



Discovery Elementary validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence



As part of the SOE process, Discovery highlighted their staff and faculty as their greatest strength. "We have amazing, committed teachers and staff," said Nelson. "I believe that the number one predictor of student success and success of a school is the effectiveness of the people, and our people are effective, phenomenal educators that are committed to ongoing growth."



Although the COVID-19 pandemic made the 2020-21 school year particularly challenging, Nelson and the SOE committee at Discovery pushed themselves to complete the rigorous validation process alongside their day-to-day duties.

"We know that doing the easy thing is not always the right thing to do," Nelson said. "But we believed that the right thing to do was to recognize and honor our school community's collaborative efforts, ongoing commitment to excellence and doing what is best for the students, families and the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose communities we serve."

According to Nelson, the SOE experience helped to emphasize a foundation of positive relationships at Discovery. "We often remind ourselves and each other of our belief that the students may forget what we taught them, but they will never forget how we made them feel while they are here. We want students to feel cared for, valued, loved, respected and important—because they are!"

Since the inception of MESPA's SOE program in 1986, 218 schools have earned the Minnesota School of Excellence validation. The validation remains effective for seven years, at which point schools may choose to reapply for validation.

Discovery Elementary School is one of three elementary schools in the state recently validated as a Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This prestigious honor was awarded to Discovery in September for its commitment to modern teaching and learning.

"Through the Minnesota School of Excellence (SOE) program, grounded in national research on high-performing schools, MESPA has created the premier opportunity in the state for validating excellence and a commitment to continual growth in a school community," said Jon Millerhagen, MESPA executive director. "This school improvement program examines the entire school community through six national standards, ensuring there is a holistic approach to creating a plan for future achievement and celebrating the unique accomplishments of each School of Excellence."

Tami Staloch-Schultz, chair of the SOE Committee, said, "It takes commitment and teamwork to honestly and thoroughly assess areas of strength

and at the same time identify a plan for continual growth. The SOE process asks the entire school community — parents, students, staff, administration and more — to reflect on and celebrate the collaborative work being done in school communities. Schools that receive validation have had important data-driven conversations about what a high-quality, modern learning experience should be for all students and have plans to make that learning experience a reality for many years to come."

Dr. Mathew Nelson is principal of the 260-student Discover Elementary. "It goes without saying that we don't do what we do for any kind of recognition, but this award to our educational community is appreciated," Nelson said. "In our profession, we are humbly committed to improvement in student progress and our communication with families as we work together to encourage more growth. This process has helped us continue in our ongoing improvement efforts while also allowing us to reflect on and realize that there are so many great things happening at Discovery Elementary that deserve recognition."

Just like our students, we learn more every day

As I write this column, it is hard to believe that we are already halfway through the first term of the 2021-2022 school year. It is so heartwarming to be among our amazing BHM school community again.



We had an amazing start to the school year in early September as we welcomed our incredible students back into our buildings. Smiles, high fives and even some hugs were all around as some teachers and students who had only seen each other on a small screen last year were able to be together in person. It was truly a moment of Bison Pride.

And yet, while the energy of being back in the classroom is exciting, we know that we are nowhere near the end of this pandemic. We continue to

hear the stories of how COVID-19 is impacting our state and country. But if there is one thing I have learned in my 30 years of school leadership, it's that every challenging situation must be assessed from a variety of data points, with a focus on decisions that are in the best interest of our students and local community.

Here in BHM, we continue to monitor the cases of COVID-19 among our staff and students. We follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Wright County Public Health (WCPH). We do this so that we are able to implement protocols and procedures that are most appropriate for our BHM school community. Currently, we strongly recommend, but do not require, face coverings in our school. We continue to implement additional safety protocols and mitigation measures, including cleaning and sanitizing, monitoring air quality and practicing safe distancing when able. (For details on our current

COVID-19 protocols, visit our website at bhmschools.org.)

We make district decisions with the best information available to us and consider what is in the best interest of our entire BHM family. We also know that no decision will make everyone happy. Much like when we develop a school calendar or allocate budget resources, we do what is best for the 5300+ students and 750 staff in our care. That being said, we are committed to continuously reassessing our COVID-19 protocols and decisions and, should situations change or if health officials provide us with new guidelines, we will adjust accordingly.

This is a challenging time for all of us. We will continue our efforts to keep students in school where they are able to engage and learn together. We are proud to partner with our families, staff and communities on this journey of making BHM schools the place for students to **dream, believe** and **achieve**.

Proud Of....

Those listed below were submitted by district staff and recognized by the BHM School Board for their special contributions and accomplishments.



The BHS FFA Market Team made up of Amelia Schmidt, Bridget Weese, Faren Bebeau, and advisor Mike Socha (FFA alumni), advanced to the semi-final round for the National FFA contest. The team is one of the top 18 teams in the nation for this Career Development event.



Congratulations to the Resource Training and Solutions Leadership in Educational Excellence Award recipients:

Susie Anundson
5th Grade Teacher
Parkside Elementary

Jenny Boldt
4th Grade Teacher
Hanover Elementary



Cherie Sanderson
English Teacher
Buffalo Community Middle School

Jason Swanson
French Teacher
Buffalo High School



Halloween Family Fun Events Saturday, October 30

Dress in costume if you choose and enjoy a day of Halloween fun!

ECFE BOO Bash

FREE & child friendly activities
1-2 p.m.

 Discovery Center – Room EC1

Trick or Treat Buffalo Merchants

2-4 p.m.

 Downtown Buffalo

Opening Doors (Adults with Disabilities) Halloween Dance

Cost is \$7

4-6 p.m.

 Discovery Center Gym

Registration is required for the ECFE BOO Bash and the Opening Doors Halloween Dance.

Register at bhmschools.ce.eleyo.com or call 763-682-8770 for more information.

Buffalo High School Presents *Into the Woods* - an epic fairytale about wishes, family and the choices we make


Come out and support your talented BHS theater students in their performance of *Into the Woods*!

The Brothers Grimm story follows a baker and his wife, who wish to have children; Cinderella, who wishes to attend the King's Festival; and Jack, who wishes his cow would give milk. When the baker and his wife learn that they cannot have children because of a Witch's curse, the two set off on a journey to break the curse. Everyone's wish is granted, but the consequences of their actions return to haunt them later with disastrous results.

Performance Dates:

November 18-20, 7:30 p.m.

November 21, 2 p.m.

 BHS PAC (Performing Arts Center)

Tickets available at the door:

Students \$4

Adults \$6

First Day of School

We loved seeing everyone's faces back in our buildings and the first day of school energy! We can't wait to see all that these students will accomplish this year.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November

American Indian Heritage Month

November 11

Veterans Day

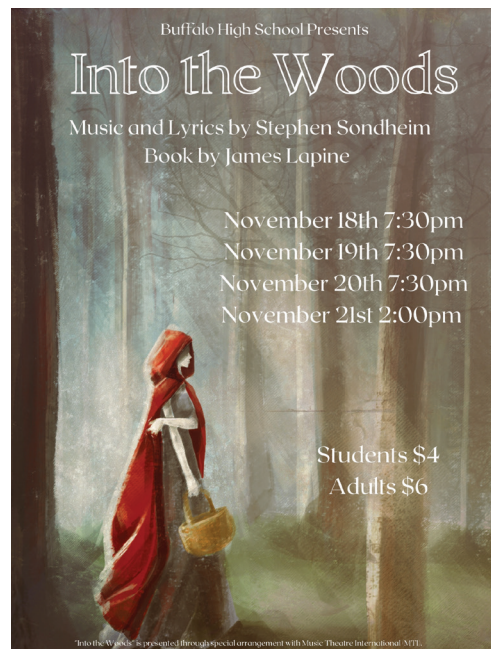
November 12

No School, End of 1st Term

November 24-26

No School, Thanksgiving Break

bhmschools.org/district-calendar



Welcome New Administrators and Teachers!



Buffalo High School Assistant Principal Takes Over as Activities Director



Buffalo High School (BHS) Assistant Principal Nick Guida took over the BHS Activities Director position on August 13, 2021 when director Tom Bauman retired after serving in the district for 21 years.

Guida joined the district in 1997 and has served as a physical education teacher, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) serving in the capacities of AVID Coordinator and BHS Administrative Assistant, Interim Activities Director and most recently BHS Assistant Principal. Over his last 20+ years, Guida also found time to coach soccer, baseball, football and 19 years in basketball. He coached the varsity boys basketball team for 13 years and led them to their first and only Minnesota Boys Basketball State Championship in 2007.

"Nick Guida is Bison Activities," said BHS Principal Mark Mischke. "He is passionate about growing young people and developing their skills. Mr. Guida will work tirelessly to continue to develop our BHS Activities Department. He sees the connection between success in the classroom and success in activities. We are excited to have him lead an outstanding team of coaches/advisors in taking the next steps to grow Bison Activities."

Ed Cox Appointed as Next Buffalo High School Assistant Principal



Ed Cox took over as the new Buffalo High School Assistant Principal on July 1, 2021, replacing Nick Guida who accepted the Activities Director role.

Ed Cox is a familiar face and name at BHS and in BHM Schools. He was a BHS Science Teacher for 10 years before serving as the district's interim director of technology for one year and the high potential services coordinator for three years. In 2014 he left BHM Schools for Shakopee Public Schools, where he gained more secondary (grades 6-12) administrative experience as a teaching and learning supervisor and as the Shakopee High School Assistant Principal. For the last three years, he has been next door as the Assistant Principal in the St. Michael-Albertville (STMA) High School.

Cox is excited to be going back to BHS in an assistant principal role. "I am looking forward to learning more about the district as an administrator and assisting the great educators serving our students. BHS is where I formed my values as an educator and I am excited to bring what I have learned from other districts to help the students, educators and families of BHS. Also, as a long-time community member, I look forward to serving my community and its student and families."

Andrée Iden Named Tatanka Elementary STEM School Principal



Andrée Iden began serving as Principal at Tatanka Elementary STEM School (TESS) beginning July 1, replacing Principal Don Metzler who retired after having served in the position for the last 16 years. Iden is bringing seven years of experience as an assistant principal in the Minneapolis Public School District and before that as a middle school teacher.

Iden was drawn to Tatanka Elementary STEM School because of its focus on integrating STEM throughout the daily learning experiences for students. "I believe in giving students authentic learning opportunities that allow them to explore their identity, critically examine the world around them by identifying problems and seeking solutions through creative thinking."

Also, as an equity leader, Iden is drawn to the work BHM is doing to provide all students with inclusive learning opportunities that maximize students' strengths and allow all learners to thrive. "The deep sense of community, rooted in meaningful relationships with one another, the commitment to keeping students central to our collective work, and the dedication the BHM staff have to value the identity and voice of all learners supports why I want to be part of the BHM team."



2021-22 New BHM Teachers

Front row (L to R): Kelsie Wahlberg (BHS), Macy Wurm (BCMS), Kendra Durst (BHS), Stephanie McGinn (BHS), Emma Lindenfesler (PES), Hayley Schendel (PES), Peyton Miller (PES/HES), Kristine Wiese (BHS), Dana Pearson (ECFE)

Back row (L to R): Barb Metcalf (BHS), Austin Barbein (BHS), Austin Youngmark (BHS), Kimberly Archibald (BHS), Alyssa Fligge (BHS), Karrie Albers (BHS), Nick Besemer (PLC), Ryan Hagerty (BHS)

Not pictured: Jacob Haarstad (BHS)

BHM Prepares Students for Their Next Steps Through Career and College Readiness Programs



When it comes to their student's future success, Buffalo High School places the utmost importance on Career and College readiness. Through the College in the Schools (CIS) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered at Buffalo High School, our goal is to allow our students to earn college credit all while having a fulfilling and rewarding high school experience. We help forge a path for success for all students through a unique set of courses that align with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). Partnerships with Southwest Minnesota State University, St. Cloud State University, University of Minnesota, North Hennepin Community College and Hennepin Technical College allow BHS students to experience a wide variety of college and career learning opportunities.

The MnTC is a planning resource for students that promotes and encourages a college-going climate, all while reducing their college debt. BHS teachers are trained and credentialed to teach these college courses, offering our students a supportive environment while they experience the rigor of college.

For Kurt Konsela, who teaches Industrial Tech within the CIS program at BHS, he appreciates hearing from former students who went through the program, specifically about the

experiences they have had as they transition to college. "I have had several students either in-person (back from college on winter or spring break) or through email, stating that what they're doing in their college courses is the same material/information that they did while here at BHS," said Konsela. "They appreciate what I taught them is being used and is useful in their college classes."

For Megan Breyer, middle school Family and Consumer Science (FACS) teacher as well as CIS Child and Human Development at BHS, she enjoys the higher level conversations that come with teaching a CIS class. "I love that the class teaches students skills they will need for working with kids either in their current or future jobs, as well as their personal lives in the future." As part of the course students must care for a "RealCare" baby for the weekend, babies that have sophisticated computers that replicate actual newborn baby schedules and require care at the most inconvenient times. After the weekend, students write a reflection paper about the experience. "I love reading how students appreciate how their parents have sacrificed for them over the years," she said.

Since its origin in 2014, the MnTC program at BHS has helped students earn more than 20,000 college credits, all before they have even received their

high school diplomas. Additionally, these credits have resulted in a financial savings of over \$6.5 million for families!

BHS 2020 graduate Katie Burandt reflected on the tremendous help these classes offered her as she prepared for the college workload and expectations. "A lot of my teachers at BHS told us right away how they were going to treat us differently, like college kids, and how their class will be structured differently," said Burandt. "There was not going to be any test retakes, lots of note taking, more studying, research, presentations, papers, etc."

In addition to the opportunity to earn college credits through their high school classes, students also get to take advantage of the contacts and experience afforded through the relationships with the local partners. In the CIS Landscaping class, there is an opportunity for a hands-on career day during the Green Expo every January. "It's a great opportunity to meet professionals in the green industry," said Gary Wirkus, CIS Landscaping and Animal Science Teacher. Additionally, students are able to take advantage of some of the amazing facilities of the CIS partners, such as being able to attend the hands-on animal science labs offered by the University of Minnesota teaching staff and professionals in the industry. For Wirkus, the opportunities are even more personal. Wirkus's daughter, Zara, BHS 2018 graduate, went on to earn a degree and start her career in landscape design. "This class opens a lot of doors to the green industry," Wirkus said.

BHS offers 40 Career and College Readiness courses through the CIS programs, nine through technical schools, and additional AP classes in calculus, music theory and computer science. Like the CIS classes, AP classes help students gain the skills and study habits they need to be successful in college, and students can earn college credit, which is nationally recognized and accepted by taking a standardized AP test in the subject area. Learn more about Career and College Readiness at BHS: bhmschools.org.



214 1st Ave NE | Buffalo, MN 55313
 www.bhmschools.org
 763-682-8700

NONPROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Twin Cities, MN
 Permit No. 32324

INSIDER

Oct/Nov
 2021

Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Vol. 48 No. 1



*****ECRWSS**
 RESIDENT DISTRICT 877

SCHOOL BOARD

- Melissa Brings.....Chairperson
- Sue Lee.....Vice Chairperson
- Bob Sansevere.....Clerk
- Ken Ogden.....Treasurer
- Amanda Reineck.....Acting Clerk/Treasurer
- Adam Bjorklund.....Director
- Amanda Lawrence.....Director
- Erica Kyllonen.....Student Representative
- Scott Thielman.....Superintendent



WE ARE HIRING!

Join our team to help our students dream, believe and achieve!

We currently have openings for:

- Support staff
- Custodians
- Substitutes

Visit bhmschools.org/job-opportunities to apply.

We are also hiring school bus drivers! Call Vision Transportation at 763-682-3232 to apply.

