

FOCUS

Making friends through Social Emotional Learning

Bringing a school together through kindness.

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Winter
2024

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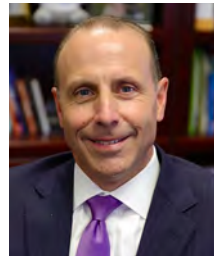
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Superintendent's Message



Michael Cornell
Superintendent

The cornerstone of the work that we do on behalf of this community's children is our Strategic Plan. The first iteration of our plan was created in the fall of 2015, and it was designed as a document that aligned the district's existing programs, processes, and priorities. Since that time, the Strategic Plan and the inclusive process we use to revise it annually, has served to establish a strong sense of purpose centered around our District Vision, Mission and Core Values.

- As we pursue our District Vision of "educating modern learners who create, care, solve, and discover", we do so by making commitments to
- Establishing powerful **relationships** with and among our students
- Providing **purposefully designed instruction**
- Ensuring that students are empowered by having **agency** in their learning
- Providing opportunities for students to build **efficacy** for themselves as people and as learners.

Because we revise our plan each year, it is agile, responsive, and acted upon each day. Our plan continues to impact our work in important ways because of who we invite to participate, the way our meetings are facilitated, our purpose-focused approach, emphasis on process, and analysis of the broadest array of evidence.

Each of our strategic planning meetings has 60+ people from every corner of our district; School Board Members, parents, business people, teachers, support staff and administrators are all a part of our planning process. Each meeting is thoughtfully facilitated to invite inquiry and dialogue that enables our school district to mine the collective wisdom of the group we've invited.

We are very purpose centered in our planning work. There is a great story about the time that President John F. Kennedy visited the space center at the time of the Apollo missions. During one visit, he asks a janitor, "What do you do?". The man replied, "I am putting a man on the moon, Mr. President."

Our goal for our planning process is that it similarly unites everyone around ensuring that every student has a great day of learning each day, and, as a result, truly breathes life and joy into our work.

Our plan emphasizes the individual teaching and leadership practices and dispositions that we want every adult to carry with them the service of children each day. This means that we promote classroom activities that require students at all levels to

- think critically and creatively
- collaborate productively
- communicate skillfully in a variety of forms.

College basketball coach Jay Wright says, "We all have different roles, but we all have the same status." Our planning emphasizes making commitments to each other as equals about how we will serve children and families. When we take off our "principal hat" or our "parent hat" and join together as a community around our commitments, we teach our children the most important lesson of all, and create a plan that our entire staff acts on each day.

Recently, I received an email from a veteran and very well-respected teacher who said that "our district's strategic plan is no longer a plan. It's an action. It's evident at every grade level at every school."

Our strategic planning process is an important way for us to look in the mirror and improve in how we serve the needs of our students. In 2024, we plan to update this process so that it continues to help us learn and grow.

Please always know how grateful we are to be your partners in the learning and development of your children.

Sincerely,

Michael Cornell
Superintendent of Schools



Follow us on social media

@hamburgcsd





Hamburg Highlights

Scan to see the corresponding videos

Each school year, we are highlighting students and staff members who are going above and beyond in our school community. Each building principal has the chance to submit nominations. These are a few of the remarkable people we've highlighted so far this year.

Matt Bermingham

5th grade teacher at Union Pleasant Elementary School

Union Pleasant fifth grade teacher Matt Bermingham starts each day with a walk outside with his class. Rain or shine, snow or sleet, he and the students kick off their morning with some fresh air and conversation.



"It's been a challenge that I've put in front of my class for this is I think our fifth year in a row that we never miss a day," he said.

This is Mr. Bermingham's 33rd year teaching in Hamburg and at Union Pleasant. He comes from a family of teachers and grew up spending time in his mother's classroom. He's a Hamburg native and loves the community aspect of the district, and Union Pleasant specifically.

Exercise is important to Mr. Bermingham to de stress and manage his day. He said he likes passing on that gift to his students. He said the routine also teaches them grit and determination

"It allows them to get their energy out, get the socialization out, feel good connecting as a group. I have an opportunity to hear from them, hear about their weekends, their plans, their goals. It takes the stress off a morning and then I find when they come into school they're ready to sit down and really get rolling."

Neil and Jennifer Scofield

Classroom aides at Boston Valley School

Husband and wife duo Neil and Jennifer Scofield get to do what they love every single day – together.



Mr. Scofield, or Mr. VIP as the kids call him, has been working in the Hamburg district for three years, with his wife joining him last year. Mrs. Scofield said the kids love to associate her with her husband.

"A lot of them just kind of embrace it, a few of them it's like, mind blown! But most of them are just like, 'he was here first,' so I'm always like, 'oh yeah, oh yeah,'" she said.

Both are classroom aides in different classrooms and said there's no typical day when it comes to this job.

"I do love the 'aha' moment, but I also love to see them grow and learn, and it's a lot of fun to see them achieve things they don't think they can do and they're like, 'I did it!'" Mrs. Scofield said.

For the Scofields, the school day doesn't end when they get the kids on the bus. They attend many of the afterschool events and programs.

"They ask me during the day, 'Mr. Scofield are you gonna come see our concert?' and of course when they ask you, yeah we do attend those because we want to support them, we want to see them after school with their parents, with their other friends in other rooms in the school."

Both said they love the environment, teachers, administration, but most of all, the kids.

"The students are just fascinating. They're so clever, so witty, and it's just a good environment to work in. I'm definitely happy to be here and be around them as well."

Hamburg Alumni Spotlight



Do you know a Hamburg graduate who has made a positive impact on their community? Nominate them to be featured in a brand new spotlight series!

Fill out the form over on the Community Relations page at hamburgschools.org



Coming soon to a stage near you

Theater season is almost upon us and students and staff across the district are hard at work putting together some spectacular shows.

Here's a preview of what we have to look forward to on Hamburg stages in the coming months.



Middle School

Newsies, Jr.

January 25 & 26 at 7:30 p.m. and January 27 at 1:00 p.m.

"Newsies Jr.' takes place in lower Manhattan, July 1899. Jack Kelly and his group of homeless and orphaned newsies hit the streets selling "papes" to earn a living. When the cost of the newspapers go up significantly, Jack and the newsies decide they must form a union and "Seize the Day" in order to fight against injustice and corporate greed. As the story continues, we meet more characters such as Katherine; an ambitious young reporter, looking to make a name for herself by writing about the Newspaper Strike, Medda; a successful vaudeville performer, who offers her theater to the newsies as a safe haven, and Pulitzer; a pompous and uptight businessman who owns "The World" and only cares about his riches. Come "Watch What Happens" as "Newsies Jr." takes HMS by storm!"

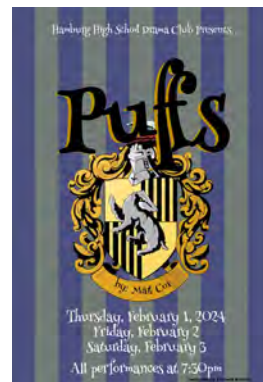
- Director Katie Riederer

High School (play)

Puffs

February 1-3 at 7:30 p.m.

"For seven years a certain boy wizard went to a certain Wizard School and conquered evil. This, however, is not his story. This is the story of the Puffs ... who just happen to be there too. This is a tale for anyone who has never been destined to save the world. I chose this play for two reasons. First, I am a huge Harry Potter fan, and this story hilariously and cleverly tells the entire HP story through the Hufflepuffs' point of view. However, audiences do not need to be familiar with HP to enjoy this funny, magical story. Secondly, there are about 50 characters with many students playing multiple roles. It's a very active and fast-paced show." - Director Marc Ruffino



Armor Elementary School

A Year With Frog and Toad Kids

February 8 & 9 at 7 p.m.

"This is an adaptation of the Tony-nominated Broadway musical based on the beloved story books by Arnold Lobel. The show is filled with vaudeville and jazz style music, and tells the tale of a beautiful friendship that endures throughout the seasons. The Armor 5th graders are very excited to bring this musical to life in February!"

- Director Kelly Ersing



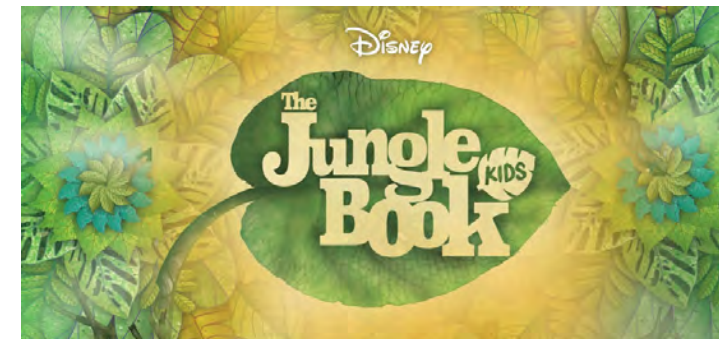
Charlotte Avenue

Disney's The Jungle Book Kids

March 20 & 21 at 7 p.m.

"Disney's The Jungle Book Kids is based on the classic beloved tale which boasts exciting characters and fabulous music! The 4th and 5th grade students at Charlotte Avenue are excited to bring this story to life onstage."

- Director Jackie Gould



Boston Valley School

Disney's Robin Hood

March 27 at 7 p.m.

"The classic animated story of Robin Hood and his Merry Men gets a school-based twist as we tell the story from the perspective of students acting out the legend in order to immerse themselves in the history. Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham are up to their typical dirty tricks, and will King Richard ever return from the Crusades to save the people from the rule of his tyrannical brother?"

- Director Laura Biddle

Union Pleasant Elementary School

Untitled (for now)

April 23 at 7 p.m.

"We're currently writing the musical with a team of 5th grade writers. Our story is set in Niagara Falls in the early 1900s and follows a young daredevil named Annie and her friend Walter, a frustrated inventor, as the two of them set out to win a competition for the most spectacular feat at Niagara Falls in order to save Annie's family's bakery."

- Director Kurt Ebsary

High School (musical)

Into the Woods

April 26 & 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Into the Woods follows a story of a Baker and his wife who are trying to have a child. They suddenly learn that there has been a curse placed on them by the Witch and they need to make a potion to "reverse the curse." The baker and his wife travel throughout the woods and run into various fairytale story characters; Cinderella, who wants to attend the King's Festival, Jack, who wishes that his cow would give milk, and Little Red who simply wants to travel to Grandmother's house. When the baker and his wife succeed and everyone's wishes are granted they realize that their choices have consequences and the grass is not necessarily greener on the other side.

I chose this musical because it is a difficult show that showcases many of our students. It is funny and witty while also displaying deep moral values of life, death, family troubles, and consequences of actions. This show is a modern classic that has continued to return to Broadway and is still relevant to audiences today.

- Brandon Mellerski

Making friends through Social Emotional Learning



Fifth graders at Boston Valley School are giving a whole new meaning to being the leaders of the school.

Last year, Principal Nicole Lauer implemented 5th grade leadership teams. The goal is to give these older students a level of responsibility to themselves, their peers and the school.

"I think of this like a special group thing, kind of like leading the whole school while I'm in fifth grade," said Joey Litwin.

These include Hallway Greeters, Morning Announcers, Character Education,

Advisory and Service, and a new one this year, the Social Emotional Learning team. This stems from the SEL time all elementary teachers set aside each morning to check in with their students; socially and emotionally. For some, this includes "how are you doing today?" prompts, for others it's sharing something fun they did over the weekend. The 5th Grade SEL Team is facilitated by Principal Nicole Lauer and Counselor Lindsay Ferry

"Our work with the SEL team is to use our 5th grade leaders on that team to promote connection in our building. So,

we know SEL is a really important part of our day and we thought it would be awesome to involve the kids in that, so we made a new 5th grade leadership team for this school year," said Mrs. Lauer.

She said the mission of the SEL team is to get into classrooms and facilitate activities that help build relationships. They want classmates to have good relationships, even if they aren't best friends.

The team's first project involved going into all the K-5 classrooms, giving a brief presentation about connections and kindness, and helping the students make



a pawprint. Students write their name, grade, class, some of their favorite things, and include their photo on the pawprint. The paw prints will be displayed in the hallway so that all who pass by can see and read about every member of our BVS learning community.

"It connects with the people around you, so if you didn't know something about somebody else, it can tell you that, 'oh I like alligators, this other kid likes alligators, stuff like that,'" said SEL team member Calvin Bauerlein.

Calvin said the public speaking aspect was nerve racking at first.

"I used to be afraid of all the attention, like in our first one, I went in my own classroom, then I got used to announcing stuff and being in front of the whole class."

The kids drive the team, with Mrs. Lauer and Mrs. Ferry simply scheduling and facilitating the meetings. Charlotte Pfohl said she always tries to be kind to others and this team was a perfect fit for her.

"I feel like everyone deserves to have a friend. And I know that there are definitely some friends out there that don't really have many and I feel like this will help us to make our community a very good place, especially this school," she said.

Mrs. Ferry said she's seen first-hand the impact SEL time has on the students at BVS. She said she's seen conflict resolution strategies being used organically by groups of students in the cafeteria, and students being more in touch with their emotions in general. Involving the 5th graders in this message has only strengthened the good work already happening.

"I think it also helps the older kids to even understand more of what SEL is, so they understand that time, where the little kids don't understand that time but now I think they're understanding why it is that we do SEL, why they do SEL now."

Seeing the older students teaching a room full of their younger peers is truly a heart warming experience. It's easy to imagine where these students could be years from now, especially with the strong leadership foundation being laid at such a young age.



Mrs. Lauer said seeing the students' growth in confidence throughout the duration of this project has been awesome, and she can't wait to see where life will take them when they leave the halls of BVS.

"My goal is always, I look at them and I'm wondering where are you going in the future, what does it hold for you, am I going see you being that student who's leading the student council or maybe you're the student representative sitting on the board of ed, things like that. I just want them to always know they can do whatever they want to do."



Around the District



Bulldog Dash 15-19 age group winners



Alphabet parade at Armor



Boston Valley Bulldog pride!



First day of school at Union Pleasant



Winners of Middle School Harry Potter Trivia



High School students at Meridia Bulldog Branch grand re-opening



Armor students having fun outside



Boston Valley principal Nicole Lauer being silly-stringed!



Lunchtime at Charlotte Avenue



Marching band warms up for homecoming parade



Union Pleasant students welcome guest speaker from Chile



Middle School Student Government bags candy for local veterans



Cooling off during the Charlotte Avenue Fun Run



High School Character Club distributes meals during Thanksgiving Drive

Impact through action: The Chick-fil-A Leader Academy

The Chick-fil-A Leader Academy™ is a national high school leadership program sponsored by Chick-fil-A Operators, focused on making an impact through action.

Hamburg High School Work-Based Learning Coordinator and Academy of Finance Director, Krissy Lawrence, and Youth at Risk Coordinator, Nicole Dayka, decided to bring this program to Hamburg this school year after hearing how schools in the northtowns partnered with their local Chick-fil-A to offer it to students. Mrs. Lawrence said as soon as a Hamburg franchise opened, she reached out immediately.

"I know how important it is to develop employability skills in our students. The program not only focuses on leadership, but it helps develop communication, teamwork, problem-solving, innovation, and creativity in our students as well," she said.

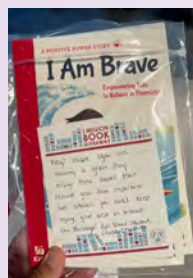
The academy isn't a class, it's a one-year program in which students participate above and beyond any of their classes with the goal of building leadership skills.

At the end of the year, students earn a certificate for their hard work. Applications

were open to the entire student body. 18 students applied and all were accepted.

Students attend monthly leader labs at school before or after school hours. Each month focuses on a different aspect of leadership. So far, students have learned about visions and values and servant leadership.

Students also participate in three community service initiatives throughout the year, two of which are already complete.



In September, academy students participate in the 1 Million Book Giveaway. They packaged books, which were given to first graders at Union Pleasant to take home. They also visited the school and read one of the books to some of the elementary classes.

Sophomore Anna Matychak said she joined to become a better leader, but has found more fulfillment in helping others than she ever could've imagined.

"Already it's helped me become a better person, in a sense. It makes me feel good, like when we delivered the books and saw all the smiles on the first graders' faces it just felt so good," she said.



In December, the student leaders participated in Do Good December. They decided to make friendship bracelets for teens at Children's Hospital.



Sophomore Chase Chudoea said the opportunity to do community service projects like these is one of the reasons she joined.

"I hope it helps me get more connected with my community that way I can, if I ever wanted to do more community service like this I could have already established the connections for that."

This spring, they will choose a project for their Spring Impact Project. Anna and Chase will attend the Academy of Finance advisory board meeting this month to talk about the program and brainstorm ideas for the project.

"We don't want to copy other things. They do drives, we don't want to do that. We want something different because this is brand new so we want to start our own thing. Like AOF has the MLK Food Drive, we want Chick-fil-A Leader to have its own thing," Anna said.

As they talk about the program, both Anna and Chase couldn't help but smile. It's evident how much they are truly enjoying it.

"It makes you realize that doing things for other people is a great thing. It makes you feel better than anything."



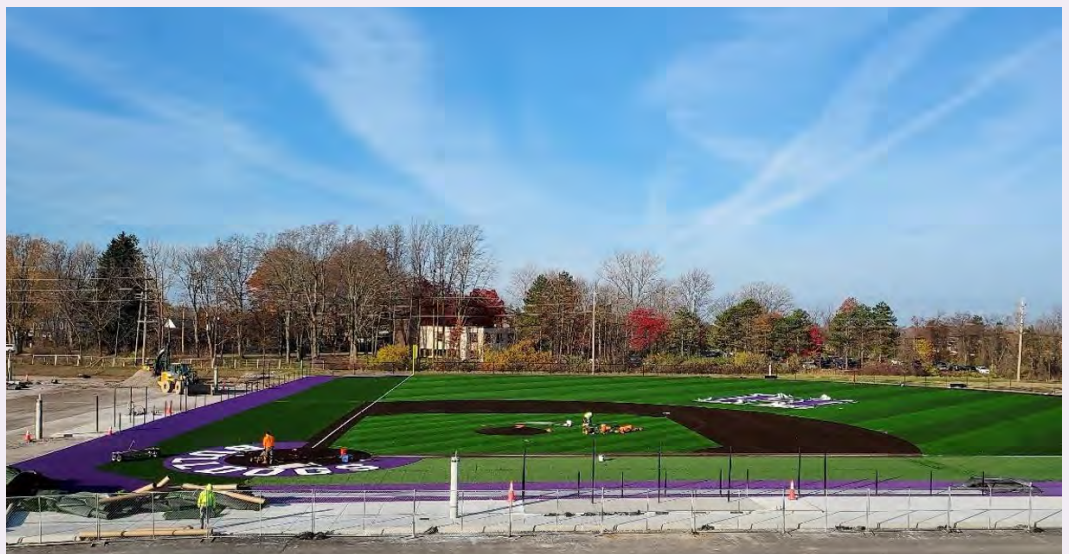
CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

The Capital Improvement Project has been full steam ahead from the beginning of summer, into winter, and into the new year. Over the course of the past year, the construction team has achieved several notable milestones including the installation of the new bus loop, resurfacing of the Middle School parking lot, replacements to the Howe Field turf and track, relocation of the existing fuel island, and flooring renovations in the Middle School and High School vestibules.

Since the beginning of this school year, the construction team has been focusing heavily on the baseball and softball fields. The past couple of months, the team has installed all the necessary storm management and drainage systems, foundations, aggregate stone subbase, and other underground systems to properly prepare the new fields for turf. The team has also adapted and accounted for the colder weather as construction continues to ensure all new systems are properly installed.

Over the next several months and into the spring, the construction team will continue progress on the baseball and softball fields. Most notably, over the past several months, the baseball turf was installed and all dugouts for both fields have been installed. Next, the team will be focusing on completing the softball field turf, new batting cages, concrete slab on grades, and installing all sports equipment such as benches, fencing, netting, dugout cubbies, padding, etc.

A special thank you to the entire Hamburg school community for your patience and understanding as the construction team works diligently to complete this phase of the project. The construction team has expressed to us that they are extremely thankful for everyone's continued support and they love being our partner in building these beautiful new facilities.





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Michael Cornell, Superintendent

- Armor Elementary..... 716-646-3350
- Boston Valley Elementary..... 716-646-3240
- Charlotte Avenue Elementary.. 716-646-3370
- Union Pleasant Elementary..... 716-646-3280
- Hamburg Middle School..... 716-646-3250
- Hamburg High School..... 716-646-3300
- General Information..... 716-646-3200

hamburgschools.org



Vision:
Educating modern thinkers who create, care, solve & discover

Mission:
Engaging all students in learning experiences that inspire lifelong learning and empower each for their future

Core Values:
We...

- Honor every learner as a unique person and adapt to the needs of each
- Inspire the love of learning in every student
- Ensure that our schools are places of innovative teaching and active learning
- Are proud of our past and committed to our future
- Ensure that our schools are safe, kind, and welcoming so that we make every day a great day to be a Hamburg Bulldog

Kindergarten and PreK registration

Attention parents! PreK registration opens December 4, 2023, and Kindergarten opens January 16, 2024.

After you submit your registration online, the Central Registrar will email you with the next steps in the registration process.



For existing families with an active parent portal account, log into your parent portal account and click "Register New Student" on the right side of the screen.

The PreK program for the 2024-25 school year is open to children who will be four years old on or before Dec. 1, 2024. PreK families who are interested in the full-day classroom will need to be registered with the district by March 1. Placement in the full-day classroom is by digital lottery, which will be held in March of 2024. Letters informing families of their placement in the full-day classroom or in a half-day session will be immediately sent after the lottery via U.S. mail.



Questions? You can call (716) 646-3200 ext. 7217, email centralreg@hcsdk12.org or visit <https://sites.google.com/hcsdk12.org/registrar>.

Families without computer access should contact the Central Registrar at the phone number above.