to complete a section on a state exam. The number and type of questions depends on what type of test it is. For example, on the reading test, a section may include a passage, a few multiple choice questions, and a writing prompt known as a text-dependent analysis, or T.D.A. On other sections of the test, there could be several passages and no T.D.A.



In order to properly prepare for the state tests, students take a series of benchmark tests, known as the C.D.T.'s or NWEA MAP tests, depending on the subject. Both tests track the students' progress and readiness for the state exams. If deficiencies are discovered, the teachers then adjust their lessons to make sure that the students are getting the instruction they need to succeed.

One thing that is sure to be different this year is that these tests will all be taken online. Because students are working every day on chromebooks, it seemed like a natural choice for the 2020-2021 school year.

Cyber Teachers Keep Students on Track

by Abigail Carr

This year, Butler offers a new cyber program for students. Because more students than in the past are choosing cyber learning for all or some of their classes, the Intermediate has cyber teachers on staff to assist students. Some of the cyber teachers are: Mr. Simmons in English, Mr. Andreassi in history, and Ms. Hegedus in mathematics.

Mr Simmons has been working as a cyber since September 28 after graduating from The University of Chicago. He is responsible for assisting the needs of the students enrolled in the online classes, specifically for English Language Arts, as well as answering the technical questions of parents and students. In his training, he had to complete the basic lessons that it takes to become a properly licensed educator, along with lessons on how to work the Edgenuity system and Tyler 360 database. He works with around 300-400 people per day. Although his job may seem a bit tough sometimes, he seems to thoroughly enjoy it and being able to see students succeed and thrive in their education.

"I am always excited when a student is able to meet with me, then starts succeeding in their courses. I love how just a bit of encouragement can motivate someone to start excelling in their work!" said Mr. Simmons.

Outside of school, he is an amateur dramatist and enjoys things such as cooking, playing scrabble, and listening to music. Once the "Covid-age" has finally ended, he plans on possibly pursuing a PhD and teaching at either the secondary or post-secondary level.

Cyber Teachers cont.

The best advice he has for students is: “Make sure you have verified contact information with the office. Often, the cyber support team needs to contact parents to inform them of a student’s course progress. However, some families have given incorrect or old telephone numbers and cannot be properly contacted. If a telephone number is unable to be given, make sure to set-up an email address for yourself. Parents deserve to be--and should be--a part of the conversation on how their student’s academics are progressing. Take it from the cyber support teacher for English: Communication is absolutely key to success.”

Mr. Andreassi is the social studies cyber support teacher for the IHS online students and started working as a cyber teacher this year. Like Mr. Simmons, he also assists the cyber students and teachers at home involving Edgenuity and tutoring sessions. He did not receive any formal training specifically for cyber teaching, but before he moved back to Pennsylvania, he had taught social studies for middle schoolers in Tucson, Arizona for six years. This made switching from in-person teaching to teaching on a virtual platform a bit harder for him.

Mr. Andreassi works with a number of parents and students and works closely with the other cyber support teachers and the social studies department. In the future, he plans to keep pursuing his teaching career.

“The most satisfying part of my job is, just like classroom teaching, I have the opportunity to help make a positive difference in students’ education,” said Mr. Andreassi. In his spare time, he coaches football and basketball at Knoch High School and enjoys playing basketball at the YMCA and reading a good history book.

His advice to parents: “Make sure that your child has a designated learning space that will put them in the mindset for school. This will help keep your child organized and focused. Also, stay in communication with teachers and principals so that you are on the same page as far as the protocols and expectations that are set.”

Ms. Hegedus is the math cyber support teacher for the online students at IHS. Like both Mr. Simmons and Mr. Andreassi, she works with the cyber students and tutors them. Throughout the day, she has Google Meets with students in need of extra help. According to Ms. Hegedus, “I love teaching and doing a Google Meet with a student allows me to interact with them and help them understand the content better.” In addition, she works with the technical side of Edgenuity and contacts parents about their children’s grades. For instance, if a student is having issues while taking a quiz, she can offer them retakes to redo it.

In her training, she did not undergo lessons specifically for her current job, but she did receive a bachelor’s degree at Slippery Rock University and has had plenty of experience with assisting students because of substitute teaching. Ms. Hegedus works with several people each day including cyber teachers, students, and traditional learning teachers. “There are so many cyber students and not enough hours in the day,” she observed. However, she makes every minute count!

