

The Paw Print

BCWMS

October 2022

Involvement Leads to Success at School

by CARTER WILLARD & MYLEIGH COOK

Byron Center West Middle School takes pride in positive work ethic and student achievement, but how do students go about getting good grades and keeping up with class work?

There are strategies and methods to do well in school and keep up with assignments. Organization and remembering to follow through with expectations is an important part of success in school. Using planners like Google Calendar to keep track of assignments is a good way to remember to do what has been assigned in class.

If you want help with remembering everything you have learned, making note cards and other study guide materials is a good way to prepare for upcoming tests and quizzes.

See **SUCCESS**, pg. 2



Above: BC Spirit Day on Friday for Homecoming Week. More Spirit Week Photos on Page 4

Construction Adds Classrooms to WMS

by FIONNA VU, SULEIKY RAMOS, & LIVIA HOLWERDA

The new Intermediate School across from West Middle School was not the only place under construction this past summer. Recently, new classrooms were added to BCWMS.

The newly built spaces are on the first floor where there used to be empty spaces filled with some chairs and tables. Sometimes kids would go there to work or film a video, but now they have now been replaced with two new classrooms.

7th graders probably never knew about this, but the 8th graders

have noticed. The three World Language teachers, Mrs. Finkbeiner who teaches German and the Spanish teachers, Mrs. Sibalwa and Ms. Monk have moved into the newly built classrooms.

“This is my fourth year at West and my fourth time moving classrooms,” Mrs. Finkbeiner shared. German is only offered 6th hour at WMS and Mrs. Finkbeiner spends the start of day at HS where she teaches additional German classes.

See **NEW**, pg.2

SUCCESS, Cont. pg. 1

Teachers have ideas on how to do well in class and note-taking is an important habit.

8th grade Science teacher, Mr. Lacy said it is important to make note of key ideas from in-class assignments and to pay attention to the notes you have taken for completing study guides. The most important thing is making the time to study what you have learned in class. "I think the more time you spend doing any activity helps you improve," he said.

Another part of doing well in school is how you behave in school. Behavior can play a big part in how you score and do assignments. At WMS we have RISE and that stands for the behaviors Reach, Impact, Stand, and Empower. This can be a good reminder of how to behave in positive ways.

Mrs. Ryskamp, the WMS Choir teacher and Musical Director, knows what it is like to get a big group of kids working together and how important behavior is. Mrs. Ryskamp said, "Wellness shows up when we are all working in a respectful and safe place."

It is also more enjoyable for both students and teachers when everyone is being respectful in class and behaving with the expectations that we have at WMS.

"When teachers are teaching rather than disciplining, we are all in a much better place," Mrs. Ryskamp added.

When students are on their best behavior, it helps teachers have a more positive day, and actively makes everyone's day more enjoyable.

If there is one thing to think about for having a great year it is the choices you make because they reflect who you are. A person's true character is revealed in their choices and actions, especially when it seems no one is watching them. Making good choices allows you and the people around you to focus on the better stuff of life.

Making poor choices can get you stuck in negative consequences with discipline. So much time can be wasted there. Teachers and students enjoy each other so much more when everyone is focused on learning.

NEW, Cont. pg.1

"My first and third years, I borrowed another teacher's classroom during their planning. My second year and this year, I am sharing the classroom with the Spanish teacher who is at West for 1st and 2nd hour and the high school for the rest of the day. Since I have moved so many times, I have moving down to a science," she said.

Ms. Monk, who has been teaching Spanish in the same classroom for 10 years moved to the new space right before the school year started.

"After being in the same room for over 10 years, relocating was challenging. I knew I would miss my teacher neighbors, and it would be a lot of work," said Ms.Monk.

Ms. Monk's previous classroom was room 2102 on the second floor of the building. Now that she has moved, her classroom is on the opposite side of her previous room and on the first floor.

Right next door to Ms. Monk is Mrs. Finkbeiner's room, who shares it with Mrs. Sibalwa.

"I think this room feels similar to the other rooms, although I think each room has its own uniqueness. I love sharing a room with Mrs. Sibalwa and getting to decorate it for Spanish and German," Mrs. Finkbiener said.

Moving classrooms can be a lot of work. Teachers have to bring all of their materials, decorations, and anything else that was in their other classroom. The teachers shared it can be fun, too.

Mrs. Sibalwa shared, "I am able to reorganize and redecorate when I move, and it feels good to have a new space."

Even though moving is a lot of work, the teachers appreciate having a new classroom.

"It is nice to have a new space. I enjoy having a view of the trees instead of the parking lot. I also like having fresh bulletin boards. It's a lot like my old room, but feels renewed," shared Ms. Monk.

Mrs. Sibalwa said each room she has taught in at WMS has great memories with students because each is filled with the love of learning Spanish.

"This is the 4th room that I have been in at West Middle School, and I have loved them all," said Mrs. Sibalwa.

"I think this room feels similar to the other rooms, although I think each room has its own uniqueness. I love sharing a room with Mrs. Sibalwa and getting to decorate it for Spanish and German," Mrs. Finkbiener said.

As the year continues, students and teachers will begin to forget what it was like before the new classrooms were built and they will seem like they were always a part of our school building.

"It took some getting used to, but I feel like it is my own room now," stated Ms. Monk.

The Paw Print
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**Thank You
Parents At West
for your support**

Teacher Feature:

History Motivates WMS Teacher



by SULEIKY RAMOS, FIONNA VU, & LIVIA HOLWERDA

“Teaching has always been a passion of mine,” said Mr. Molenkamp. Mr. Molenkamp teaches 7th-grade History and you can see him walking in the halls talking to students and teachers. He has spent his entire 17-year teaching career at Byron Center Public Schools.

Mr. Molenkamp attended Grace Christian University as well as Cornerstone University, then he did his student teaching at Byron Center High School before he got his job as a teacher at West Middle School. He has been married to his wife, Candace, for 15 years and they have three children. His oldest son is Brayden, who is 12-years-old. Layla is 10-years-old and his youngest son, Dominic, is 8. His wife is a STEM teacher at Jenison Junior High School.

When asked about why he chose teaching as a career, he said that his own time as a student helped push him in that direction.

“I enjoyed my experience during school and I wanted to be able to help with kids,” he said. Mr. Molenkamp loves to teach about history because of the connections that we can tie between what has happened in history to what is happening today.

Back when Mr. Molenkamp was a middle school student, he used to read paper textbooks and answer questions on paper. “At WMS, students learn in a variety of ways (debates, activities, presentations, games) and I think it is a much better experience than what I had,” he said. One of Mr. Molenkamp’s favorite subjects is learning about ancient Greeks and the Olympics.

“Be an active learner. The more engaged you are and the more you participate in school including sports and programs outside the classroom, the more you will get out of it. Some of the most successful students are the ones that are always looking to be involved,” he said.

Outside of teaching, Mr. Molenkamp enjoys traveling, too. He loves going to the states out west and enjoys hiking and going to National Parks. He has also gone to the Upper Peninsula with his family, he has been there the last couple of summers. He also enjoys going to Florida with his family.

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Safety First for Fun Holiday

by DALANIE BARES & HAYLEY DICKEY

Halloween can be a fun time with friends, but being safe is always important. Whether it is making sure treats are safe or traveling in groups, WMS students have experience with ways to stay safe during this fun time.

“I trick or treat normally with my friends, every house, and come back around midnight. We go through and check all the candy, then keep it separate by one bin per sibling,” said 8th grade student, Axel Cramer.

Checking candy is important and has safety benefits. Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious. Be careful when giving children any treats that could be potential choking hazards such as chewy candies, peanuts, and hard candies.

Always walk on sidewalks or paths. Watch for cars that are turning or backing up. Never dart out into the street or cross between parked cars. Another suggestion could be not letting anyone go out in neighborhoods alone.

8th grade student, Paige Cunningham states, “I usually go with my dad, but this year I’m going with some friends; never alone.”

Before using face paint or make-up, do a patch test to see if your child is sensitive or allergic to something in the cosmetic. Even products labeled as “hypoallergenic” can still cause allergic reactions. If you are wearing a costume with masks, make sure it is easy to see and breathe with it on.

With these tips, everyone can enjoy a safe and fun time this Halloween.

Homecoming Spirit Week



Pajama Day Monday



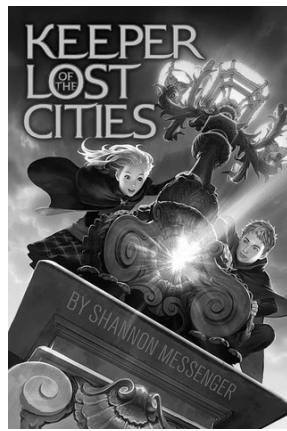
Crazy Sock Day Tuesday



Pink Day Wednesday



Twin Day Thursday

Book Review:***Keeper
Keeps
Readers
Going
Strong***

by McKENNA HUIZENGA

Keeper of The Lost Cities by Shannon Messenger starts off with a character, Sophie Foster, who is a telepath. Sophie cannot control human thoughts in her head, but one day an elf named Fitz comes to save her. Sophie realizes that there is a whole world of elves that humans never found. This realization sends Sophie on thrilling adventures with her friends, but it's not that simple. A group called the "Black Swan" is sending Sophie notes which are threatening her. Sophie doesn't know what to do.

When I read these books the first time, I loved them because they were thrilling and exciting. There are currently nine books in the series, but another is coming out. The books are wonderfully planned, with plenty of adventures and plot twists.

The best part is the fact that the series is going to have ten books. When I read the series and learned it was going to have ten books, I was super excited, especially with some of the cliffhangers these books have to keep the reader wanting more. *Keeper of the Lost Cities* has actually been such a big success that a movie is being released for Disney. There is no official cast or date for the movie yet, but it is confirmed. I personally love these books and would recommend them to just about anyone.

If you've ever read and enjoyed *Harry Potter*, *Percy Jackson*, or *The Land of Stories*, then this ten-book series should be next on your reading list. In case you are ever looking for a new series to try, consider reading *Keeper of The Lost Cities* by Shannon Messenger.

**Treat Yourself to
Last-minute Ideas**

by LIVIA HOLWERDA, FIONNA VU, & SULEIKY RAMOS

We have all probably had an experience with last-minute Halloween costumes. You didn't know what you were going to do, so you kept putting it off. Then, surprise: it's almost Halloween. There are a few different ways you can go about getting a last-minute Halloween costume.

First off, you can simply go to a store. If you aren't waiting until the *very* last minute, you can probably find a simple and cheesy costume at a store like Target or Party City. It doesn't matter what it is, and the stores usually have some simple options.

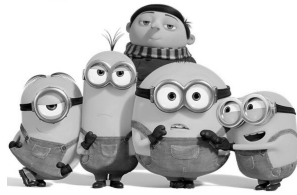
Another thing you can do is take a Halloween costume from a family member. If any of your parents or siblings had a Halloween costume that they decided to keep, then you can take it and wear it. Whether or not it is a simple or elaborate costume. As long as it fits you, you can still have fun with it.

Now, here are the more fun options. If you can't find one at a store or take one from your family members (or maybe you just don't want to) then you can usually find a way to make one. Homemade costumes are a treat. They are so fun to make and usually a lot more creative than a vanilla costume you might buy online. Also, if you don't need a last-minute costume, making yourself a costume could still be a fun experience. There are plenty of tutorials online that can inspire you and make the process easier.

Finally, another way to get a last-minute Halloween costume is to wear something else in your wardrobe. You can cosplay as any human character in a show, movie, book, or game if you have the right outfit. This is usually quite a simple thing to do, and if you want to, you can coordinate with your friends. Hopefully, you already have a costume ready this year, but if not, these tips should help you figure something fun and simple out to wear for Halloween, regardless of whether you are going trick-or-treating.

Movie Review:

Sequel Brings Back, Introduces New Chaotic Characters



by LB AUSTHOF

I give *Minions: Rise of Gru*, rated PG, three bananas out of five. It was one of the new movies this year. It had a pretty good plot with a good meaning; the jokes were solid, it had a satisfying conclusion, and it was more coherent than its predecessor. In this movie, our favorite (or least favorite, I won't judge) yellow friends are living with Gru and presumably have been since *The Minions Movie* ending wherein, he freezes the main antagonist and establishes himself as the minions new "big boss." The main storyline revolves around a supervillain group that Gru has always been a fan of called the "Viscous Six," who invites him to join them.

He tells the minions to stay at the house but being the embodiments of distracted chaos that they are, they follow him regardless. Gru enters the base of the "Viscous Six," where he meets the amazing and best character in the movie that is Dr. Nefario. Dr. Nefario encourages Gru to continue on his journey to become the greatest villain in the world, but when he meets the "Six," they are mean to him because he is a child. They tell Gru to talk to them when he finally steals something, so he steals this cool rock from them that they found in the jungle. They are all mad and promptly go after him, but he outruns them and hands the cool rock off to a minion to take back to his lab.

After the rock is stolen, the storyline in this film gets a little confusing and sometimes goes off the rails. For example, the minions decide to learn kung fu for whatever reason. It takes up like 10 minutes and is essentially padding to add runtime to the movie. Now, remember the minion Gru gave the cool rock to? Well, he's incompetent and traded it for a pet rock, which gets all of the minions fired. So, the minion gives Gru the rock, which leads to more movie-filler. As more silly hijinks ensue, it gets really dark for the last 10 minutes before the day is predictably saved.

All in all, this sequel is a pretty okay movie. It's not bad by any means, but it's not that good either. I give it three bananas out of five, with one of them for Dr. Nefario alone.

STEAM Students Travel to Gilmore Car Museum



Lunch Costs Should be Covered

by AUGUSTINA KUIPERS & JOSEPHINE PELL

Every school year brings many changes such as new teachers, new students, and new relationships. Not only this, but lunch costs money this year, to the discontent of many students at BCWMS.

As we know, hot lunch was free last year, due to the pandemic. This took the stress of lunchtime off of many families and their children. Because kids are legally required to attend school, we think they should be allowed to receive food as a part of their education.

Kids need to eat, but not every kid has access to healthy food. School is a great place for kids to offer that access.

Although Byron Center West Middle has many advantages that many schools do not have, but food might still be a struggle for some. Our school does have a system in place to help students who are unable to afford school lunch, but this is not available for everyone.

Some students who do have the money to buy school lunch might put eating second to other costly pleasures. They might skip out on lunch in order to

purchase something they think is more valuable. Not only does this lead to students not getting the proper nutrition their bodies need to function, but it is building a detrimental relationship between kids and food.

School is here to help prepare students for the future, and in order to do that both the school and the students need to be willing to put in the effort and work together. It is not fair to expect students to focus and perform to their teachers' expectations, when they are running on empty.

Food is what gives our bodies fuel and the ability to even just keep our head up in class. Think about this, would you rather do a 50-question test on an empty stomach, or a full one? Most of us can agree that having a full stomach on a test is much more preferable than an empty one.

Unfortunately, the reality for many kids is that they simply just don't get enough food to eat, and may cause grades to slip, assignments to be left overdue, and the classification of school life less than prime.

We hope our efforts to draw attention to this might make a change.

Treats are Expected for Middle Schoolers

by LB AUSTHOF

Ah, it's the time of the season when we ask the age-old question: should middle schoolers trick or treat? The answer, of course, is: obviously, yes.

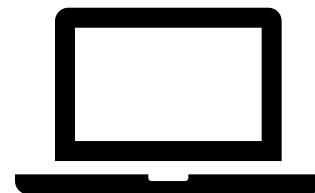
Middle schoolers are, after all, still kids and free candy is free candy (ask Mr. Purdy's 3rd hour). Who in their right mind would pass up a chance to dress up and run through different neighborhoods with their friends? Unfun people, that's who.

You get to go from door to door, scaring others you pass with your friends and get free candy! You can also amuse adults who answer the door with your spooky jokes or creative costumes (the adults will think it's funny). You get to behave like this because it's Halloween and a chance to go wild! After all, trick or treating is a fun activity for all ages and for everyone to enjoy.

Happy Halloween,
Byron Center!

Have an opinion you would like to share?

If you would like to share your opinion or join the Newspaper and Yearbook Club, contact Mrs. Campbell at jcampbell@bcpsk12.net



Players Make Teamwork Gameplay Priority

by ALIVIA NIELSEN

Winning is not the only focus for BCWMS Football.

According to Coach Dennett, who also teaches Science at WMS, “As far as record wise, we don’t worry about the record score. We try to prepare them for high school football. Winning isn’t the endgame.”

Football allows the players to work as a team and learn new communication skills. “It’s a different way to interact with students and teaches them very valuable lessons. It also teaches them how to work as a group,” Coach Dennett said.

8th graders, Carson Conrad (corner and wide receiver) and Jackson Baareman (running back and linebacker) both enjoy the game and being a part of the team.

“Just like when you score it’s like accomplishing something. And just by being around the other players,” said Carson Conrad. Jackson Baareman agrees.

“It’s just kind of nice after you make a play,” stated Jackson Baareman.

Playing football can be a risk, too. You have a chance of getting injured and then not being able to play.

Sam Emmett, (full back and linebacker) tells us what keeps him going out on the field with the risk of getting hurt is the fun he feels when playing.

8th grader Mason Triplet, the quarterback, said, “I just don’t think I’ll ever get hurt.”

7th grader Isaac Crittenden (wide receiver and cornerback) said, “I like to play football and I wanted to be a part of the team.”

Nick Ryan, another 7th grader who plays wing back and strong safety, had a hard time listing just one thing he likes about the game. When asked about what he liked he said, “Everything really. You can work as a team and get respect for doing it.”

Fall Sports Snapshots

Photographs provided by BCWMS Families

