



# The Paw Print

BCWMS

October 2019

## FlexiSCHED Assists All at WMS

by BROOKLYN  
SCHUTTE

Most of the seasoned 8th graders have noticed a change in how we do FLEX here at WMS.

Our school has adopted a new way to sign up and it's called FlexiSCHED. FLEX is a time on Tuesday and Thursday to get extra help.

If you're a 7th grader, you're probably wondering, "What in tarnation did everyone do last year for FLEX?" Good question!

Last year, to schedule a FLEX period with a teacher, all you had to do was simply email them.

As you can imagine, this was messy. Kids were running around everywhere, emailing multiple teachers, and then deciding that they wanted to go somewhere else, without telling anyone. See **FLEX**, pg. 2



Photo by Kayla Meredith

## New Language Offers New Learning for 8<sup>th</sup> grade Students

by KAYLA MEREDITH & MIA  
RUSH

Hallo!

German is the official language in six countries, with about 220 million people in the world who speak it. Europe is where it is mostly spoken, so if you are planning a trip over to Austria or Switzerland, this language might come in handy.

Byron Center Public Schools has recently added a German to the language classes being taught in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades. This new class is being taught by Mrs. Finkbeiner.

The other foreign language taught is Spanish. At WMS, this is taught by Ms. Monk.

Both classes are a year-long and offered for High School credit.

Having an opportunity to take a foreign language can help students expand opportunities for learning outside of Byron Center.

Many students, such as 8th graders, Natalie Holmes and Aubrey Larobardiere, plan on studying abroad in Germany; for them this new class is perfect.

See **GERMAN**, pg.2

**FLEX, Cont. pg.1**

Now with FlexiSCHED, there is a schedule for you to access, showing you exactly where you are supposed to go and which teachers can take you.

This makes scheduling and going to the right classroom easier for students.

8th grader, Kailen Herin, said, "It's more organized than the email system we used last year."

It also makes it easier for teachers and helps keep track of where students are supposed to be, which makes it safer.

According to Ms. Monk, the Spanish teacher, "First and foremost, I think it addresses the issue of safety, because it is a system that addresses the accountability for where students are."

However, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student Mason Dennis, voiced the concern emails are not always working for students to know where to go.

We were informed that this would be a function the program would be equipped with, but on the first week of using FlexiSCHED, this feature was not fully working.

This has been mostly fixed. If students don't know where to go, try checking FlexiSCHED.

Other than early email difficulties, FlexiSCHED is great at getting students to go where they are supposed to be.

If students do not go to the assigned classroom, Assistant Principal Mrs. Kanitz made sure to inform us in an email the consequence: "...if you do not report to where you are supposed to be for FLEX, you will receive a detention. Attendance is being taken."

FlexiSCHED is certainly an upgrade to some of the chaos of FLEX last year and useful to all at WMS.

**GERMAN, Cont. pg.1**

Mrs. Finkbeiner said they have a lot planned, including learning ABCs, numbers and greetings, then introductory conversations and personal descriptions (personality and appearance).

"Then we cover family, pets, and free time activities. The third unit is about countries/capitals, languages, and nationalities around the world," she added.

The second semester is also chock-full of information, including cultural differences/holidays and describing the weather.

Mrs. Finkbeiner wants students to finish the classes with success, adding, "The big focus for the students is on proficiency... Focusing on proficiency means that I am looking at what the students are able to produce and understand holistically rather than picking things apart or simply looking for errors and grading for points."

As you can see, she really cares about her students and their grades.

She also said, "I love working at West Middle School, even if it's only for the last hour of the day this year. All of the staff and teachers have been very friendly and helpful, and all of the students I have met are hard-working and super sweet!"

One of her students, 8<sup>th</sup> grader, Aubrey Larobradiere said, "I enjoy German class very much."

8<sup>th</sup> grader, Sarahi Huerta said, "I enjoy German class sometimes. If I had to rate German 1 through 10 on how hard it is, it would be a 10. German can be very frustrating to me because my tongue has trouble allowing me to say some of the words."

German is said to be one of the hardest languages to learn; famous author, Mark Twain once said, "A person who has not studied German can form no idea of what a perplexing language." Yet that does not mean they don't have fun. Most students expressed that they have fun in German, but it is still a challenge.

The new German class is a great addition to our school and it opens several doors for students in means of communication.

In conclusion, it is Wunderbar!



The Paw Print  
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Teacher Feature:

## Students are New Teacher's Favorite

By CAITLYN MATHIESEN

Who considers herself a Ravenclaw, an animal lover, and helps kids as a teacher and coach?

In August, Ms. Utting was welcomed as a new teacher at BCWMS.

She teaches U.S history to the 8th graders and she also coaches Cross Country at the high school; she will be a familiar face for WMS students when they move up to the high school after their two years at WMS.

Ms. Utting enjoys animals. She has one dog, which is a sheltie named Noah. Her favorite animal is an elephant.

Ms. Utting speaks a small amount of Spanish and German, which are both taught at WMS - so if you have her as a teacher, you can test out your communication



skills with her.

Her favorite part of teaching at WMS is the students. She said she loves how willing students are to work towards learning new things and how excited we are for new challenges. She also said we have some amazing ideas to contribute.

If she wasn't teaching History, she would want to teach Journalism.

When asked what inspired her to teach, she said, "When I was in fourth grade, my history teacher really made school come alive! And I want to continue that with my students."

## Students Start School Year with 'Hello'



*"Start with Hello Week" was an opportunity for students to meet new people and start the year at WMS by expanding their friend groups. This week was a part of a national push to promote kindness started by the Sandy Hook Promise.*

*Some of the events included a graffiti wall, photo booth, and sitting with your month's birthday at lunch.*

## Writing Warm-Ups Could Lead to Winning

by MIA RUSH

Most students may think about writing warm-ups as just another chore to do in school. Others love it because it takes up time otherwise spent staring at a page in a book. But for some people, these warm-ups can be the seeds of a new story for the Scholastic Writing Awards.

Citlali Esparza, 8th grade said, "I actually enjoy writing warm-ups because I get to be creative and I get to be crazy with my writing."

Ava Putnam, an 8th grader, agrees with her.

"Writing warm-ups engage us and open our minds. They let us be as creative as we can be, which is good for us. Honestly, writing warm-ups are underrated and should be more appreciated by the students at our school," she said.

Zach Ryan, an 8th grader, said, "I like writing warm-ups when we aren't confined to writing something we don't want to write, like themes. I like them when we can use our imagination."

8<sup>th</sup> grade student, Holden Leifer said, "I think writing warm-ups are a good way to show your creativity and express how you feel."

Many 8th graders think that writing warm-ups are a fun thing to do.

Ava Putnam uses the writing warm ups to generate ideas for Scholastic Writing Awards, which is an annual competition that starts in our regional area before Gold Key winning works compete nationally. We have had several students receive awards over the years, with a National Silver Medalist in writing from Mrs. Stevenson's class in 2017.

"I think the warm-ups are very important for us and useful if you want to use them later on, maybe like I used one of mine for a Scholastic (Award)," Ava said.

The Scholastic Awards also include Visual Arts. WMS has had 10 National Medalists in Art and Writing since 2008 and 5 students have been able to attend the ceremony in New York City. The deadline to submit work is December 12<sup>th</sup> and more information about the competition can be found by asking your teacher and at [www.artandwriting.org](http://www.artandwriting.org).

Writing warm-ups are a fun and productive way to kick-off English, and it might even give you a chance to go to New York.



## Collaborative Art is Creative Eye-Candy

by EMMA WHEELER

After School Art started the year working together to create one sweet piece of art!

Students had to make a food-related piece in the "Feast for the Eyes" competition at the Downtown Market in Grand Rapids, MI. The work created had to either have food involved in it, or look like food.

This year, the After School Art kids made an ice cream cone that is a hot air balloon, with rats riding below it. They used candy wrappers, cardboard, paint, felt, celluclay, yarn, and pasta letters to make it.

When asked her favorite part about the project, 8th grade After School Art student Brooke Greenman said, "I like the candy wrapper part of it. It is a very detailed portion of the project."

Cullen Brownell is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student that has been in After School Art since 7<sup>th</sup> grade; he was asked his favorite part and he said working together to make something awesome was the best.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in After School Art all get to put their own ideas into it, and get creative.

Art Teacher, Mrs. Campbell said, "I like that we started the year with something everyone contributed to. Last year we got to exhibit our ArtPrize piece in the Downtown Market, so it's fun that our piece this year this gets to go there, too."

This art piece has everyone's different ideas in it, and everyone got to help in some shape or form. It's a very awesome and amazing piece, and they hope you like it as much as they do.



## Sweet Show Streams on Netflix

by MADISON BARNARD

Do you think of baking as a hobby? Or do you think it as a competitive sport?

Either way, it is fun for the whole family!

In the Netflix tv series, *Sugar Rush*, it is about four teams of two, baking in three rounds of competition: the cupcake round, confection round (Cookies/Candy), and the cake round.

During the cupcake and confection rounds, teams have a total of 3 hours to get both done, and the leftover time gets banked into the cake round. This is where they have 3 or more hours to make their cake. Everything they make is decorated or flavored to a theme the hosts have chosen.

The three main judges are Adriano Zumbo (an Australian cook), Hunter March (the host of *Sugar Rush*), and Candace Nelson (the founder of Sprinkles Cupcakes, which is the world's first cupcake bakery).

On each episode, there is a guest judge, that matches the theme of the cupcakes, confection, and cake rounds.

If the baker wins, they receive a grand prize of \$10,000.

Whether you can bake or not, this sweet show is one to stream with friends or family.

## Halloween Safety for All this Fall

by LYSSA SMITH

Safety while in public should always be a priority, especially when it is dark out and you may be traveling to houses you don't know. Sounds strange? Not for Halloween.

Here are some Halloween safety tips before you get your friends together to Trick-or-Treat.

First, think about your costume. Wear bright colors because it gets dark at this time of year. If you wear bright and reflective colors for drivers to see you when you are crossing the street, it might prevent accidents. Also be sure to stay on sidewalks of well-lit streets.

Going in a group is safest. If you are an older brother or sister, you could walk the younger child up to the door while you stand on the sidewalk or hold their hand up

to the door. Ringing the doorbell can also help because some Halloween decorations can scare little kids and give them nightmares.

If you are not an older sibling, you can always travel with groups of friends because there is power in numbers. Stay in a big group of people and do not split up. Always have a phone on you if you are not with an adult and only go to houses with the porch light on. Make sure not to go in stranger's homes.

Finally, always check the candy when you pick it out of the bag to see it is completely sealed. If not, then do not eat it because it could be contaminated.

If you follow these safety tips, you are sure to have a fun time this Halloween.

## Universe is Out of this World



by JOLIENNE SCHUTTE

*Steven Universe: The Movie*, which came out in September of this year on Cartoon Network is a movie for the whole family with a rating of 10 years and up. It also has 100% on Rotten Tomatoes, along with a five-star rating on Common Sense Media.

It wasn't in the theatre, but it can be watched on the Cartoon Network channel and can be bought On Demand, Amazon Prime Video, YouTube, Google Play Movies and TV, and Vudu.

Some parts of this movie may be hard to understand if you haven't watched the show *Steven Universe*, but it does feature a musical number covering key plot points and characters from the show.

Of course, it does not explain everything, but you can get an idea of how the world works from the movie. This takes place after the main character, Steven, shows the tyrant rulers of the universe the error of their ways, dismantles their empire and has spread galactic peace.

The movie starts when he goes back to Earth to spend quality time with his friends. His relaxation is interrupted by a mysterious new villain whose intent is to destroy Steven and the Earth.

It is a story that explores themes like mourning, abandonment, independence, communication, and the ability to change for the better. It is a great movie full of beautiful songs, animation, and positivity.

# New Tables Change Lunchtime Culture

by LEA PRUS

Lunch is the best part of the day. We can all agree to that.

Why?

Students get to eat food and sit by some of our most beloved friends.

Ever since kindergarten, we've been saving spots and cramming our friends on the lunch benches, even if someone took their spot.

The new lunch tables make it very hard to do that.

With the new tables, you can only sit by a small group of people instead of sitting with

several of your friends.

We are constantly talking about inclusion and how we should make everyone feel included at school. It's very hard to do that when there are specific seats and it limits how many people can sit by each other.

On the other hand, the lunch tables are a lot better in the sense of looking new and not having any holes or being squeaky.

Other than some of their looks, I didn't see any major problems with the old lunch tables; in fact, I think they were

easier to put away.

Shouldn't the school be spending money on more important things like things for our classes?

I think the school is making a good effort to put things like this in students' best interests, but they should at least ask the students what they want first.

If they would've had students take a poll on old lunch tables vs. new lunch tables, I'm almost positive most of us would've said the old lunch tables are fine, no need to change them.

## Bus Rodeo Less Rowdy

by EMMA WHEELER

Bus rodeo. When most WMS students who ride the bus regularly hear those two words they think, hot, crowded, and it takes forever.

But the bus rodeo has changed a lot since last year, which may change a lot of negative feelings students have had about it from the past.

One major thing is it moved to the Nickel's bus loop.

Since even the beginning of the year, they have changed and improved the bus rodeo a lot; now the buses are facing the inside of the bus loop, where there is much more space, and less crowded.

You can easily walk to your bus, without having to walk across the entire bus garage to get there.

Some people think we should go back to the bus garage area for bus rodeo, but I think we should stay where we are currently, because the bus loop at Nickels is much quicker.

I think the Bus Rodeo we have currently will be good for the time being.

If they could find or build a bigger area so that it's not so compact, it would be good, especially if we need more busses because of the growing number of students in our school.

## Ways to WMS Success

by CITLALI ESPARZA

Now that I am in 8th grade, I can look back at my 7th-grade year and see that it was harder than it needed to be. Here are some pieces of advice to help this year's 7th graders make their first year at WMS a successful and fun one and hopefully avoid some of the things that can get in the way from doing your best.

First, a planner or a google slide showing what homework you have can help you always stay organized. By staying organized you know where things are and will not fall behind in your work.

Also, when you get assignments do not procrastinate. If you never have late or missing assignments, it won't pile up and cost you a grade.

One of the biggest things that helped me last year was having some kind of study group chat. Having a group chat with friends or with people in your class and asking them about homework can keep you updated and they could help you or help you study for assignments/tests.

The most important thing to do is ask for help. If you're struggling with a subject, ask a teacher for help. You can also go in for FLEX.

Finally, one of the best ways to have fun at WMS is to join extra activities or sports. Joining can be so much fun because you can make so many new friends.

So, make sure to stay on top of your work and try new things and ask for help when you need it.

## Cheer Rockets Students in Sport



by CITLALI ESPARZA

This year Byron Center's Rocket cheer team is better than it has been in years.

These girls meet on Mondays and some Wednesdays. They work on different kinds of cheer practice to get them ready for their sideline cheering and competitive season. Practice includes stunts, jumps, tumbling, and chants.

Perfecting techniques and learning new stunts are a big part of the work. Before they tumble, they practice their jumps. They also work on cheering.

Coach Justin leads this dedicated team. At the end of practice, the girls always tumble and work to get skills.

A flyer in 8th grade named Ellie Lanning said, "I like how supportive of each other everyone is and the stunts that we learn, and just how fun it is."

There are 12 girls on the team and competing is something many enjoy.

8th grader Victoria Rolff said, "I love cheering and working on my stunting for competition."

Mia Rush, who is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade back said, "I don't like cheering at games, but I love stunting and tumbling at practice."

Cheer is a great way to interact with your friends while having fun and learning new skills.

## Growth as Successful as Winning for WMS Coach & Runners

by MACILYNN SCAFFER

Our Byron Center Cross Country team has been working hard this season.

They run hard and have surpassed many expectations. Runners make goals at the start of the season and work hard to meet and move past them.

One of our runners, Layla Batrville said, "My favorite part of Cross Country is showing growth, and winning meets."

The Cross Country team is split into boys' and girls' teams. The first seven runners score for the team.

Our Cross Country team has 81 students and is led by Miss Day, who also teaches English/Language Arts at WMS.

When asked why she loves coaching Cross Country, she stated, "I love coaching because I get to see students fall in love with a sport. For running, it's great because it is a lifelong sport for so many athletes," adding, "I don't necessarily look for anything in an athlete. I look for characteristics to pull out of them. Some kids are what I characterize as quiet leaders, who lead by their actions while others lead vocally. My role as a coach is to help foster and bring out the best attributes of my athletes."

Students who participate in a sport get to show a different side of themselves that may not be seen in class or at school.

"Coaching gives me a chance to see kids in a different light. I get the opportunity to motivate athletes and help kids not only improve athletically but also improve who they are as people," she said.

In addition to coaching this sport for the last four years, she has also coached Basketball and Softball.

This year, the Cross Country team has been rocking it, with the girls' team taking six first place finishes and boys' team with four third place finishes and a first place victory. Even with the success of the season, there is a focus on how to grow and get better at running the courses.

"Every year I have different dynamics and groups of kids," Miss Day said. "This year, all 81 runners have improved on their 2-mile time, so yes I would say I have a good team this year. The girls and boys are running really well."

## Football Works to Win



By CITLALI ESPARZA

Football is a sport that many kids participate in all across Michigan, including students at West.

It also helps athletes make new friends and hang out with old friends.

Football takes not only concentration, aggression, knowledge, and athleticism, but also teamwork. Luckily, the football teams at WMS have all of that and more.

That's what makes them all great teams. This year there are two teams in 8th grade and two teams in 7th grade; both are called the orange team and the black team, based on school colors. These teams are selected at random.

They practice almost every day after school, with games on Wednesday and Friday. During practice they go over plays and strategy for the upcoming game.

8th grader Josiah Karnehm is on the black team. When asked what happened before a game and during practice, he said, "Before games we will sit in silence in the locker room or get speakers to play music and pump each other up."

The team has fun before the game, and try to get pumped up before the seriousness of the game starts.

Another 8th grader named Ryan Strickland on the black team said, "I like hanging out with my teammates and I also like the games."

Many players love to play and are sad the season is almost over.

The athletes strive to become better at this sport, having fun while catching wins on the field.



## Teamwork Beyond Court

by DIANA ESPARZA

Volleyball is a great way to improve teamwork and sportsmanship for girls at BCWMS.

It also helps these athletes make new friends and learn time management skills. This year there are 4 teams; 2 teams in 8th grade that are called A team and B team and 2 teams in 7th grade called the A team and B team.

For the players at BCWMS, the focus is on the teamwork both on and off the court.

Alex Barbour, a B team player for 7th grade said, "I like how it's a team effort. No one gets left out and no one gets less attention than others."

When asked what they do at practice, she said, "Some skills we do at practice are passing drills and then we knee serve and we will either work on hitting or passing, setting, and attacking the volleyball".

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade B team coach, Mrs. Barbour, is focused on players doing well, but also getting better.

"I like to watch the girls try to improve their skills after I've talked to them," she said.

Makayla Karel is also a B team player for the 7th grade team and describes volleyball as a great place to meet and find friends.

"I like working as a team and becoming friends with players on the team. I have nothing I dislike during practice," she said.

These teams work hard daily after school by playing the game and practicing on their volleyball skills. If you like making new friends and working in teams you should try-out for the volleyball teams next year.