



2021-2022

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## FEATURING

Updates from the Superintendent, Business Office, Curriculum, Operations, Food Service, Transportation, and Technology Departments.

# PATRICIA ROBINSON SUPERINTENDENT

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The end of the school year is near, and our students, staff, and families remain focused and committed to our district goals (see below). Our academic areas continue to strengthen in a positive direction. We have focused on professional learning communities, which allow our staff to review data and work with colleagues to extend our shift in learning.

To provide quality facilities, a major project we have been exploring is a bond that may be on the November election ballot. You were given the opportunity to provide feedback on areas you would like addressed in the buildings. In the end, the question we add to the election ballot will be based on your input. Our central focus for this project will be Moccasin Elementary School, and we will address areas such as:

- Size of classroom space
- Make restrooms ADA compliant
- Make a separate space for the cafeteria
- Separate the music room from the library
- Upgrade major building systems such as heating/boilers, ventilation, air condition/circulation, plumbing, and electrical
- Replace windows, roof, etc.
- Improve drop-off/pick-up spaces



In addition to Moccasin areas, we are addressing these areas at the high school:

- Relocate transportation services to create more academic space at the high school.
- Renovate classrooms, labs, and other instructional areas to expand our course offerings (culinary, science, career & technical education) and include additional space for student group work, research, tutoring, and personalized instruction.
- Add space in our guidance and administration offices to improve student services in psychology, social work, mental health, college & career planning, and course scheduling.
- Add air conditioning throughout the high school building.

Thank you for your input, and we look forward to working with you on this project.

We strive to sustain effective communication and this year we updated our website and increased our presence on social media. Regularly, our department leaders work to enhance our systems and facilities and ensure fiscal responsibility. This publication highlights key points from our central office leaders to keep you well-informed of the district happenings.

Thank you for your support of our students, staff, and district.

## **District Goals**

1. Buchanan Community Schools will increase student achievement and interest for all students through engaging and inclusive curriculum programming.
2. Buchanan Community Schools will deepen our systemic academic and social-emotional support for the health, safety, and well-being of the whole child, recognizing that our learners need to balance academic, physical, social, and emotional demands.
3. Buchanan Community Schools will attract, retain and recruit a diverse student and staff population.
4. Buchanan Community Schools will strive to develop and sustain effective structures for communication and ongoing engagement of students, staff, families, and the community.
5. Buchanan Community Schools will develop and sustain efficient use of all resources (people, time, and money) by providing quality technology, facilities, and business services to optimize operations for improved student achievement and fiscal responsibility.

# CARRIE BRUNSTING BUSINESS OFFICE

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The Buchanan Business Office has gone through quite a transition this year with staffing, however, we are excited about the services which have continued and improved.

There is a lot to be proud of:

- Contracted Business Manager & Accounts Payable services with Berrien RESA
- In process of banking with two local credit unions instead of one
- In process of changing credit card vendors for greater rewards
- In process of changing to local auditor services
- Reviewed and improved processes and procedures
- Maintained fund balance board requirements
- Provided in depth review of State and Federal Grants
- Developed/implemented CARES act budgets with stakeholder input

We are excited to continue the process of improving the Business Office services in the coming year.

## **MARK KURLAND** **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT & CURRICULUM**

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**K-4 Update:** Ottawa Elementary (K-1) continued working with Mark Tompkins in the area of English Language Arts (ELA) showing good growth or progress in the areas of daily schedule alignment, Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), Phonics, and Phonemic Awareness using Heggerty Instructional Strategies and piloting the use of FOUNDATIONS, and Fluency Instruction - Word Recognition and Sight Words. Moccasin Elementary (2-4) also continued working with Mark Tompkins in the area of ELA resulting in the Gold Standard Status being met for Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) in second, third, and fourth grades.

Both Ottawa and Moccasin finalized their essential standards, updated their pacing guides, and worked through a process for reviewing their curriculum as well as looking at materials to purchase as we move forward into the 2022-23 school year.

**5-12 Update:** Buchanan Middle School and High School continued their work in the area of Professional Learning Communities working with Solution Tree. This included the creation of scales that could be used in Standards-Based Grading along with processes for their respective building PLC meetings.

The Math Departments at Buchanan Middle School and Buchanan High School continued working with Joe Elsheiki (Berrien RESA) in the areas of number sense routines, standards resources, pacing guides, along with creating reliable assessments tied to specific standards and/or learning targets. This work will support moving into researching new curriculum materials during the 2022-23 school year.

The ELA Departments of both buildings also worked with Chris Martin (Berrien RESA) in the areas of the shifts in the common core curriculum, standards-based unit planning, essential standards, and aligning assessments to standards and proficiency targets. Both schools also worked through a Curriculum Review and Material Purchase Process to update curriculum and purchase materials moving into the 2022-23 school year.

The Social Studies Department at Buchanan High School worked with Rebecca Bush (Ottawa ISD) looking more in-depth into the C3 (College, Career, and Civic Life) for Social Studies. The C3 calls upon Social Studies teachers to look at their instructional practices to enhance the rigor and build critical thinking, problem-solving, and participation skills in students. This included looking at various new instructional strategies, updating their essential standards, researching various resources including free textbooks as well as other websites. Lastly, they looked at updating their assessments.

## **ALAN BERGET** **OPERATIONS**

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The Operations Department oversees the maintenance and custodial teams. We welcomed Mike Cornelius into the maintenance department last summer. Mike has been a huge asset to the group. The maintenance department has been very efficient in completing work orders in a timely manner and getting things done right the first time.

Many updates have been occurring throughout the district. The high school received a fresh coat of paint last summer and is looking great! We are also currently working on two major projects utilizing ESSER funds; adding air conditioning to the gym and locker room areas at the middle school as well as updating Ottawa's heating and air quality system throughout the main building.

Bond discussions have been of priority to obtain some much-needed updates for Moccasin and the high school. Major building systems at Moccasin (such as heating/boilers, ventilation, air condition/circulation, plumbing, and electrical) are aged, beyond their service life, and inefficient. Also, due to their age, the roof, windows, floors, and ceilings need to be replaced. Our facility study of the high school also identified critical needs of needed classroom renovations to expand our course offerings, adding air conditioning throughout the high school building, and relocating transportation services to create more academic space.

## **BECKY KALTENBACH** **FOOD SERVICE**

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Supply chain issues were a challenge this year, but food service staff were flexible, innovative, and patient, which allowed us to serve an average of 473 breakfasts and 1,031 lunches to students every day during the school year. We worked incredibly hard to ensure that the students had access to nutritious and appealing foods every day, and it showed in our increased daily averages.

We also began using our digital display units in each cafeteria. These large screens show the daily menus as well as rotating information such as the weather, animal facts, this day in history, kindness ideas, and school-specific items.

Looking to next year, elementary students will have new cafeteria tables with individual stool seats instead of benches. The middle school is getting one-way window treatments, allowing students to see out of the cafeteria, but preventing people from seeing in. Ottawa Elementary is getting a new, larger walk-in freezer, and the high school is getting new salad bars, allowing us to expand our fresh fruit and vegetable offerings.



# B NATE WILL TRANSPORTATION

The 2021-22 school year began with much uncertainty. With driver shortages and the lack of substitute drivers nationwide, we are pleased to say that we have made it through the year without having to cancel any routes. We welcome anyone who may be interested in becoming a driver to reach out to us for more information.

We have partnered with EZrouting, our routing software company to let parents know when the bus is on its way. Please make sure your email address is current with your child(rens) school office. You will receive an email to register your child(ren) for transportation. This link will also include the instructions on how to download and set up Bus Quest.

We have had a few changes within the department this year. I started here in October as the transportation supervisor. I have 14 years of experience in school transportation. Jennifer Templeton, our administrative assistant, joined us in October. She has a wealth of knowledge and experience from working in school transportation for 20+ years. Lacey Chase is a new driver that has a full year of driving experience. She has children here at Buchanan Community Schools and we are happy that she has joined us in filling a route vacancy.

We also hired Stephen Schaefer as our full time mechanic this year. He has been a huge asset as we no longer have to send out buses and other vehicles for repairs. He is very knowledgeable about all types of vehicles.

Thank you for all your patience and understanding as we navigated this school year. Enjoy your summer and we look forward to another great year in 2022-23!



# B PHIL PLACE TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technologies Department at Buchanan Community Schools is responsible for the maintenance of all technologies used in the education of students and the support of that education. This includes obvious things such as teacher and student computers, projectors, Chromebooks, wifi, etc., but also includes the network infrastructure connecting our buildings together.

**Continued WiFi Hotspots for Families Without Access** Through the federal e-rate program, we were awarded funds to continue offering families without Internet access hotspots for use at home.

**1:1 Chromebook For Every Student a Success** 2021-2022 was the first year where every student in grades 1 through 12 had a dedicated device assigned to them. Kindergarten classrooms also had enough shared devices so that each student would have access as well. This availability signifies a dramatic shift in how we engage students.

**Enhanced Classroom Audio** Every classroom at BHS and BMS received a high-fidelity sound bar installed onto their instructional display. These upgraded speaker systems greatly improve the sound quality and coverage within the classroom when instruction involves audio sources.

**Newly Designed District Website Launched** Using the feedback from our community, parents, and teachers, a new District website was designed throughout the course of the school year and went live in April.

**BUCHANAN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS THANKS YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**