

# The Paw Print

BCWMS

October 2020

## BC Virtual Helps Students Learn at Home

by KAYLA VIRGA

New to WMS this year is BC Virtual, which is a way for students to continue learning from home while still being a Byron Center Public Schools student.

Virtual learning can be very hard, but the website is very easy to use. Students who attend BC Virtual have the same classes as everyone else in school with some minor differences.

One advantage to this new learning option for students is the flexibility.

If a student gets behind in something it's not a huge deal because there is time to catch up the next day.

7<sup>th</sup> grade student Angel Lin participates in online learning. She said, "I really like the flexible schedule and it's probably my favorite thing about online learning!"

See **VIRTUAL**, pg. 2



*WMS Band students practice outside for class. Read more on page 4.*

## Hybrid Learning Starts School Year in New Way

By ALLYSON LaBEAN

Like many schools around the state of Michigan, Byron Center Public Schools started the year with less students in classrooms and hallways.

Due to COVID-19, schools could start the school in three ways: Virtual, Hybrid, or Full Face-to-Face using the Michigan's Return to Learn Roadmap for safety.

Byron Center Public Schools started the year using the Hybrid model. A Hybrid Schedule was a mix of normal school and online school.

There were 2 groups that the 7th and 8th grades were split into. The two

groups were Group A and Group B and they alternated remote and in-person learning.

The Group A students attended school in person Monday and Wednesday and every other Friday, then would be in online school for Tuesday, Thursday and every other Friday.

The Group B students would go to school on Tuesday, Thursday and every other Friday, then would go online for Monday Wednesday and every other Friday.

See **HYBRID**, pg.2

**VIRTUAL**, Cont. pg. 1

Lin added, "I wish that we didn't have a quiz almost every day, but besides that I like it! One thing that I would change is I would want more time to talk with the teacher! I have a lot of questions... but besides that it's great!"

X'zyana Edwards is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student in BC Virtual who also has a very good perspective of virtual learning.

WMS teacher Mrs. Collison is the advisor of virtual learning. She taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade History last year and now is the lead teacher for online students.

"Online school is very different, but I've grown to like it," Mrs. Collison shared.

"Personally, my favorite thing about online school is the Google Meets. I get to do one-on-ones with my students and get to know them all a little more personally. My least favorite thing about online learning is that all my students don't get the opportunity to work with teachers and interact with others. If I could change one thing, I would want to have more time with each of my students."

Virtual learning may look different than the traditional classroom, but students are able to work at their own pace to find success.

**HYBRID**, Cont. pg.1

This schedule existed for the first four weeks of school and allowed for half the number of students in the school to help with social distancing and other safety protocols outlined in the Return to Learn Roadmap.

8<sup>th</sup> grade student Madison Tewinkel thinks the hybrid school schedule was ok because she got to sleep in every other day and that helped with getting enough sleep plus there was more time to get your homework done. But she prefers the normal school schedule because there is less homework in her opinion.

Mrs. Stevenson, who teaches 8<sup>th</sup> grade English/Language Arts, has mixed feeling about the hybrid schedule. She said, "It brought me peace of mind knowing my students could be safely spaced out in class; however, I also understand that working from home can be really difficult for some students." She said that one positive thing about this school year is that she still gets to impact her students every day, even though it might look a little different.

Mrs. Wauben, who teaches 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math, also liked having the chance to have smaller classes so students could be distanced, but agreed that it was difficult to make sure everyone was on the same page when not everyone was at school at the same time.

The normal school schedule is where both group A and group B are back at school at the same time, so it's just like last year, but there are extra precautions to keep students safe from COVID-19.

For example, students and teachers all wear masks now. Students also have assigned seats at lunch and all of their classes. Teachers also clean the tables in the classes to help with safety and there are certain ways students are supposed to go in the hallway to help with the flow of traffic. Also, students have to fill out a form to leave the classroom and you are expected to be at least 6 feet away from each other when possible. For 8<sup>th</sup> grade student Abby Middleton, seeing her friends at school has been the best part of the year so far.

Even though this year started out different than last year, and may end different than last year, one thing that is the same is that it has been great to see friends and learn new things.



See more pictures of Virtual and Remote Learning on Page 5.

The Paw Print  
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Teacher Feature:

## BC Alumni & Teacher Brings Experience to STEM



by MERCEDEZ THOMPSON

WMS STEM teacher, Mr. Veldhouse, puts his past experiences to work when students enter his classroom and the workshop. There are many great teachers and Mr. Veldhouse stands out as one of them because he is always there to help whenever students have a question.

Some things students might not know about Mr. Veldhouse is he actually grew up in Byron Center and graduated in 1995. Instead of going to the high school we know today, his high school is what we now call Nickels Intermediate School! It is kind of cool to see how much our district has grown in the past years.

Some things that you could see Mr. Veldhouse doing out of school would be working on cars. He has a really old Bel Air car that he is still trying to restore and repair. He wasn't always the STEM teacher; he used to be a Science teacher and also taught History.

In STEM, one of the positive things that he enjoys seeing is when students create something that they didn't think they could ever do. He also likes to see the difference from a new group of students who have never run any tools before and compare their ability to use the tools at the end of the semester. Many students look like professionals and can run any of the power tools in the workshop.

Mr. Veldhouse has been married for 22 years, he has two kids named Cody (in 11th grade) and Dahlia (in 9<sup>th</sup> grade), and he also has a really nice bulldog named Daphne. He was born at his parent's home during a snowstorm which is really unique and he is not afraid of thrills. One thing he has done that can be scary is bungee jumping, which he says is really thrilling.

Some past jobs he has had before becoming a teacher are a farmer, a construction worker, and a factory worker. He uses these past experiences to help him teach STEM in the classroom because they all have a STEM connection.



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# Halloween's Changed Since it Started and Might Change Again

by SKYLAR PRUITT

Halloween is a day of candy, costumes, and pumpkins; it is a day near and dear to most children's hearts, but do you know where Halloween came from?

According to History.com, Halloween is believed to have originated from the Celtic festival of Samhain (Sow-in) celebrated by the Irish 980 BCE. In the 800's the Catholics in that area re-named the day All Hallows Eve, adding the idea of celebrating spirits. Then in the late 1800s to early 1900s Americans started advertising for things that were said to make the day more special, like pumpkin carving and candy. Now we see Halloween everywhere in the fall, used in tv shows and movies for children, making it something people look forward to every year.

This year's Halloween may look a bit different due to COVID-19. Because there are more health concerns, some students at the middle school think that there will be less kids trick-or-treating or even no trick-or-treating at all; others think that you may have to wear a mask and social distance.

8<sup>th</sup> grade student, Elaina Perez said she plans to dress up for Halloween as someone from the 70s and she thinks that not as many people will be out trick or treating due to COVID-19.

Most students surveyed say that they plan to dress up for Halloween but they still are unsure about whether to go trick-or-treating. And those who do say they plan to participate in Halloween share that their favorite parts are dressing up and getting candy.

7<sup>th</sup> grade student Izzy Smith said she plans to trick-or-treat (if it is allowed) this year and thinks the biggest difference will be using social distancing to help keep each other safe. When asked what her favorite part of Halloween was, she said, "Running around past dark."

Even teachers are thinking about this festive night.

Mrs. Tromp, who 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Strategies, shared that her favorite part of this time of year are the fall treats like apple cider and said, "My daughter will be trick-or-treating this year. Her costume will be a chicken."

Whether you go out or stay in, dress up or not, just remember no matter what you do for Halloween, have fun, be safe, and save some candy for later.

# Band Makes Music Outside

by PARKER DeWYSE

This year the school has been going through some major changes, and the West Middle School Band is no exception.

On October 5, the Health Department gave clarification on the regulations that the wind players would have to play outside due to COVID-19.

"I love playing outside! I just love feeling the breeze when it's windy and even feeling the cold sometimes. I like being able to look out at the field and trees. And I just like that it's outside in general," said 7th-grade percussionist, Skylar Hiemstra.

"Overall learning seems to go slower outside because the tools and resources I'm used to teaching with are not as readily available," Mr. Townsend, WMS Band director shared. "However, it was beautiful to be outside when the leaves were changing."

Not only has playing outside been a change, but there have been plenty of other minor changes, too. Recently, the 7th and 8th-grade bands have been given bell covers to cover the bells of their instruments for safety.

"The mask on the bell of my trumpet makes it hard to play," Connor Hummer remarks.

Originally, students had to play with special surgical masks that had slits in them. "Wearing masks is a big [change], but also in the beginning when we had to still wear our masks while playing," comments Audrey Wolfe.

"The word we have been saying a lot is 'perseverance.' Band students have been overcoming and very flexible with the minor adjustments we have needed to make amidst the troubles caused by COVID," said Mr. Townsend.

After a week of playing outside, the Health Department gave permission for the wind students to play inside the building during class.

As more changes come and go, the WMS Band will be prepared for the next new thing!





## Virtual and Hybrid Remote Learning: WMS Students Share Moments of Learning from Home



Movie Review:

## *Ivan* Shares Heart, Talent, Friendship in Family Film

by GIANNA DESGRANGES

This past summer I had the opportunity to watch this movie which was released August 12, 2020, and directed by Thea Sharrock. *The One and Only Ivan* tells the story of Ivan, a silverback gorilla, who was forcefully captured by humans when he was young. Torn away from his family, Ivan was held captive in a circus located in Tacoma, Washington, and stayed there for over 20 years. Ivan's story was created into the book, *The One and Only Ivan*, written by Katherine Applegate, published in January of 2012. After 8 years, the book was finally created into the movie released this August.

In relation to the book, the movie opens to Ivan in his final years at the Big Top Mall, accompanied by his friends, Bob, a talkative stray dog, Stella, an aging elephant, and Julia, the janitor's daughter.



As Ivan performs everyday for the circus, thumping his chest, and roaring, Mack, ( played by Bryan Cranston) the owner of the mall, starts to realize less and less people are coming to the shows. One day, Ruby arrives. Once Mack learns Ivan can draw, Ruby, the small, curious little elephant, just becomes another one of the acts, who dreams of living in the wild. Although Ivan focuses on the show, and making his drawings, he wants Ruby to have a better life out in the wild, instead of in a cage.

Ivan's journey from confinement to freedom serves to teach us a valuable lesson; every living soul should be wild and free, no matter what, or who you are.

Book Review:

## Take This Read Home

by LANA SCHELL

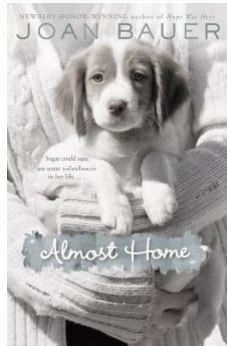
In the book *Almost Home* by Joan Bauer, you meet Sugar Mae Cole and her mother Reba Cole, both abandoned by Sugar's troubled father who may never learn what love really is.

Sugar and Reba live in Round Lake, Montana. Sugar is a sweet girl who is strong and has a gift to write. Reba is a southern belle with real grit. Sugar and Reba are as happy as can be. They live in a nice house with a front porch that Reba loves to sit on and watch the world. When Reba can't pay the bills, everything from there begins to slip. They are about to lose their house when Shush, the pup, appears and a smile on Sugar's face emerges and that is the beginning of a never-ending friendship.

Joan Bauer brought Sugar Mae Cole to life through the writing. She made it so the reader could empathize with Sugar, feeling the sadness and happiness of her life.

This has more hints of sadness than *Close to Famous*, another book by the author. *Almost Home* is full of ups and downs.

Will a family torn by others be put back together or will it stay broken forever? With hints of loss, love, and family, this book is a true masterpiece thanks to Joan Bauer.



Game Review:

## Magical Fun in *Hogwarts Mystery*

by PARKER DeWYSE

Never got your Hogwarts acceptance letter? Now you can!

In the game *Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery*, players can become the world's most powerful witch or wizard!

The game is very interactive. Players can befriend classmates from their own House, and even from other Houses, too!

The actual storyline is brilliant, taking place about 10 years before Harry Potter is even at Hogwarts. A few familiar faces from the original series, such as Bill and Charlie Weasley and Professor Snape are also there mixed with brand new characters, like Rowan Khanna and Skye Parkin.

One really enjoyable thing is that players can join clubs and earn prizes for leveling up! Adopting mythical creatures and other ways to take part in side quests and duels are available all in one iOS and Android game! There's always a twist on every corner, and the way you handle it will change your future.

Ready to start a magical adventure?

## Arrows Needed, Even If Hard to Follow

by DIANA ESPARZA

New to WMS this year is the use of arrows to help direct students during passing time in the hallways. There has some controversy about having to follow the arrows in the hallways, but I believe that we as a school and a community should try our best to follow these rules that have been set to keep students and staff members of WMS safe and out of harm's way.

Throughout out the school day, on my way to class or on the end of the day, I sometimes see students going the wrong direction from the one-way arrows.

I also have to admit that sometimes I can be one of those students because I find it a lot easier to

get to a certain class that way instead of having to walk around the whole school to get there.

It might be more work to always follow the arrows and that can be frustrating or tiring to other students because in years past it was easier for students to get to classes quicker without having to take certain routes.

However, if we don't keep trying our best to follow these arrows and other safety rules, I think it will be much easier for students and staff to come in contact with each other and there will be a higher chance for students or teachers to quarantine or even have everyone go to remote learning again.

## Hybrid Offers Safe Solution

by MACILYNN SCHAFFER

Hybrid learning is a great compromise that provides both in-class help to students and keeps students safe.

However, it can cause quite a bit of confusion among students and teachers. For example, teachers have to memorize the names of the students in two first hours, second hours, etcetera while remembering what days they are in school. This can be very stressful and confusing.

From another perspective, students have to work from home on some days. This can be an issue because this adds the factors of common distractions of things such as family members and pets. This can cause problems because the flow of students' learning can be disrupted. Students' grades can suffer greatly from this. To add on, some students may be divided from their friends due to the every-other-day policy.

While this policy keeps the members of the Byron Center school system safe, many students may become discouraged or lonely. On the other hand, hybrid learning allows the interactions between students to be closely monitored allowing the spread of germs to be followed in case if a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19.

This is crucial because it ensures that if needed, any person that is infected can be placed under quarantine. In conclusion, both the students and staff will take a few hits because of hybrid learning, but is it worth it to keep our staff in students safe and healthy?

I say yes.

## Backpacks Prevent Problems for Students

by MERCEDEZ THOMPSON

Being able to carry backpacks around school from class to class and in the lunchroom benefits students.

I think it benefits us as students because it has resulted in less tardiness. Now, by being able to carry your bag with your everywhere, you don't have to go to your locker in between classes because you have everything you need on your back and carried with you.

This also prevents students from forgetting things and leaving work in lockers. Instead of going back and forth if you forget anything, all of what you need is right on your back.

This makes things way more efficient for me and probably a lot of students enjoy not having to use lockers.

Last year it seemed like someone was leaving the classroom to go get something from their locker every 30 seconds; now that you don't have to use lockers, people can't forget things and that results in less distraction in the class and it makes things quicker and easier for everyone.



## WMS Athletes Are Ready to Play

by: DIANA ESPARZA & HANNA PULAWSKI

COVID-19 is having a big impact in sports this school year. Two ways it has affected students is delayed try-outs and practices. By the end of September, students started sports back up again for the season.

Students are excited to be able to finally start their sports once again, knowing everyone is taking major precautions to keep students safe while competing in athletics.

An example of this is some sports require students to wear masks while practicing or still staying a safe distance apart from each other, even if outside.

7th grade football player Hunter Pulawski said, "They made us wear a mask under our helmets at all times, even if we were out of breath from running, also while in groups when my coach was talking to our team, we have to stay farther than six feet apart."

Ms. Day teaches English Language Arts at WMS and is also a Cross Country coach. When asked about what has changed from prior years and she responded with, "COVID-19 has affected middle sports in many ways. I think our biggest takeaway from this season is appreciating that we get to have the season. While there are things we have had to change, it has been worth it to experience the season. Practice begins very differently this year. Each player has a dot painted out on the field. The dots are 6 feet apart so we can socially distance. Races have a runner cap, only allowing 70 total runners per heat which means

more heats/races. The kids are having a great season. We are leading the conference right now, heading into our final two races."

There are many ways coaches are trying to keep athletes safe both at practice and during game days.

8<sup>th</sup> grade Cross Country runner Colton Standorf said, "Whenever we go to practice, the first thing our coach does is take our temperatures and we all have to stay 6ft apart when we are not wearing our masks."

Daphne Ball is also an 8th grade member on the Cross Country team. She said, "We first have to start running 6ft apart and when we are running, we have to wear our mask which makes it very hard to breath."

Some things that have also changed are the way that students communicate with each other.

In years past students would have the chance to talk with their friends while doing sports but now since we have to wear masks, they communicate less with one another and the distance doesn't help with it either.

However, these precautions are necessary if we want to continue doing the sport and staying safe.

COVID-19 has had a big impact on sports and changed the way we experience them while participating in certain extracurricular activities.

How has COVID-19 impacted you and your participation in sports?