



Polar Pride on Display at Northwinds Elementary

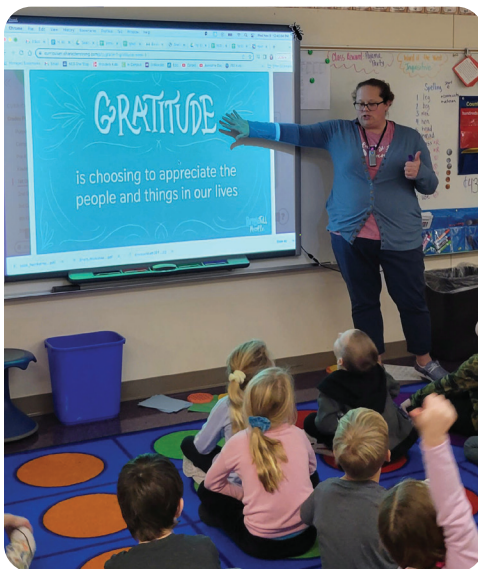
"Where everyone is welcome and everyone belongs."

Elementary school is an amazing time for kids! They are able to connect with their peers and caring teachers and support staff while they explore the world around them in new ways. Schools across our district provide safe and supportive environments for students, and that mission is on full display at Northwinds Elementary School (NES).

The mission of NES is to provide an inclusive educational environment for all learners with a commitment to each child's academic, social and emotional growth. Principal Carmen Tubbs and the staff prioritize and value relationships with students, families and the community by looking for new ways to support social and emotional learning, allowing students to drive their learning and providing opportunities for learning through play.

Purposeful People and Polar Pride

Through collaboration with Wright County, a recent grant received through the Statewide Health



Improvement Partnership for community wellbeing has led to the piloting and upcoming expansion of the Purposeful People program at NES and Discovery Elementary. The program involves lessons and activities for all grade levels with a focus on values like respect, empathy and responsibility.

In Holly Winkleman's first grade class, students are completing guided lessons about regulating emotions, making strong choices and acknowledging how actions might impact others in fun ways. A recent lesson involved each student decorating their own puzzle piece, to then put them together to show how despite each piece being different, they fit together.

"It's really about kindness and respecting others," said Winkleman. "By allowing others to be in a place where they feel safe and loved, we are able to work through our differences and manage our emotions in an appropriate way. If students don't have that feeling of safety and security, they won't be able to learn or absorb the information."

These lessons tie in perfectly with the school's Polar Pride program, where students and staff can nominate each other for their positive character qualities with winners drawn weekly. Nominations really show the impact of supporting one another. "She is a caring teacher," said a nomination by a first grade student while a fourth grader recognized a teacher with "she is always there to listen and makes others feel heard."

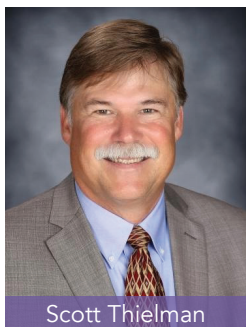
Personalized Learning at Every Turn

Teachers at Northwinds are incorporating more student voice and direction into the classroom, and it is having a major impact. Fifth grade students are pursuing some amazing hands-on opportunities including outdoor learning and new technology to explore and find new interests while learning the required standards and often going further.

"We know the best learning happens when students feel connected with what it is they are learning," said Principal Tubbs. "To make learning meaningful, we need to connect it to real life. Our teachers know that learning is more successful when it's personalized and self-directed."

Debi Volkenant's fifth graders have been connecting with nature and collaborating with each other through outdoor learning activities that are largely directed by what the students are observing. Students experience an incredible sense of awe as they discover new and interesting plants, bugs, spiders and aquatic animals. They asked questions about what they were observing so the class began identifying, researching and reading about the organisms.

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Scott Thielman

There has been a lot of excitement in our district this school year with every school having so much to be proud of! We have seen our students growing as learners and leaders, and have been fortunate to provide some additional professional development time for our staff to allow us all to work together and continue working towards the mission and vision of Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools.

Staff Development Creating a Culture of Collaboration

By implementing early release days each month, we have dedicated time and resources to providing professional development opportunities for staff. There will be eight two-hour sessions throughout the year, resulting in 16 hours of important training. Utilizing the early release days in this way has allowed us to remove barriers for teachers and educational support professionals and minimize teacher time outside of the classroom.

The early release of students also gives us the opportunity to individualize the professional development for each school and department based on student and staff needs. The topics range from enhancing instructional practices to supporting and understanding the importance of creating caring, trusting and supportive relationships with students. WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading) is a focus on instructional practices of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). These practices focus on educator agency and student agency where individual student advocacy is reinforced by making students aware of the opportunities that are available to them in the future.

Taking AVID Programming to the Next Level

We are proud to incorporate the AVID program in our schools. AVID provides students rigorous academic preparedness, agency (self advocacy) in what they choose to pursue and knowledge of the many opportunities that are available. This program for college, career and workforce readiness gives students the tools they need to succeed in whatever path they choose. Our District goal is to have our schools recognized as AVID National Demonstration Schools, which is an exemplary model of the AVID implementation strategies. We will undergo a rigorous validation process and will continue to revise and improve our instructional practices for the future with AVID being a major part of our staff development.



Student-Centered in Every School

Class sizes are a priority at BHM Schools. We are proud to be able to maintain staffing levels with highly trained and dedicated teachers serving our students. We prioritize our students in all aspects of the school day and work to keep class sizes low while recruiting incredible teachers and support staff who provide amazing connections with students. Our schools offer opportunities that meet students where they are at and encourage them to work towards their goals. This dedication is just part of our efforts to continue to be the place where all students can **dream, believe and achieve!**



District-wide Kindergarten Registration Night

February 16, 2023

The time is almost here! If your child will be five years old by September 1, 2023, you can enroll them for the 2023-24 school year in BHM Schools. All incoming kindergarten students will need to complete Early Childhood Screening.

Watch for more information about Kindergarten Registration Night taking place on **Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6 p.m.**

World's Best Workforce Annual Report

The "Striving for the World's Best Workforce" bill was passed in 2013 to ensure every school district in the state is making strides to increase student performance. The World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Plan is intended to serve as a foundational document aligning educational initiatives serving students from pre-kindergarten through high school.

The WBWF legislation is based on the following five goals:

1. All students ready for kindergarten.
2. All third-grade students can read at grade-level.
3. All students attain career and college readiness before graduating high school.
4. Close the achievement gap.
5. All students graduate from high school.

The district's WBWF Plan, coupled with the district's strategic plan, provides a solid foundation to accelerate student achievement. The full WBWF document will be published after December 14, 2022, on the district's website: bhmschools.org. If you do not have access to a computer and would like a copy of the report, you may call the BHM Teaching and Learning Department at 763.682.8778 to request one.



Enroll at the place to dream, believe and achieve

DISCOVERY ELEMENTARY

APPLY FOR THE LOTTERY TODAY

Applications are now being accepted from any family in the BHM School District for Discovery Elementary, where students build character and find meaningful learning opportunities that help them consistently perform above state averages. Discovery Elementary uses a lottery process for enrollment.

The validated Minnesota School of Excellence serves 250 students in a welcoming and small-school environment. Multi-age instruction at Discovery emphasizes personalized learning, creativity and critical thinking, while instructional looping (having teachers move with students to additional grade levels) allows students to form long-term, positive relationships with teachers.

Letters and application forms for Discovery Elementary School enrollment will be mailed out in January to all families who are registered with the district as having a child eligible for kindergarten next fall.

If you have any questions about Discovery Elementary or would like a tour of the school, please contact Dr. Nelson, principal, at 763-682-8426.



Join us at an information night
on January 23, 2023!

BHM MAGNET SCHOOLS

Enrollment Open Now



Now accepting enrollment for magnet schools!

BHM Schools has two wonderful magnet schools available for students in elementary grades.



Montrose Elementary School of Innovation (MESI) STEAM Magnet offers students Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM).



Tatanka Elementary STEM School (TESS) offers students Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), with a primary focus on engineering.

BHM Schools is a member of the Northwest Suburban Integration School District (NWSISD). The district was created in response to the State of Minnesota's Desegregation Rule. One way the district has worked to break up the racial isolation is by creating magnet schools in the seven-member districts. Any student who lives in the seven-member NWSISD can apply for enrollment into any magnet school.

Students who live in BHM Schools, but not the attendance boundary of the two elementary schools, must enroll through NWSISD. Enrollment also includes FREE transportation to and from school. Early application into all NWSISD magnet schools for the 2023-24 school year is open through December 31 and can be submitted at www.nws.k12.mn.us.

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"The excitement and enthusiasm students are experiencing is powerful," said Volkenant. "They are developing strong life-long connections to nature and feelings of pride in their work while also building a sense of collaboration with others to care for and preserve the natural world."

Students use nature journals funded by the Teaching and Learning Department to record observations and document their experiences. They drew a map of the outdoor space with the locations of Honey Locust trees after noticing they had different amounts of seed pods. Students then worked collaboratively to observe and count the number of seed pods remaining on each tree, creating a bar graph to represent their data.

Fifth Grade Teacher Kate Volk is also allowing students to drive learning, but is utilizing technology like green screens and photo and video software. Students wrote poems about what made them unique and then got to add a background to a photo of themselves that represented their interests with plans to create videos.

"I believe that using new strategies in the classroom helps with student engagement and gives students a sense of ownership," said Volk. "Teaching with technology is a passion of mine because I see the response in their excitement and their drive to create great things!"



The Power of Play

For younger students, there are other ways to tap into curiosity and interest. Kindergarten teacher Wendy Nelson has been incorporating structured and unstructured play into the school day to tie in to any subject. This time allows students to be kids while also learning valuable concepts like sharing and collaboration to solve problems.

"I had some students who all wanted to build LEGO creations at the same time and one student suggested using a timer so everyone got a turn, which led to a great discussion about both math and sharing," said Nelson. "Northwinds is special because we recognize when students need extra support and make sure to make them feel comfortable."

Our students really want to be here!"

By getting to know students and allowing their interests and personalities into the lessons, teachers are creating a school culture where students want to come to school, be engaged and feel that they belong. By listening to the students and focusing on the whole child, learning has really come to life at Northwinds.

"We really keep emotional learning as the focus in order to build relationships with students to help them feel safe and secure at school and increase their success in learning," said Principal Tubbs. "This has happened naturally and we are looking to expand it because it is working."

ELECTION RESULTS

Two new members joining the board!

District residents had seven school board candidates to choose from with three open seats on the ballot during the November 8 election.

Incumbent Bob Sansevere will return to the board and two new members, Matt Hoffman and Sheila Smude will join in January 2023. We are excited to have these members join our board for four-year terms and thank all the candidates who were part of this election for their interest in our district!

BHM Schools also thanks outgoing members Ken Ogden and Amanda Reineck for their years of service to our students, our schools and our communities!



Matt Hoffman



Bob Sansevere



Sheila Smude

Student leaders creating a positive environment at events

If you noticed some energetic students in reflective vests at BHS events, you have seen the B1 Bison Bleacher Captains in action. A group of seniors have stepped up as leaders to engage the crowd in support of their fellow students in this positive new initiative.

The program is part of a push to create positive spaces at events, and ties into the goals of the Lake Conference and the Minnesota State High School League to keep crowd behavior above the line. This behavior includes being positive and respectful and avoiding taunts, personal references or other negativity.

“We want our events to be places where everyone feels safe and supported, while allowing our students to shine as proud and driven leaders. We want everyone involved to leave our events thinking that Buffalo is awesome!”

- Nick Guida, BHS Activities Director

Ahead of the football season, Bleacher Captains connected with Cheerleaders to learn and collaborate on cheers. Student support was felt at activities ranging from football games, swim meets, soccer games and cross country races.

BHS seniors Victoria and Erica joined the B1 Bison Bleacher Captains because they love leading people and creating a positive energy.

“During the homecoming game, it was raining and very cold so some people were leaving, but it didn't stop us from making it fun,” said Victoria. “I had everyone turn on their phones and do the roller coaster. Everyone was yelling and stomping their feet and it was awesome!”

“We invited students to Culvers after the game by writing ‘Culvers?’ on the chant whiteboard for everyone to see,” added Erica. “More and more students joined and we had a really good time celebrating together. I realized that the team we were cheering for was our football team, but we were also a team as a student section.”



Photos by Matthew Scherber

There are plans in place to expand the program to coordinate a larger presence at school events with applications opening for juniors in the spring.

“When kids participating see students coming to support them, it creates a really good feeling for everyone.”

- Nick Guida, BHS Activities Director

“The goal is to continue that feeling into other parts of our school culture,” said Guida. “How does that improve the classroom? How does that help kids who may be struggling? We don't want to just tell students to behave, we want them to know the reason behind it so they learn those essential leadership skills.”



Photos by Matthew Scherber

Upcoming Events

BHS/BCMS Band Connections Concert
December 12
7:30 p.m.

BCMS Grade 7 Choir Concert
December 13
7:30 p.m.

DES Choir Concert
December 15
6:30 p.m.

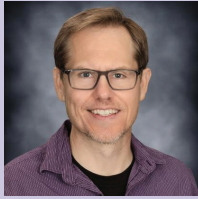
BHS Sounds of the Season Concert
December 15 & 16
7:30 p.m.



Proud Of....

Those listed below were submitted by district staff and recognized by the BHM School Board for their special contributions and accomplishments.

LEEA Recipients who received the 2022 Leadership in Educational Excellence Awards for their leadership in BHM Schools on behalf of Resource Training and Solutions:



Steve Carlson
BHS Psychologist



Alexandra Edwards
MESI Title I Teacher



Jennifer Lunning
BCMS Social
Studies Teacher



Dana Luc
TESS 1st Grade
Teacher

ESS Recipients who received the 2022 Education Support Staff Awards for providing outstanding support to BHM students and staff on behalf of Resource Training and Solutions:



Dan Manz
PES Head Engineer



Kris Wurtzberger
BHS Registrar



Amy Maatz
BCMS ESP



Jill Ebeling
NES KidKare Site
Lead Supervisor

Quest Application Period

Apply for the Quest Program for 2023-24

The BHM Quest program provides specialized classroom instruction for highly gifted students (top two to three percent in their class) in grades 2-9 and combines enrichment and acceleration of district curriculum. Students can expect to learn at a faster pace with real world applications.

Grades 2-5 of Quest are located at Parkside Elementary with transportation available for all qualifying, in-district students. Middle and high school programming is provided at BCMS and BHS. Families of students currently in grades 1-8 who feel their child may benefit from this environment are invited to apply for the program for the 2023-24 school year. **All materials are due by Thursday, January 26.**

For more information about the Quest program visit bhmschools.org/quest-program or contact Rob Nosbush at rnosbush@bhmschools.org or 763-682-8766 with additional questions.



**Attend an information night on
Thursday, January 19, 2023 at
6:30 p.m. in the DC Board Room.**

**BHS Parent/Teacher
Conferences**
December 19
5-8 p.m.

**BCMS Grade 7 Band
& Orchestra Concert**
December 20
7:30 p.m.

Winter Break
December 23 -
January 2

**BCMS Grade 6
Band Concert**
January 5
7:30 p.m.

**BCMS Grade 6
Orchestra Concert**
January 9
7:30 p.m.



**Buffalo
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BHM SCHOOLS

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*****ECRWSS**
RESIDENT DISTRICT 877

WINTER WEATHER ALERTS

Be sure to watch for weather updates that impact school hours this winter.

The school notification system, Campus Messenger, is used to alert all parents and staff when school is canceled, delayed or dismissed early due to poor weather conditions. School and activity delays or cancellations can also be found on local TV stations, KRWC Radio, the district website and on the district's Facebook page. Generally, schools will remain in session if buses can drive their routes safely. As a rule, if there is no school, there are no evening school district or Community Education activities or classes.

Decisions to close, delay or dismiss school early are never an easy task. When weather threatens the school day, district administration makes informed decisions by monitoring weather reports, talking with the bus company and surrounding districts, driving the roads, consulting with local and county officials for road closures and assessing student safety.

Weather conditions may be severe in one area and not in another and as a parent, you ultimately have the final decision about whether or not it's safe for your child to go to school.

INSIDER

Nov/Dec
2022

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SCHOOL BOARD

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