

Year In Review

2024-2025



Featuring Updates from:

Superintendent
Food Service
Business Office
Operations
Technology
Transportation



PATRICIA ROBINSON
SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Buck Families,

With the 2024-2025 school year ending, we take a retrospective look on a year marked by significant progress and achievement. Our students have continued excelling academically in a safe and supportive learning environment. Buchanan Community Schools uses data-driven approaches to guide improvements across all areas, including academics, student behavior, school climate, finances, technology, and facilities.

Academic Excellence

Each spring, our third through eleventh-grade students participate in state assessments (M-STEP and SAT). These assessments provide insights into our students' mastery of core academic subjects. We are proud to report that 75% of our core subject averages exceeded both county and state benchmarks during the 2023-2024 assessment period. The 2024-2025 assessment results are not yet available. The results reflect the quality of our educational program, which includes:

Assessment	Average Scores		
	STATE	COUNTY	BUCHANAN
MSTEP ELA	39	43	53
MSTEP MATH	36	40	46
MSTEP SCIENCE	38	40	45
MSTEP SOCIAL STUDIES	30	32	35
PSAT 8 ERW	56	55	75
PSAT 8 MATH	32	38	37
SAT 11 ERW	51	46	55
SAT 11 MATH	26	21	20

- Strong building leadership
- Fully certified, expert teaching staff
- Evidence and research-based curriculum programs
- Dedicated instructional coaches to support teacher development
- Specialized academic interventionists to provide targeted student support

School Culture and Climate

Creating a positive school culture remains a top priority. Our staff and school leaders work closely with families to develop an environment where learning can flourish. We strive to ensure all students and staff feel safe, respected, and valued.

Our classrooms buzz with the energy of knowledge acquisition, inquiry, and exploration, with our expert teachers skillfully facilitating the learning process. We've achieved this through several key initiatives:

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Restorative Justice practices
- Student of the Month recognition program
- Prompt and appropriate responses to disruptive behavior

These evidence-based approaches have significantly improved our district's disciplinary outcomes. We're pleased to report that office discipline referrals and suspensions have decreased compared to last year.

Parent Feedback and Engagement

Parents participated in the MI Student Voice survey for the second consecutive year in February. This feedback is invaluable in our ongoing efforts to enhance the learning environment for our entire school community. The survey revealed several areas of improvement in services, communications, and community connections. While we celebrate this progress, we've also identified areas requiring additional attention. We remain committed to implementing strategies that address these growth opportunities.

INCREASED PARENT SATISFACTION			DECREASED PARENT SATISFACTION		
	2025	2024		2025	2024
Do you feel that staff are respectful to your child?	79.5	74.3	Overall, are you satisfied with your child's school?	62.7	73.2
Are you satisfied with the services offered by the school (e.g., transportation services, lunch services, school counselors, school library services, etc.)?	72.3	69.3	Are you confident that this school has the ability to meet your child's learning needs?	64	65
Are you satisfied with the way your child's school communicates with you?	71.1	68	Are you confident that your child is safe in this school?	58.5	60.8
Do you feel that your child has a connection with teachers/staff at school?	70	62.2	Would you recommend this school to other parents seeking a place for their child?	67.1	73.9
Do you feel that your child has a connection with other students at school?	66.3	61.7	Does your child feel successful at this school?	64.6	68.7
Does the style of teaching in your child's classroom(s) align with your child's style of learning?	54.2	51.1	Does your child look forward to going to school?	51.2	63
			Do you feel that there is a sense of belonging at this school?	58.5	63.7
			Does this school motivate your child to learn?	50.6	57

Looking Forward

As we conclude this school year and begin planning for 2025-2026, we celebrate our collective achievements while looking forward to building upon this foundation of success.

We sincerely appreciate your partnership and support throughout this journey. Together, we continue to create an educational environment where every student can thrive.

Go Bucks!

Educationally yours,

Cathy Rolfe



BECKY KALTENBACH
FOOD SERVICE

The Food Service staff carefully plans and serves meals that are appealing to students and meet the nutritional requirements of the age groups at each school. We do this by including a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, milk, whole grains and meat. We also provide vegetarian options at each school.

For the second year in a row we were very pleased to join school districts across Michigan in offering free breakfasts and lunches to all students. This allowed us to serve an average of 487 breakfasts and 1,108 lunches daily.

Other highlights of the year include:

- Preparing and serving 500 meals for the annual Empty Bowls fundraiser.
- Composting food waste at Buchanan High School for a local farmer.
- Participating in National School Lunch week by inviting school staff to eat with the students and try our school food.
- Providing a free daily snack to the Boys and Girls Club after school program at Buchanan Middle School.



CARRIE BRUNSTING

BUSINESS OFFICE

As we reflect on the past year, the Buchanan Community Schools Business Office remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring the district's financial health while supporting the academic and operational goals that serve our students, staff, and community. Managing school funding is a complex but critical responsibility, and we continue to approach it with diligence, creativity, and a strong sense of stewardship.

Understanding Michigan School Funding

- In Michigan, public schools are primarily funded through a combination of local property taxes and state funding based on per-pupil allocations. However, this traditional formula often does not fully cover the wide array of needs and challenges that districts face—especially when addressing equity, aging infrastructure, or student well-being.
- To meet these growing demands, we actively seek alternative funding sources to supplement our general fund. This includes local options like the Sinking Fund, as well as State and Federal grants earmarked for specific purposes.

Leveraging Alternative Revenue Streams

Sinking Fund:

Buchanan Community Schools uses its Sinking Fund to finance essential capital improvement projects. This fund helps address building repairs, security enhancements, and infrastructure upgrades without drawing from instructional budgets. Details of completed and ongoing projects can be found in the following Operations Summary section.

State Funding – Key Categorical Aids:

- Section 31a (At-Risk Funding): This funding supports the entire District and provides targeted academic and behavioral interventions for at-risk students. These funds are crucial in closing achievement gaps and expanding student support services.
- Section 31aa (Mental Health, Safety & Security): This relatively new allocation has been vital in enhancing our mental health services and safety infrastructure across the district. These dollars help fund our District nurse, security systems, and training to ensure a safe, supportive learning environment.

Federal Funding – Title Programs:

- Title I, Part A: Federal Title I funds target academic intervention programs, particularly at Ottawa Elementary, Moccasin Elementary, and Buchanan Middle School. These programs are designed to help students who are not meeting academic standards.
- Title II, Part A: Title II funding supports professional development for our educators and District leaders, ensuring they are equipped with current strategies and knowledge to best serve our diverse student body.

Fiscal Responsibility & Strategic Planning

Our team understands that every dollar matters. As such, we work proactively to prioritize needs, explore additional funding sources, and align spending with strategic goals. Whether managing day-to-day expenses or long-term projects, we emphasize transparency and accountability in all our financial decisions. We remain deeply aware of our role as stewards of public resources. Through careful planning, collaborative budgeting, and consistent monitoring, we are proud to support the educational mission of Buchanan Community Schools while preparing for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



MARK KURLAND

OPERATIONS

The Buchanan Community Schools Operations Department was excited to bring custodial services back in-house which means all employees are district employees and not part of a third-party company. Maintenance paid extra attention to replacing outdated vehicles and the use of sinking & safety funds during the 2024-25 school year.

Exterior doors have been replaced at Ottawa, Moccasin, and Buchanan High School to enhance campus safety.

Purchased 2021 Chevy 4x4 Silverado with plow to replace our old maroon truck.



Purchased 2024 16' Cargo trailer to replace old box truck.

Buchanan Middle School Gym LED Lights - Sinking Fund Project.



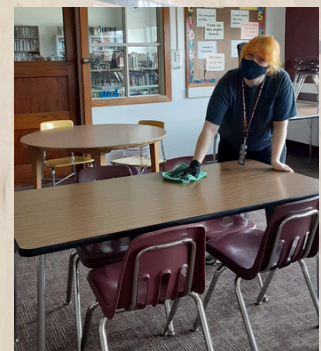
Moccasin Facade Project - Sinking Fund Project.



Projects to be completed over the summer:

- BHS Athletic Fence Project - new fencing around football, softball, and baseball fields along roadways - Safety Funds
- BHS Large Area Air Conditioning & Window Air Conditioning Projects - Band, Media Center, CTE, and Art Room air conditioning units along with window units for smaller classrooms - Capital Funds

	PROJECT	AMOUNT
Sinking Funds	District Facilities Study	\$24,300.00
Buchanan High School	HS Plumbing Repairs	\$14,909.57
	HS Heating Boiler & AC	\$60,330.63
	HS Fire Panel Repairs	\$5,281.00
	HS Carpet Repairs	\$700.00
	HS Roof Repairs	\$4,122.29
	HS Elevator Repairs	\$4,227.55
	HS Emergency Hallway Lights	\$6,600.00
	HS Electrical Repairs & Upgrades	\$23,800.00
	HS Removal of Trees	\$1,200.00
	HS Transportation Concrete Pad for Tanks	\$8,132.00
	HS Transportation Electrical Upgrade for Tanks	\$5,851.00
Buchanan Middle School	MS Plumbing Repairs	\$3,234.00
	MS Gym LED Lighting Project	\$11,510.00
	MS Concrete Pads	\$6,467.00
	MS Roof Repairs	\$742.50
	MS Heating Boiler & AC	\$1,590.16
	MS Emergency Lights	\$536.83
Moccasin Elementary School	MS Removal of Trees	\$2,256.00
	MES Plumbing Repairs	\$5,405.00
	MES Fence Project	\$2,627.00
	MES Heating Boiler	\$2,793.59
	MES Facade Project - Manager Services	\$16,326.77
Ottawa Elementary School	MES Facade Project - Construction & Repairs	\$53,914.10
	OES Plumbing Repairs	\$4,629.50
	OES Playground Deck Repairs	\$28,930.25
	OES Heating Boiler & AC	\$1,337.60
Safety Grant Projects	HS Replacement of Exterior Doors	\$27,004.00
	MES Replacement of Exterior Door	\$3,395.00
	OES Replacement of Exterior Door	\$4,285.00





PHILLIP PLACE

TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technologies Department at Buchanan Communities 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.

Network Equipment Upgrades (10Gbps backbone)

BMS, MES and OES went through an infrastructure audit to determine what equipment is needed to move forward with the 10Gbps backbone upgrades. After the successful implementation at BHS last year, we submitted for federal eRate approval for total replacement of all necessary equipment in each of the other buildings utilizing the same technology and manufacturer as BHS. Through eRate, the District is able to fund this project and receive an 80% reimbursement.

Administration Workstation Replacements

The District operates on a workstation replacement cycle that runs between six and ten years. We work hard to extend the life of computers by performing regular maintenance and upgrades when possible. This year, all administrative workstations were replaced after reaching their effective End of Life (EoL). All offices including secretaries, counselors and media assistants received new systems with the specifications needed to last into the next replacement cycle.

Library Information System (LIS/LMS)

Through a generous grant from the Michigan Gateway Community Foundation, the LIS for BMS, MES and OES was replaced. As part of the grant, Buchanan Community Schools has partnered with the Buchanan District Library to reopen the high school library using this same new system. Having all the buildings under the same cloud based solution means a much smoother workflow for our staff and a consistent experience for our students while simultaneously expanding access to books. The new system went online this fall, but a full transition is expected to take another year.



NATE WILL

TRANSPORTATION

Despite the ongoing bus driver shortage that continues to impact many districts, we are proud to share that we remained fully staffed this year, including a dedicated substitute driver. In April, we welcomed Aaron Morphew as our substitute driver—please join us in giving him a warm greeting!

We have also applied for clean energy bus grants to begin replacing our diesel buses with propane-powered vehicles. This change offers significant cost savings and environmental benefits that will positively impact our students, their families and all of the BCS community.

Summer School Transportation

BCS will provide transportation for summer school. Please remember that all regular school-year transportation rules will remain in effect during the summer months.

2025–2026 Transportation Requests

In July, parents and guardians will receive an email requesting transportation information for the 2025–2026 school year. Even if your child's transportation needs have not changed, it's important to review and confirm that all information is accurate.



Your support helps our students, families, and community thrive.

Thank you from all of us at Buchanan Community Schools!

