



A look at Hanover Elementary's most unique learning space

Hanover Elementary has a lot of great things going for it. The community is incredibly supportive, parents are enthusiastic about volunteering, the PTO is supportive of student and teacher needs, and teachers love working there so much that some have been there more than 30 years. The school was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School, class sizes are small, test scores are high, and students are encouraged to do their very best every single day. There is another very unique thing about Hanover Elementary that isn't even inside the school, but just outside of it.

Right on the school property is a beautiful forest with more than 30 acres of natural beauty waiting to be explored. Once known as "Nature's Walkway" when it was opened in the mid 1990s, Hanover School Forest has found new life in recent years as an outdoor learning space, complete with seating, signage identifying plants and trees, and a variety of ways students can explore the space or just participate in learning outside.

"Before the pandemic, we decided to use the forest a little more so we worked to clear the trail and explore it, but the pandemic stopped the plans for a bit," said Principal Brad Koltes. "When we returned from distance learning, it made so much sense to be able to have kids outside to take a mask break and be

able to continue learning, so use of the space really started to grow from there."

A driving force behind utilizing the forest as an outdoor learning space is fourth grade teacher Jenny Boldt who utilizes the forest weekly during what her class calls "Forest Friday" and also provides updates from the forest on the Hanover School Forest Facebook Group.

"I was offered a tour of the forest with a DNR Forester and I immediately knew we needed to do something with this space," said Boldt. "With support from our PTO, I was able to install trail cameras and feeding stations along the trail. My fourth graders love being able to fill up the feeders each week and their interests and questions really help drive learning in our class."

On one trip through the forest, the fourth graders noticed some white spots along trees and asked the teacher what they were. These questions led to a deep dive on the different types of lichens found in the forest, including connecting with Joe Walewski of Wolf Ridge Environmental Center via Zoom, who literally wrote the book on lichens, to learn more. Students also learned about tapping maple trees to make syrup, how to measure trees to determine their age (using a mathematical equation involving pi!)

and so much more. They were eager to share their newfound knowledge, which is where Becky Hanson's second grade classroom comes in.



"We started doing the 'Fourth Grade Friends' program in my class and the second graders just love being able to connect with the older kids and take on new activities," said Hanson. "The fourth graders got to teach the second graders about lichens and how to fill the feeders. Being able to mix grade levels like that is such a great benefit to our students."

While the outdoor learning space can be part of the lesson plan, it is also there so students can have a change of scenery. Teachers can hold any type of lesson outside. The BHM Teaching and Learning Department helped to fund outdoor seating options like picnic tables and benches, and outdoor chairs and desks are also on the way thanks to a recent grant. There's even a "Little Free Library" along the trail!

"It really doesn't matter if it's tied to science," said Principal Koltes. "There is no limit to what can be done out there, it's just about getting kids outside and encouraging teachers to find new ways to use the space and get kids excited about learning."



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Focusing on small class sizes and strong connections for our students

This school year continues to fly by and it is so wonderful to see students back in classrooms where they can learn, grow and connect together across our district. Every single person in our district has been working hard and going above and beyond every day to prepare all of our students for a successful future in this changing world.



Scott Thielman

We have been taking advantage of a lot of opportunities to keep the state of our district strong. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government provided relief to schools and school districts through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. To access these dollars, every Minnesota school district had to submit a plan to the Department of Education on how funds would be used. BHM Schools articulated a plan to use these one-time funds with a priority on how we can best impact our students.

After conducting a needs assessment in which we collected data in a variety of ways, we determined that our greatest

needs were in learning recovery and social-emotional support for students. As part of the plan we will continue to gather information and input, and we will make revisions as needed.

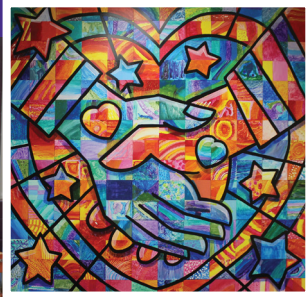
Beyond the one-time infusion of ESSER funds, we know that we have an ongoing need to keep district class sizes low. Lower student-to-teacher ratios and other regular school day support systems will best help our students with achievement and provide the support they need. Our goal is to keep staffing our buildings at a level that allows our dedicated professionals to continue to serve our students and their learning. We are proud of the incredible connections that our students and staff are developing every day and we know that the personal relationships provided by this staffing approach are essential.

But keeping this focus on low class sizes requires ongoing resources. In his latest proposal, Governor Walz includes a 2% increase in the general education formula and an additional \$15 million in spending for education support professionals. Unfortunately, the Governor's proposal is not supported by the Minnesota Senate. The State has announced a \$9.235 billion dollar budget surplus, while special education

services continue to be underfunded at an annual rate of \$780 million dollars. The Minnesota House of Representatives have approved a bill that would fully fund special education which would have a positive impact on school districts' general fund budgets. An ongoing infusion of resources is a critical step needed for Minnesota public schools, especially as we see inflation and costs continue to increase. We are fortunate that our district finances are currently in a position to weather this storm for another year. And, with the recent approval by our school board that lowered the district's property tax levy, residents should see a reduction in the school portion of their 2022 property taxes.

While talking about budgets and taxes is not always interesting, it is because of the generous support and participation of our community to meet the needs of BHM students, and our State's commitment to support public education, which allows us to provide quality learning experiences for each and every student in our schools. We remain committed to being good stewards of taxpayer dollars so that students at every grade level continue to **dream** big, **believe** in themselves, and **achieve** great things!

Northwinds Elementary gets a fresh look thanks to art residency project



Northwinds Elementary has unveiled new art pieces thanks to Minnesota-based artist Greg Preslicka and Northwinds students working together to create beautiful murals. Greg spent a week in the school, working with students on the creative process and collaborating on plans and techniques. The Northwinds PTO sponsored the project and the end result is a permanent mural created by fourth and fifth grade students in the hallway, with younger students making classroom murals in the same style.

The collaboration between the school and the artist began with a discussion of what Northwinds stands for. "We talked a lot about Polar Pride, our greatness pledge and our belief that Northwinds is a place 'where everyone is welcome and everyone belongs,'" said Principal Carmen Tubbs. "The design that Greg came up with really built on those ideas and our students were so excited to be a part of it."

The style of the mural is a large picture that is made up of many smaller squares that are individual parts of the whole. Students were excited to see how their pieces became part of the larger design and teachers were able to support students throughout the process and incorporate more art lessons into their classrooms.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD!

Celebrate Week of the Young Child April 11-15 with BHM ECFE. We will draw one currently enrolled student's name per day. You can join us at BHM Schools Early Childhood Family Education on Facebook to be included in the fun give-aways.

ECFE Family Fair takes place April 23

The ECFE Family Fair is a free event for parents and their children, with a focus on young children, in celebration of the Week of the Young Child. Join us at Discovery Elementary (302 2nd Street, Buffalo, MN 55313) in the gym from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There will be a variety of activities for children and their parents provided by the ECFE Staff including a Galen Marble Maze, Montrose Lions KidSight Program, a children's book giveaway by BHM School Board members, all accompanied by music of the Andes Mountain Region. There will also be a silent auction sponsored by the ECFE Parent Advisory Council and Bison box lunches will be available for purchase.

ECFE Summer Catalog Coming Soon

Our ECFE Summer catalog will be mailed out to families on or about April 11, 2022. We are offering Summer Sun Preschool, ECFE Music in the Park Series, Kinder Camp, and ECFE parent/child classes. Be sure to check out all of the early childhood opportunities offered this summer.

28th Annual Scholarship Pork Chop Dinner Thursday, April 14

The 877 Scholarship Foundation is sponsoring the 28th Annual Scholarship Pork Chop Dinner which will offer both a dine-in option and a drive-thru option on Thursday, April 14 from 4:30-7 p.m. at Buffalo Community Middle School. All proceeds support Buffalo High School (BHS) student scholarships. Last year, the 877 Scholarship Foundation was able to award over \$91,231 in scholarships to 81 high school seniors.

A pork chop meal is \$10, a meal with two pork chops is \$15 and a kids' hot dog meal is \$5. All meals include baked beans, applesauce, chips and dessert. Curb-side order/pick up will



be available at the main entrance.

Purchase tickets ahead of time by scanning the QR Code with the camera on your smartphone to go directly to the 877 Scholarship Foundation website at 877foundation.org/events. Tickets can also be purchased curbside or at the door the day of the event. Tickets can also be purchased at the Community Education Office at Discovery Center - 301 2nd Ave NE, Buffalo, or curbside and at the door the day of the event.



BHS Presents "The Curious Savage"

On April 21-23, twelve students will take the BHS stage performing the comedic play "The Curious Savage" by John Patrick. The play was chosen for its humor and unforgettable characters and is directed by Tracy Hagstrom Durant and Debb Bestland. The mood of the play is high comedy, with the audience being left with a feeling that the neglected virtues of kindness and affection have not been entirely lost in a world that seems at times motivated only by greed and dishonesty.

The show takes place in a resident home called the Cloisters and centers around Mrs. Savage who is keeping her newly inherited family fortune from her vain and greedy step children as she gets to know the colorful characters residing at the Cloisters.



Tickets are on sale now and are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students.





BCMS BAND MEMBERS



BHS BAND MEMBERS

Jett Hayes, Tabitha Gallus, Evie Lubben, Lauren Berg from BCMS, and Olivia Kohls, Emmerson Breyer, Kiera McGorry, Kumail Akram, Lexi Zheng, Noah Bolliat, Oliver Holt, Gloria Armstrong from BHS participated in two different honor bands hosted by the Central Minnesota Band Directors Association.



KYLIE K.



JACOB M.



NOLAN R.

Kylie Kelm, Jacob Mullerleile and Nolan Rabon, 8th Grade Quest students at BCMS who were nominated for the 2022 Star of the North Award sponsored by the MN Educators of the Gifted and Talented.

Nolan Rabon, 8th grader at BCMS, who was named the 2021 Minnesota Educators of the Gifted and Talented Star of the North for his outstanding accomplishments in academics, visual or performing arts or leadership.



Jennifer Heebink, DAPE Teacher at BCMS and BHS, who was named the 2022 Central District Teacher of the Year by SHAPE America. Ms Heebink will advance to the National Competition.



Melanie Olson, Quest Multi-Age Teacher at PES, who was nominated by the Minnesota Department of Education for the CS Teaching Excellence Award for inspiring students to explore the computer science field.



VARSITY 1 TEAM

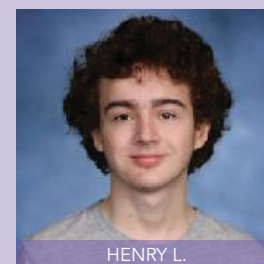


VARSITY 2 TEAM

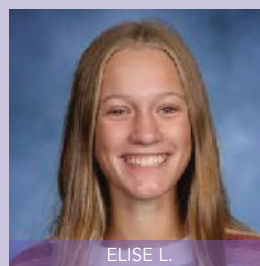
BHS Knowledge Bowl Varsity 1 and Varsity 2 Teams who placed 2nd and 1st respectively at the Region meet and will advance to the State Tournament. Varsity 2 - BHS Juniors; Matthew Scherber, Milo Zimmerman, Ryder Zvorak and Avery Thompson and Varsity 1 - BHS Seniors; Elise Lubben, Will Borgerding, Rachel Lawrence, Adam Blevins, Amelia Butler and Andrew Braun.



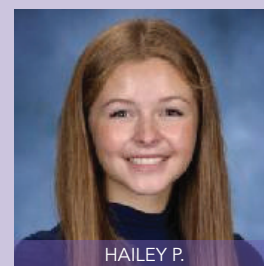
ANNA L.



HENRY L.



ELISE L.



HAILEY P.

BHS Seniors: Anna Lee, Henry Lefebvre, Elise Lubben and Hailey Pageau who were selected as the 2022 Students of Excellence sponsored by Resource Training and Solutions.

Preparing to Celebrate 100 Years of the BHS Band



"Although a band had long been a desire of Buffalo High School, it was not until the fall of 1923 that this dream was realized," says the page scanned from 1924 with an accompanying photo of students and their instruments. That page had been on the wall of the office of music instructors Scott Rabehl and Mike Knutson for a long time, but they recently took notice of the date and realized that they would soon be at the helm of a band program that has been around for a century.

"We are not really sure what happened in the first 60 years of this program, but we really want to look into it and establish more of the history of the band at Buffalo High School," said Rabehl. "We wanted to find a way to truly celebrate the legacy of music here, so we thought the best way to do that was to commission a piece of music specifically for the occasion."

With help from the Buffalo High School (BHS) Music Boosters, they are raising funds to commission a

brand new piece of music to mark the anniversary. The piece will be composed by Dr. Erika Svanoë, an accomplished composer, who is also an assistant professor of music and the conductor of the concert band at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. The BHS band has performed music by Dr. Svanoë before.

"Every time we work on one of her pieces, there are so many things that we can learn and explore with our students," said Rabehl. "She is a very cool and exciting person and composer," added Knutson. "Her pieces have lots of humor and interesting things happening with opportunities for everyone to be able to play the melody."

Dr. Svanoë will begin composing the piece in the fall of 2023 and will spend time with BHS students as part of the process. She will have the opportunity to write parts for specific players and musicians to be performed in Spring of 2024 to celebrate the end of the 100th year.

While there aren't specific plans yet for what the celebration will look like, there are lots of options being considered. For now, the two music instructors are excited to be back with students playing as an ensemble after the pandemic interrupted the program.

"This community is so enriched in the arts and music is so important here. Buffalo has theater programs in our community, a symphony, and so many other great things," said Knutson. "We have both been here since 2003 and we are very fortunate to stand on the shoulders of giants when it comes to this music program and to be in a community that values not just band, but the arts in general," added Rabehl.

Watch for more information about the 100th year of BHS Band and learn more about the project at buffalomusicboosters.org/bhs-band-centennial.



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The goal for the space is to continue to expand its use and find more ways to get teachers and students to utilize it.

"There are new science standards coming up for the 2023-24 school year and there is a big emphasis on field discovery and hands-on learning, which is perfect for this space," said Boldt. "The goal is to grow this space and have the ability to have multiple classes out there throughout the day. Every article I have read about outdoor learning spaces is positive and I feel fortunate to be able to provide this space to our students."

The PTO has held events for the community at the forest, with more opportunities on the horizon.



Early Childhood Screening

Are you planning on enrolling your student in Kindergarten in the fall? Be sure to complete this important step! Screening is a requirement for entry into all Minnesota public schools and the district provides this FREE service to all district residents. Children ages three to five years old will have their overall development checked in a one-hour appointment.

To make an appointment, please call 763-682-8780.