



“There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don’t care who gets the credit.”

- Ronald Reagan

## Dear Byron Center Community,



I hope you were all able to enjoy this past season of festivities and all the joys that come with it!

On January 1, I officially retired as superintendent of Byron Center Public Schools. As I reflect on my years of service, by far the greatest joy has been partnering with our staff and the wonderful families we serve in developing well-rounded children and helping them reach their academic, athletic, and artistic potential. In addition, it was one of the great joys of my life to partner with the caring, dedicated, and talented Byron Center staff in the education of my own four children in this district.



It has been an honor and a joy to work with each and every one of you and our supportive school board, in this exemplary school district.

Gratefully yours,

Daniel L. Takens

### Superintendent's Office

8542 Byron Center Ave. SW  
Byron Center, MI 49315  
616.878.6100

Superintendent . . . . . Kevin Macina  
Chief Financial Officer . . . Tamera Powers

### 2019-2020 Board of Education

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### 2020 Board Meetings

*District Services Building*

January 13 - 6:30 pm  
February 10 - 6:30 pm  
March 9 - 6:30 pm  
April 13 - 6:30 pm  
May 11 - 6:30 pm  
June 29 - 6:15 pm

## SINCERE THANKS TO THE BCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION

The month of January marks the observance of School Board Recognition Month. This is an opportunity to show our year-round appreciation for these servant leaders and begin to better understand how our local Board of Education trustees work together to prepare today's students to be tomorrow's leaders.

The key to a brighter future for our children is a strong education system. Every day, students count on schools to prepare them for a successful future. It takes unwavering commitment to a community to make this all possible.

Local school boards continue to influence their community and schools by:

- Establishing a vision for our education program
- Designing a structure to achieve that vision
- Ensuring schools are accountable to the community
- Strongly advocating for continuous improvement in student learning
- Ensuring that students have access to resources to help them learn
- Keeping school buildings safe
- Providing qualified teachers to guide students



We thank the Byron Center Public Schools Board of Education Members for sharing their vision, time, and tireless effort to make our schools a wonderful place to grow and learn!

## A VERY FOND FAREWELL TO SUPERINTENDENT DAN TAKENS



*We wish Dan Takens all the best as he retires from his tenure at Byron Center and begins a new, adventurous chapter of his life. Here is a sampling of tributes that give a glimpse into the enduring impact that Dan's leadership has had on our students, our schools, and our community.*

"The impact that Dan Takens has had on our district is truly immense. When I entered the district in 2009, there were many areas in our district where people weren't trusting each other, or working together well. Our sense of collaboration as a team was broken for various cultural reasons. Dan helped to lead the charge where our staff could work together and put students first. Through the years, we have watched our students build success stories in so many different ways, and the opportunities so many students have had is due to a team of educators working together under Dan's leadership."

**Scott Joseph**, BCHS Principal

"Mr. Takens was exactly what this district and community needed at the exact right time. There was a much-needed shift in philosophy and foundation. That shift is one focusing on building relationships! Not just building positive relationships with students, but with ALL staff members and those in the community. Mr. Takens has been a perfect example of this and has made it a priority. Not only has Mr. Takens been an amazing leader and "boss," but has also been a friend to all he has met. He has always made it easy to talk to and has always been sincerely concerned and shown interest in life in and outside of school. Mr. Takens will be missed, and I will personally be forever grateful for his leadership, friendship, and example to ALL in the Byron Center community and beyond!"

**Matt Amo**, Teacher

"From the first day I met Dan, he always wanted to make sure that everyone he came in contact with was taken care of... in school, at home, on the field, or on the stage. He cares about everyone in the community, and he has always taken the time to connect with them. His positivity and go-get-em attitude are infectious!"

**Jeff Wierzbicki**, WMS Principal

"Dan's impact on this district will last far longer than most of us! He makes us feel like we are home. Dan has an incredible talent to remember small things about each person he meets. With that gift, he makes people feel special and appreciated, and that we belong. Through the touch he has on the community, the schools have become a strong family and a major influence on the community. We are blessed to have worked with him."

**Stephanie Boyce**, ECC Director



"Dan will leave a lasting legacy in Byron Center because of his passion to see every student reach their fullest potential in academics, fine arts, and athletics. His ability to connect with people and remember names and details has made his superintendency a very personal one. He will surely be missed and referred to for years to come as BC continues to build on the foundation he has set."

**Jolynne Dobson**,  
Countryside Principal

"I feel that Mr. Takens has made a huge impact in Byron Center over his tenure. To me, I have always felt a strong connection with him because of his caring heart. He knows EVERYBODY and all of their family! The relationships he has with all of the Byron Center staff and students are amazing, and you don't see that everywhere. He is always taking time to make it out to sporting events, attend different school events, and even play Santa for our elementary students. Byron Center is thriving in many ways because of Mr. Takens' dedication to the district. Dan will be missed tremendously, and I wish him luck in his future endeavors."

**Tara Kiel**, Teacher

"Dan has cemented his legacy in the positive school culture that exists in BCPS. Dan has modeled a student-focused philosophy that has carried through to principals, teachers, and support staff. On a personal level, Dan connects with people in a way that makes them feel valued and appreciated. He will be missed by many in BCPS, but we are happy that he will have an opportunity to share more of himself with his family and friends."

**Thomas Trout**, NIS Principal

# BYRON CENTER High School

## THIS SENIOR SOARS!



When BCBS senior Ta'Niya Lomax arrived at her job at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport one day last fall, she had no idea how special that day would be. Ta'Niya is a wheelchair pusher at the airport and while waiting for a customer to deplane she noticed that a teenage boy suddenly stopped and clutched his throat. Thankfully, Ta'Niya

had just learned CPR from her health teacher, Mrs. Ann Schuelke at the high school. She recognized the sign of choking and immediately sprang into action. After a few abdominal thrusts, the obstruction flew out of the young man's mouth, and he was able to breathe again.

The young man, along with his mother, expressed their deep thankfulness for Ta'Niya's quick, life-saving action and then Ta'Niya just got back to work.

A short time later, administrators at Prospect Airport Services learned of the incident and awarded Ta'Niya with the SOARING Award, which is named for Safety, Our customers, Accountability, Respect, Integrity, New ideas, and Growth.

Ta'Niya plans to go to college next year and major in music education. Congratulations, Ta'Niya!



## SPAIN & ITALY TRIP SUMMER 2021

The Spanish Department is traveling to Spain and Italy with EF Tours in June 2021. Students and parents are welcome to join this amazing tour. Highlights in Spain include Barcelona, Pamplona, Picos de Europa, Santiago de Compostela, and Madrid. In Italy, the cities of interest will be Rome, Pisa, Milan, and Florence. To learn more about this incredible experience, contact Kat Sibalwa at [ksibalwa@bcpsk12.net](mailto:ksibalwa@bcpsk12.net) or Laura Showers at [lshowers@bcpsk12.net](mailto:lshowers@bcpsk12.net).



## NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Welcome, Nathan Clophus, new Assistant Principal at Byron Center High School. Nathan and his family come to us from Louisiana and are quickly adapting to Michigan. His wife Karyn has family in the area and is originally from West Michigan. They have two children.

## NHS SAVING LIVES

The National Honor Society hosts three blood drives with Michigan Blood each school year. High school students make up the majority of those donating. The most recent drive results were awesome!

<b>Donor Goal:</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Actual Donors:</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Pints Donated:</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Impact:</b>	<b>240 patients receive life-saving blood!</b>



This group donated almost a full day supply for area hospitals! The blood collected contained all eight blood types, which is extremely rare. The next blood drive is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2020. The community is welcome to donate. Hours to donate for the community are from 8:00am – 2:00pm. Enter through the main office to sign in.

# WEST Middle School

## READING ACHIEVEMENTS



The culture of reading is thriving at BCWMS. Every time the 8th grade ELA students walk into their classroom, they have a visual reminder of the books they have read and the goals they continue to meet. When students finish a book, they add one link to a classroom book chain. Each colored link displays the name of the student

and the book they read. At the end of the school year, the chains will be disassembled and added to a drawing for gift cards—the more books read, the more entries students receive. And, because middle school students (and their teachers) are competitive by nature, a friendly competition between classes is taking place as students see whose chain is the longest.



## SERVICE MEMBERS HONORED

Students at West Middle School honored military servicemen and servicewomen by discussing the importance of our freedoms and rights we have as citizens. “Veterans Day is a great day to say thank you for all those who have served or are currently serving to protect our country,” said 7th-grade history teacher Ryan Molenkamp. On November 11, students in their history classes identified the different branches of military service. They discussed the importance of each branch and how they have played an essential role in defending our country’s freedoms.



## MATH INITIATIVES REALLY ADD UP

This year, WMS is changing it up in our math classes. The day after a unit assessment, students are given a chance to reflect on what they learned and what they may still be struggling with by going to other math teachers’ rooms. Even our math interventionist is getting involved! Some kids are getting small group help, some are getting extension lessons, and some are reflecting on the unit! It’s fun to see how the kids interact with each other from different math classes.



## GILMORE CAR MUSEUM ROAD TRIP!



WMS Art and STEM students visited the Gilmore Car Museum and traveled through time learning about the invention and innovation of the automobile. Students learned about the way design, engineering, and artwork come together to help shape various models and styles over the years. They had the chance for some hands-on experience with slot car racing. The Gilmore Car Museum is a great place to see the concepts learned in class put into practice, and the trip got students thinking about careers in the Automobile Industry.





## STUDENTS EXPLORE JOHN BALL ZOO



Students were randomly selected to attend a special program for STEM at John Ball Zoo this fall. Students learned about some of the technical aspects of running a zoo and had an opportunity to engage in designing a model for a specific animal at the zoo.

## 30 DAY KINDNESS CHALLENGE

Students at Nickels are participating in a 30 Day Kindness Challenge that involves thinking outside of themselves to spread joy and kindness in the lives of others. Students were challenged on morning announcements to do something nice, like write a positive note to their bus driver. Students also served the community in December to collect food for “snack packs” and “breakfast packs” for Hand2Hand ministries.



## THE STRING PROJECT

Students in Cindy Feenstra’s class participated in The String Project assembly, which began in January of 2018 in places all over the world. All people photographed hold the same simple string, which symbolizes our connection with people all over the world. For more information on this story and project, go to [www.schoolnewsnetwork.org/2019/11/05/mural-inspired-by-the-string-project-symbolizes-connection/](http://www.schoolnewsnetwork.org/2019/11/05/mural-inspired-by-the-string-project-symbolizes-connection/)



## AWESOME ART

For the fourth year running, students at Brown worked to create the most creative yearbook cover to grace the front and back of the 2019-2020 Brown Yearbook. This year over 400 students submitted entries before five winners were chosen by a panel of judges. This activity has grown over the years and the students have a great time submitting their pictures. First-grader London Williams won top honors and his picture will be on the front cover of the yearbook this year! Great job to all students who entered the contest!



## MONSTER DASH



The cutest Monsters were in attendance for the Monster Dash at Brown Elementary School! While the weather did not cooperate outside, the students had a great “dash” around the gym celebrating their school fundraising goal. The students wore their costumes and

PUP (Parents Undertaking Projects) provided t-shirts. All of the proceeds raised by the Brown Community will go directly back into the classrooms to support the students and teachers throughout the year! We are thankful for the amazing support! Even the crossing guards took part in the holiday fun!



## VETERANS DAY

The Brown Elementary choir, directed by Mrs. Heather Baar, was honored to be asked to sing at the rededication of the WWII Monument at the Byron Center Township Offices. The students did a wonderful job singing at the ceremony. Inside Brown, students created hundreds of cards and notes for Veterans at the local Byron Center nursing homes. It was a great way for students to see their impact and give back to the community!



# COUNTRYSIDE Elementary

## VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

Countryside students celebrated Veterans Day this year by hosting an assembly to honor the veterans who are connected to Countryside families. Students wrote poems to the servicemen, and the 3rd and 4th-grade Celebration Choir sang several songs. Students also wrote cards that were delivered to veterans at a local restaurant.



## WALK-A-THON FUNDRAISER

The Countryside staff and students are so grateful for the support they received from parents and family members. They raised considerably more than their goal. As a result, Ms. Dobson, Countryside principal, had to kiss a pig during the celebration assembly.



## COUNTRYSIDE GIVES BACK: AMAZING LOVE SCHOOL

Countryside Elementary students have been working diligently to support families in Uganda. They have collected Pennies for Pigs in order to raise money to purchase piglets for the families at the Amazing Love School. The winning class was able to attend a special viewing of Charlotte's Web in celebration of their hard work.



# MARSHALL Elementary

## NATURAL ARTISTS

Mrs. Lawton's art students creating beautiful artwork with all things found in nature at Marshall Elementary.



## READ WITH A FRIEND



## OUTDOOR FUN AT RECESS



## TEAMWORK!



## VETERANS DAY

The student council organized a program to honor our veterans on Veteran's Day.



## MARSHALL CHOIR INSPIRES

Marshall's 4th-grade choir did a GREAT job singing the National Anthem at the Grand Rapids Drive game!



## Preschool Open House

Byron Center Public Schools

JOIN US ON JANUARY 16, 2020

6:00 – 7:00 PM

Fall 2020 Preschoolers & Parents  
Byron Center Early Childhood Center (ECC)  
2300 84th Street SW  
Byron Center, MI 49315

Inclement Weather Make-up  
Thursday, January 23, 2020



OUR GOAL IS TO PREPARE EACH CHILD FOR KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS!



Preschool Registration  
2020-2021  
Starts: February 3  
at 9:00 am  
Look for the link at  
[www.bcpk12.net](http://www.bcpk12.net)



Byron Center Public Schools  
2300 84th Street SW, Byron Center, MI 49315  
(Entrance is east of Byron Center Ave)  
Phone - (616) 878-6130  
Fax - (616) 878-6164  
Check us out at: [www.bcpk12.net/district/early-childhood/](http://www.bcpk12.net/district/early-childhood/)

# NUTRITION Services

## MANY BENEFITS OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST

### Why Choose School Breakfast?

School breakfast gives children a positive start to their day. Students who eat breakfast have a better attention span, making daily classroom learning much easier. When standardized tests are given, every school principal in America encourages students to “get a good night’s sleep and eat a good breakfast.”

This should not only be for standardized test days; students need breakfast every day to absorb new information and skills. Studies also show that when students eat breakfast, positive classroom behavior is a result. All students in this classroom benefit due to fewer discipline interruptions. Another benefit received due to eating school breakfast is the decrease in student absences and tardiness.



### Breakfast at School is Affordable!

If your child receives Free or Reduced lunch benefits, school BREAKFAST IS FREE! The cost for breakfast is \$1.25 at the elementary and Nickels Intermediate schools and \$1.50 at West Middle School and the High School. Breakfast selections include whole grain-rich items, fresh or canned fruit, 100% fruit juice, and low fat or fat-free dairy products. At the High School, a hot breakfast item is also a daily choice. You cannot find a delicious, healthy breakfast at such a low cost anywhere.

The BCNS Nutritional Service appreciates the understanding and support of students and staff as we wait for our new High School kitchen and cafeteria to open. Until then the HS Wrestling Room has been transformed into a serving and prep area.

## GRAB ‘N’ GO

West Middle School has added a Grab’n’Go line! These lunches feature a variety of sub sandwiches made on fresh-baked sub buns and delivered weekly for BCPS by GR Baking Company. These lunches provide all the components to make a complete lunch, with a large variety of offerings. Delicious and fast—what could be better?



## BCPS HUB NOW SERVES BREAKFAST

The BC High School is abuzz with our new HUB kiosk serving breakfast and featuring freshly brewed coffee, made to order espresso, plain and flavored lattes—hot or frozen, and many other delicious options including fresh fruit and yogurt breakfast smoothies, and parfaits! All students may get a complete breakfast at the HUB for only \$1.25, and those students who receive free or reduced school meal benefits are served a free breakfast at the new kiosk. BCPS food service practices policies to prevent overt identification. Please come check the HUB out!





# Season of Song

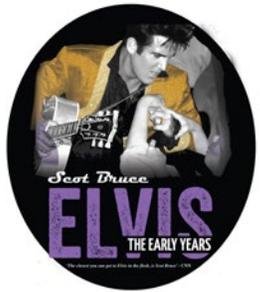
SPONSORED BY



Former BCPS Superintendent Phil Swainston and his wife, Luanna, with The Lettermen after their Oct. 11 performance.

The Van Singel's 2019-2020 **Season of Song** kicked off October 11 as fans of **THE LETTERMEN** gathered for a night of the band's classic hits. Many in attendance commented on memories the songs brought back and some also had a chance to meet and have their photo taken with the band! Then, November 30, **ABSOLUTE JOURNEY TRIBUTE** took the stage to recreate many of Journey's most popular rock hits. We delight in seeing our theater alive with patrons enjoying the shows we offer and are so thankful to our many community supporters that make it all possible.

## COMING IN 2020:



### Scot Bruce as Elvis

– Saturday, April 18 at 7:30 pm

Musician/Actor Scot Bruce celebrates what made **ELVIS** not only the King of Rock and Roll... but the King of Cool! Reserve your seats now to see the magic that made a generation swoon in the '50s and '60s, before the white jumpsuit, sunglasses, and the glitter of Vegas.

### Cool Jazz – Friday, May 1, at 7:30 pm



Chad Eby

Join us for a hot night of **COOL JAZZ** featuring Aaron Diehl and Chad Eby along with the nationally recognized Byron Center Jazz Ensembles. Diehl is a classically trained pianist and composer who has played in recent years with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Cleveland Orchestra. Eby is a widely acclaimed saxophonist/composer who has arranged more than 125 works for big band, small jazz combos, and chamber groups.



Aaron Diehl

## AHEAD IN THE ART GALLERY

The Gainey Gallery is open Wednesday – Friday from noon – 5 pm



January 10 – March 10, 2020

Featuring Byron Center Teachers Show, Mixed Media

Reception: Tuesday, March 10, 6:00pm – 7:30pm

March 12 – April 23, 2020

"Spring in Our heARTS" Arts and Motion Studios, Mixed Media

Reception: Sunday, April 5, 1:00pm – 2:30pm

April 23 – June 9, 2020

Featuring Artist Kim Gill

Reception: Sunday, May 31, 1:00pm – 2:30pm



## Van Singel Youth Theatre

Our youth theatre students will perform **FROZEN JR.** the weekend of June 5-7, 2020, and the excitement is already building among students and parents. Van Singel Managing Director Sara Bower has been meeting with parent groups at each of the BCPS elementary schools and is making final preparations before registration opens. Please check [www.vsfac.com](http://www.vsfac.com) for more information on registration and auditions as the new year begins. The program will be open to third through sixth graders although current second graders who participated last year may be eligible. The enrollment fee is \$175 per child, and registration is limited to the first 75 students who complete the enrollment process.



**BYRON CENTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
 8542 Byron Center Avenue SW  
 Byron Center, Michigan 49315  
 www.bcpsk12.net

Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Grand Rapids, MI  
 Permit No. 564



## BUS DRIVERS WANTED

**Great Pay & Paid Training**

**Qualifications:**

- Education: High School diploma preferred; required driving certifications by the State of Michigan
- Training and Experience: Previous bus driving experience preferred or PAID training provided by BC Transportation Department
- Demonstrated Technical Skills: Ability to maneuver large bus efficiently and safely
- Human Relations Skills: Ability to relate to students, staff, and community members

Call 616.878.6496 for more information. Apply online at [www.bcpsk12.net/district/transportation/](http://www.bcpsk12.net/district/transportation/)



## DIVERSITY IS BEAUTIFUL IN BC: WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE MAKES US STRONG!

BCPS is excited to roll out a new diversity initiative that includes a deeply committed group of teachers and administrators who meet regularly and receive training to build community for all students in Byron Center. The first goal of the group was to develop a mission statement for the district. After receiving input from many district stakeholders they agreed on the following: **Diversity is Beautiful in Byron Center: Creating safe spaces for ALL as we welcome, celebrate, and value our differences. We strive to listen, understand, and learn from one another to grow personally and enhance our community.**

The committee has at least one member from each school who shares the information with the rest of the staff members from their school. Staff members from all of the schools have shared the excitement by developing assignments, events, and even fundraisers to support this initiative.