



Buffalo High School Changes Class Schedule Beginning in 2019-20

The Buffalo High School (BHS) will make a significant change to their schedule next year in order to incorporate a time for students to gather, in small learning communities, to receive extra support in academics and social and emotional learning. The program is called Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) which helps to ensure all students are receiving interventions that match their individual needs. Advisory and Academic Support time will be offered to students in the middle of the school day beginning with the 2019-20 school year.

"We are attempting to downsize a big school and create closer relationships and support with our students," states BHS Principal Mark Mischke. "This is an opportunity for students to find support outside of the regular classroom."

On Mondays and Fridays, students will have 30 minutes of Advisory Time. Each student will be assigned to a teacher that they will meet with in a class setting for four years. During this time, they will learn about topics such as resilience, mindfulness, gratitude and other social and emotional skills. It will be an opportunity for students and staff to build healthy relationships, develop academic skills and enhance school culture.

Tuesdays and Thursdays will have 30 minutes dedicated to academic support. This will provide targeted, timely and systematic learning opportunities for all students at BHS based on student academic and enrichment needs. On Wednesdays, students will have about 10 minutes added to each of their four class periods.

At the Monday, March 25 BHM School Board meeting (when the change was approved) BHM Board Chair Dave Wilson led a discussion regarding how the schedule change will be accepted by students and staff. BHS Social Studies Teacher Brigitta Berquist said that many of the staff members (through surveys) have expressed a desire to create better connections with students and the ability to provide more support. Mischke noted how they have also used surveys with students to track their connection and satisfaction with BHS and will continue to use surveys to monitor the changes they plan to make. Director of Teaching and Learning Pam Miller added that it will be up to Principal Mischke and his administration to be sure that all teachers are providing the same level of support to students and that the students are connected and engaged in the new program.

Mischke is excited for the opportunity and the challenges that are involved with the schedule change. The mission is to make sure all students feel like they belong at BHS and that they have the support they need to carry them into the future.

Mischke shared that a MTSS Committee has been established at BHS to implement the changes beginning next school year. Now that the school board has approved the proposal, the committee will visit two schools this spring who are already doing something similar. They have already met with the Buffalo Community Middle School and Phoenix Learning Center staff who have implemented parts of these supports. Over the summer the BHM Teaching & Learning Department will support continued planning and curriculum writing for the new program.

See a graphic of the new BHS schedule on p. 3.

**The place to
dream, believe
and achieve.**

BHM Financial Outlook

In the last edition of the *Insider*, I referenced the State's November budget forecast (projecting a \$1.5 billion surplus) which was adjusted in the February forecast to a \$1.0 billion surplus. Governor Walz has indicated a desire to provide an education funding increase tied to inflation, funding for the special education cross-subsidy, (the cross-subsidy is \$5.9 million annually for BHM and \$750 million state-wide), school safety funding for mental health and infrastructure, and levy assistance for low property wealth school districts. The Governor's budget was presented in February and included a 3% and 2% increase in the general funding formula for school districts over the biennium as well as an increase of \$77 million in special education funding. We know that the budget is a starting point for the governor and the legislature. Unfortunately BHM's current budget is unsustainable without a significant infusion of new funding (at least a 3% increase on the school district funding formula each year and additional funding to address the special education cross subsidy is needed).



Scott Thielman

budget utilized \$1.4 million of the undesignated/unreserved fund to balance the district budget, covering the costs for added staff and program needs. Additionally, \$2.7 million of the fund balance is intentionally being utilized for the 2018-19 school year. Therefore, the budget for BHM Schools will be near the minimum threshold of an 8% fund balance by the end of the 2018-19 school year. Reaching the 8% threshold requires the board to take action to prevent the district from falling below the policy parameters.

The board has begun the difficult task of reviewing options to avert further use of the fund balance. The board also understands its fiduciary responsibilities and knows that reductions will have to be identified if sufficient funding is not procured from the state. Moving into the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, the district will have limited ability to maintain current programs and staffing without spending down the fund balance any further. The 2019-20 budget projections will require a reduction of \$725,000 beyond the \$1.039 million of one-time cost cutting measures that have already been determined, and utilizing \$2.8 million of the fund balance. The reductions will come from various sources and will include a combination of staff reductions and increased fees, as well as reductions in operating costs and supply accounts. While some staff reductions can be addressed through attrition, it is certain that cuts in personnel will need to be made. The board will make the final decisions regarding reductions, funding parameters and potential revenue sources over the next several months. The BHM School District is not alone in this as many districts are facing the same realities.

The BHM School Board has been a very good steward of the budget and had built up the district fund balance from 10.2% in 2009-10 to a high of 17.9% in 2014-15. The fund balance policy requires a range of 8 – 12% to be reserved in the undesignated/unreserved fund. The Board determined that it would intentionally utilize the fund balance to address class sizes and program needs. The 2017-18

Reaching out to our Legislators

This year, as we have done every year for the past eight years, the district met with local and state elected legislators to voice our concerns with the lack of sustainable funding school districts face every year. We heard from Senator Osmek who conveyed that he thought it might be time for the residents to file a lawsuit against the state for allowing inequitable and inadequate funding of public schools. This past February, a resident and former school board member from St. Cloud, MN, filed a lawsuit against the state of Minnesota for inadequately and inequitably funding school districts. The Minnesota Constitution (article 13, section 1) requires the state to provide a "Uniform system of public schools. The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state." I strongly encourage our parents and community to support BHM Schools in its effort to influence our legislators for adequate, equitable and sustainable funding for school districts.

The district will provide updates to parents, staff and our community through the *Insider* and social media as decisions are made over the upcoming months. The Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School District is providing outstanding experiences for our students and will continue to do so in the future. We remain committed to our mission of *making a difference by preparing all students for a successful future in a changing world*. BHM Schools is and will continue to be the place for students to **dream, believe and achieve**.



Proud Of...

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



National Merit Finalists

Buffalo High School seniors Emma Kuitunen and Mya Otto are National Merit Finalists. Over 1.6 million students in 22,000 high schools nation-wide entered the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program.

2 Only about 15,000 become finalists (this

is less than one percent of the U.S. high school seniors) and only 283 were from the state of Minnesota. Kuitunen and Otto now have an opportunity to earn a scholarship and the distinction of National Merit Scholar. The two students will find out if they have earned the title of National Merit Scholar later this spring and summer.



Special Education Leader Award

Amy Ernst, BHM Director of Special Education, received the New Special Education Leader Award from the Minnesota

Administrators for Special Education (MASE).

Ernst received this award for her commitment to students with disabilities and their families and her active involvement in professional and community affairs. She has the ability to see the systems within the district and create tangible initiatives that will ensure high student achievement. She has bold ideas, takes risks, and empowers people to "jump on board."

Ernst has been the BHM Special Education Director since 2015. Superintendent Scott Thielman says her passion and commitment for all students is evident each and every day. Thielman shares, "Amy's knowledge and experience is a tremendous asset to

Proud Of..., p. 3



School Board Elections to Occur in Even-Numbered Years

As a way to save funds and improve voter turnout, the school board approved moving school board elections to even-numbered years during their March 25 board meeting. BHM is one of only 42 districts (out of 332) in the state to have an odd-year election cycle. Changing the election cycle to align with the presidential or gubernatorial election cycle will save the district about \$5,000 each election.

In order to make the change possible, board members will be required to serve an additional year on their current terms. The next school board election will be on Election Day in November 2020.

Proud Of..., p. 2

the students of the district and the state of Minnesota and should be used to the fullest extent possible."

Administrator of Excellence



BHM Superintendent Scott Thielman was named the Region VI Administrator of Excellence by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA).

Thielman received this award in recognition of his leadership, concern

for students, and active involvement in professional and community affairs.

Thielman has served in the district for the last nine years. During that time he has lead important changes in the educational system. The district changed school start times beginning with the 2016-17 school year. Thielman and district staff presented information regarding the process the district used to local, state and national audiences. Under his leadership, the high school also aligned their concurrent enrollment course offerings to the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). Buffalo High School students can earn credits in the ten goal areas of the MnTC, which will satisfy students' general education credits for their first two years of college. The BHS MnTC is unique from all other programs in the state due to the partnership with four-year colleges and universities as well as a two-year community college and a technical college. The last calculated tuition savings for parents and students equaled approximately \$1.8 million.

BHS New 2019-20 Class Schedule, p. 1

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08 AM	08:50 AM	08:50 AM	08:50 AM	08:50 AM	08:50 AM
09 AM	1st Block	1st Block	1st Block	1st Block	1st Block
10 AM	10:14 AM Advisory	10:12 AM Support Time	10:23 AM 2nd Block	10:12 AM Support Time	10:14 AM Advisory
11 AM	10:51 AM 2nd Block	10:54 AM 2nd Block	10:16 AM 2nd Block	10:54 AM 2nd Block	10:51 AM 2nd Block
12 PM	12:44 PM 3rd Block	12:48 PM 3rd Block	12:26 PM 3rd Block	12:48 PM 3rd Block	12:44 PM 3rd Block
01 PM	02:08 PM 4th Block	02:10 PM 4th Block	01:59 PM 4th Block	02:10 PM 4th Block	02:08 PM 4th Block
02 PM	03:25 PM	03:25 PM	03:25 PM	03:25 PM	03:25 PM
03 PM					

All Inclusive, p. 6

by the Special Olympics and therefore receives special resources to support their programs. To earn the special distinction, BHS has: implemented Inclusive Phy Ed; created a Unified Club—special education students and other BHS students can go on inclusive community outings such as going to a movie or snow tubing; and initiated school-wide engagement activities such as their "Spread the word to end the word" campaign to stop the use of the R-word primarily at school and in the community. As a result of the "Champion" status, the Special Olympics has provided a personal resource to help with lesson plans, organize tournaments and make the program better. They have also provided funding for equipment and outings to help make the program a success.

Heebink also says they continue to explore the idea of having Unified Sports. They have participated in a basketball tournament in Waconia and hope to have their own mini-tournament at the end of April. The hope is someday Unified Sports can be offered as an extra-curricular activity outside of the school day.

"What we found at BHS is that students are absolutely starving for connection—REAL connection," continues Heebink. "The kind of connection that brings vulnerability and belonging. They are hungry for more mentorship opportunities. With the start of Inclusive Phy Ed this fall, we saw the increase of friendship and the next step in changing the culture with a movement for inclusion. This class is giving students, with and without special needs, the opportunity to become part of a team together."



BHS students line up to sign the banner to pledge to "Spread the word to end the word." Submitted photo.



Snow tubing at Elm Creek was one of the inclusive community outings for BHS students (left to right) Jordan Ragone, Lauren O'Connell and Lexi Georges. Submitted photo.



Brilliant Bison—Alumni Shining in the World

Alumni: Randy Ernesti Buffalo High School Class of 1973

Lives In: Buffalo, MN

Family: Two Children: Zachary ('05) and Jessica ('07)

Employed: Buff 'N' Glo Car Wash—Owner

Buffalo Glows—One Shiny Car at a Time

Randy Ernesti's Path

You might say business ownership runs in Randy Ernesti's blood. He is one of four siblings born to Ken and Rozella Ernesti who began Buffalo Cleaners and Launderers in 1951. His days growing up in the dry cleaning and commercial laundry business gave him is love for numbers and the "business side of things." Someday, Ernesti figured he would naturally follow in the footsteps of his dad.

Ernesti got his first taste of entrepreneurship when he was in 9th and 10th grade. He invested in a candy machine and installed it in the laundromat. While he admits he likely ate most of the profits, it was a good experience for him.

After graduating high school in 1973, Ernesti, like many students, wasn't sure what he wanted to do. He traveled with friends out to Santa Clara, California where he took some accounting and business classes at a vocational school, but by 1975 he made his way back home. He worked for his folks in the laundry business for a few years, even after they sold it in 1980. But at age 27, the light bulb went off, and Ernesti knew what he had to do.

A gas station, Hustons, on the corner where Wells Fargo is located now, closed their car wash. After the community had been without a car wash for a year, Ernesti realized the need. With the help and guidance of his parents and future wife Colleen, he was able

to build and open Buff-N-Glo Car Wash on August 15, 1982.

The business started out with eight bays of self-wash and Ernesti and his wife detailing cars by hand (they would even pick-up and deliver the cars to their customers). He started detailing two to three cars a day and it quickly grew to over 10 a day. By 1986, he added an auto wash section. Customers used to get out of their cars and watch as their car was pulled through the wash and towel dried. This process took about 10 minutes. In 1998, the conveyor belt was added and they quit towel drying cars. Today, an automatic car wash takes about two minutes. While the cleaning time has decreased, the price, of course, has increased. In 1982, you could self-service wash your car for \$0.50 and today it's \$2. A basic wash in '86 cost \$4 and today it's \$7.

In 1994-95, Ernesti added on to the building giving him office space, a wash prep area and storage. They offered more detailing and oil changes. His staff quickly grew over the years. Currently he employs about six full-time staff and nine part-time staff. Ernesti has a special interest in giving adults who have extra challenges a chance "to feel a part of something" in his business. "I try to find positions where they can work and be successful," explains Ernesti. "It's important for people to be independent."



He also often hires high school students. In fact, his longest employee, Dan Christian, has worked at Buff-N-Glo for 34 years—he started when he was only 16.

How did BHM Schools prepare you for where you are today?

Ernesti attended St. Francis Catholic School for eight years (K-7) before entering BHM Schools. He remembers having a good school experience and learning from all of the teachers, coaches and directors along the way. He credited music teacher Rolf Mohwinkel, social studies teacher Leroy Erickson and math teacher Bob Bredemeier for helping to shape him. His basketball coach Don Wermager "The Machine" motivated him and helped to give him his drive. He noted that everyone knew everyone and they all had fun. He was no stranger to being active, finding time to play trumpet, run cross-country, play basketball and golf, be in the class cabinet and participate in the camera club.

What it all boils down to is drive and determination. Ernesti is self-motivated and driven to succeed. "I knew that I needed to know reading and math to be successful," explains Ernesti. "You also need to have motivation and the will to want to succeed. Everything I learned, I learned from a mentor. I learned from others who were successful. I've always had the mentality, 'What can I do next to enhance the business, to make it better and be more prosperous?' You can't just think things are going to happen. You have to love what you do. Every day you need to get up and do the best you can do. There are so many opportunities out there just waiting to be discovered."



Randy Ernesti (front, left) played basketball through high school. This is a photo from the 1973 yearbook (Ernesti's senior year) when the varsity team missed going to the state championship by one point.

Basketball: Front Row: R.Ernesti; A.Porter; B. Clifton; C.Hicks; R.Bredemeier. Row 2: P.Specht, coach; R.Bredemeier; D.Holte; D.Cornell; Tiemann; D.Dye; D.Wermager, coach.

Upcoming Events

25th Annual Scholarship Pork Chop Dinner

Featuring a \$2,500 Scholarship Give Away

The 877 Endowment Foundation is sponsoring the 25th Annual Scholarship Pork Chop Dinner on Thursday, April 11 from 4:30-7 p.m. in the Buffalo Community Middle School (BCMS) Mall. All proceeds support Buffalo High School (BHS) student scholarships. Last year, the 877 Foundation was able to award over \$98,950 in scholarships to 92 high school seniors.

In honor of the event's 25th anniversary, the 877 Foundation will give away a \$2,500 scholarship. The drawing will be at 6:30 p.m. in the BCMS Mall. Entry forms for BHS

seniors are available in the BHS Counselors' Office or at the Pork Chop Dinner. No purchase is necessary and students do not have to be present to win.

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, dessert and beverage. Curb-side order/pick up will be available at the main entrance. Purchase



Irene Painschaub (left) and her friend were featured on the 11th Annual Pork Chop Dinner poster when the event was in the Buffalo Community Center.

tickets at Community Education (301 2nd Ave NE, Buffalo), at the door or curb-side. No need to call ahead!

ECFE Family Fair

Celebrate the Week of the Young Child, April 7-13, by attending the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Family Fair on Saturday, April 13, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Discovery Center gym (301 2nd Ave NE, Buffalo). The event is FREE and open to the public.

Visit with our ECFE staff and our community

partners, who will offer activities for children and their parents. A silent auction will feature a variety of family themed baskets. Entertainment will be provided by RAD Zoo, Pint Sized Polka music and Inside Outside Magic show with Brian Richards. A low cost lunch and treats are available for purchase from the Buffalo High School Culinary Club.



10th Annual Transition Trek

The district's 18-21 year-old special education program, PRIDE Transitions, is offering a FREE 10th Annual Transition Trek seminar on Thursday, April 25 from 6-8:30 p.m. at PRIDE, located in the Lakeview Mall in downtown Buffalo (15-1st Ave S, Suite #4). The event is open to the public, including those outside the BHM School District. The purpose of this event is to connect individuals with disabilities and their families to transition-based support resources in the community.

Attendees can visit a number of resource booths from 6-7:15 p.m. From 7:30-8:30 p.m.

presenters will provide three breakout sessions. The topics include:

- What is Life Coaching and How Can it Help
- Special Needs Planning—Securing the Future for Persons with Disabilities
- Involving County Services

For more information, contact PRIDE teachers Terri Brummer, Shelly Geurts or Lori Eden at 763-682-8890 or visit the website at www.bhmschools.org/schools/pride.

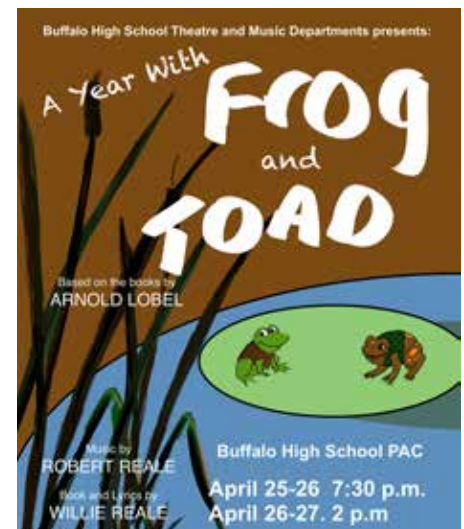


BHS Presents: A Year with Frog and Toad

Buffalo High School (BHS) students will perform the Broadway hit, *A Year with Frog and Toad*, April 26, 27 and 28. The musical is based on Arnold Lobel's well-loved books. This whimsical show follows two great friends – the cheerful, popular Frog and the rather grumpy Toad – through four fun-filled seasons. The two best friends celebrate and rejoice in the differences that make them unique and special. In just 90 minutes, this show tells the story of a friendship that endures throughout the seasons.

The jazzy, upbeat score of *A Year with Frog and Toad* bubbles with melody and wit, making it an enchanting musical for the whole family.

The musical opens Friday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the BHS Performing Arts Center. On Saturday, April 27 there is a 2 p.m. matinee and a 7:30 p.m. show. Sunday, April 28 is a 2 p.m. matinee. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. They may be purchased at Gartner's Hallmark, the BHS Activities Office or at the door.



Special Feature

All Inclusive—Physical Education Class Finds a Place for Everyone

In elementary school, most students LOVE physical education class. However, by the time those same students get to high school, that same love for phy ed has sometimes faded.

That theory doesn't hold up in Jen Heebink's Inclusive Physical Education class. First offered at Buffalo High School (BHS) this school year, this popular class has maxed out with 30 students each quarter. So, what is an Inclusive Physical Education class?

Inclusive Phy Ed (or Unified Physical Education, as it's known across Minnesota and slowly the nation) is the opportunity for students with and without special needs to come together through sports. Fifty percent of the class is made up of general education students in grades 11 and 12 and the other 50 percent of the class is made up of special education students in grades nine through 12. Heebink is the DAPE (Developmental Adapted Physical Education) teacher who teaches the class.

"This works so well because we, as human beings, understand people better when we enter into each other's worlds," explains Heebink. "Physical Education/Sports is a place that is so easy to increase human character. The last 50 years have been about creating opportunities for people with disabilities to play sports because there was little to no opportunities. Now the next 50 years are about creating opportunities for ALL people to play together."

Students in the class participate in a wide-range of activities such as basketball, volleyball, soccer and floor hockey. Students also learn about disability awareness, learning more about topics such as autism, cerebral palsy and playing sports without their sense of sight. Leadership curriculum also teaches students about advocacy, inclusion, social justice and co-leadership skills.

Students Emma Kalis (grade 12) and Jack Lieder (grade 10) love the class. "I get such joy out of this class," says Kalis. "It really humbles you and has changed my perspective. I get to help others and create real friendships. I get a closer look at what people with disabilities go through each day. We all have issues, some just have more to deal with than others."

Lieder is a young man who happens to have autism but, in class, he is mostly known for his basketball skills and funny jokes. "It's nice to bond with other people," Lieder shares. "We get to try new things. I got to see what it's like to play sports without being able to see."

The idea for the inclusive class, or unified sports, originated from the Special Olympics. BHS is recognized as a "Champion Unified School"

All Inclusive, p. 3



BHS grad Randy Ernesti (second from right) went from BHS Homecoming candidate in 1972-73 to the owner of a small business in Buffalo—p. 4.

School Board

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Reader comments or questions welcome!



Students Nathaniel Westphal and Isaiah LaBelle (left to right) enjoy a fun game of six-court volleyball in their Inclusive Phy Ed class.



In late February, BHS Inclusive Phy Ed students had the opportunity to experience what a Unified Sports Basketball Invitational was like in Waconia, Minnesota. Those participating are: (front, left to right) Zachary Phillips and Adam Braun; (back, left to right) Jack Lieder, Jihah Johnson (student coach), Kyle Kauffman, Nicole McHenry (student coach), Nathaniel Westphal, Nicholas Grady, Lauren O'Connell, Kiera Johnson, and Alyssa Sorenson (student coach). Submitted photo.