

Social-emotional learning (SEL) making its impact at BKW

The impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) continues to strengthen today's students' ability to build confidence and improve interpersonal relationships inside and outside the classroom. By creating this foundation, especially at the elementary level, students gain the necessary skills to process and share information about their emotions as they learn and grow.

"As a district, we continue to witness the benefits of SEL and its impact on our students and their success in communicating," said BKW Elementary School Counselor Mrs. Cappadona. "At BKW, we have implemented support services and instructional lessons for our students to learn how to process their emotions, and find ways to communicate their feelings positively."

Over the last seven years, Mrs. Cappadona has assisted elementary students with skills in creating social-emotional connections and supporting relationship-building opportunities. The results have been significant for our youngest learners.

Some of the key areas of development impacted by SEL are:

- Social awareness
- Relationship-building skills
- Improved decision-making skills
- Self-awareness
- Managing emotions

Elementary staff has continued to build upon their successes in implementing social-emotional learning for elementary students. Its impact plays



At BKW, students are gaining the necessary skills to process and share information related to their emotions and thought processes as they continue their pathway at the elementary level.

a significant role in engaging students in school and shifting their learning ability to a growth mindset. With each step, school officials continue to see improvements in their ability to work and play collaboratively with peers.

"We continue to see the impact of our social-emotional learning curriculum and its role in developing our students," said BKW Elementary Principal Mrs. Landry. "The ability to understand one's emotions and positively communicate feelings helps them to be a better friend and BKW student. The lessons the counselors teach in our classrooms play a significant part in allowing our students to be their

best and understand how to share their thoughts and feelings when they need it the most."

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MRS. CAPPADONA,
BKW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Engaging students with the science of reading

At BKW, we continue to analyze our data and deliver high-quality resources for our students so they may grow and find success in the classroom. In our elementary building, our primary students are using a learning platform called Reading Horizons that teaches them to utilize phonics rules to better understand how words sound and are spelled. Students receive a word from their teacher, process that word back to the teacher, and identify how the word is spelled by applying language patterns. The growth of their proficiency within this platform has been incredible to witness for teachers, parents, and school administrators.

"We introduced our Reading Horizons phonics program three years ago and its impact on how students are approaching reading and writing has been so positive," said BKW Elementary first-grade teacher Mrs. Sargallis. "The program is designed for students to understand the role of our English language patterns, strengthen their phonemic awareness, and provide unique rules for spelling words. Our students continue to make progress in observing how and why words are formed by breaking down word patterns to gain an understanding of their meaning. They can then apply that knowledge to their

reading and writing. It's so rewarding to be able to see the reading growth in our classroom."

Reading Horizons provides a scientific-based approach to providing the necessary tools and motivation to engage students while allowing them to work through the steps to become better reading decoders.

According to their website, the foundation of their approach follows four key areas:

- Intentional Sequence. Students work through simple concepts to move towards more complex ones. It bridges the ability to learn a word to complete a full sentence. Progress from the simplest concepts to the more complex sentences.
- Unique Marking System: Teachers can illustrate a visual cue to help students identify English language patterns. This develops the students' listening skills as they map out the structure of a word.



Reading Horizons continues to teach our elementary students the importance of phonics to understand better how words sound and are spelled. Their proficiency growth within this platform has been instrumental in their classroom success.

- Five Phonetic + Two Decoding Skills. These skills give all learners easy-to-learn rules for spelling and pronouncing words.
- Daily Design. Our "I Do, We Do, You Do" instruction gives educators a repeatable framework for delivering lessons.

"This program has enabled our youngest students to develop stronger reading skills and has strengthened their academic confidence and success during the early foundational years," said Elementary Principal Mrs. Landry.

Block scheduling and its impact on our classrooms

This year, the secondary school transformed its approach to learning and class schedules to increase student engagement and success by introducing block scheduling for students in grades 7-12. The new scheduling format allows students and teachers to have additional time to focus on programming and curriculum.

Currently, nearly 70 percent of secondary schools in the nation utilize block scheduling in their day-to-day school operations.

Why move to a block scheduling format?

- It provides time for content-specific, deep instruction while allowing for greater efficiency in class preparation for students, which often includes less nightly homework.
- It offers more class time to build relationships and personalize learning for each student.

- It provides increased opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching.
- It allows for focused instructional time to engage in learning that is innovative, differentiated, engaging, creative, discovery-based, project/problem-based, hands-on, collaborative, and interesting to students based on their lived experiences.
- It promotes active student learning by encouraging greater participation.
- It allows for more focused time for students to learn how they best learn in each content area.

Please note that we will continue to share information and content related to block scheduling as we progress through the 2024-25 school year.



CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Teacher hits the classroom to benefit students

During the summer months, teachers take time to plan and organize for the upcoming school year. This summer, BKW Secondary School teacher Mr. Whitfield participated in an in-person historical program courtesy of the Fort Ticonderoga Teacher Institute from July 13-18 at the original Fort Ticonderoga site.

Over this week-long experience, located on the shores of Lake Champlain and between New York's Adirondack and Vermont's Green Mountains, Mr. Whitfield immersed himself in the data and perspectives of this historical site, gaining information and insight to share with his U.S. History, Global 9 and AP U.S. History students. This visit also coincided with the 250th anniversary of the Fort and its role in early American history.

"The opportunity to participate in the Fort Ticonderoga Teacher Institute was a historical milestone for myself and other attendees," said Mr. Whitfield. "To have access to historical artifacts and documentation was amazing, along with touring the facility and learning more about our regional place in history. It will be a huge benefit to show our students about this important time."

Working with onsite experts one-on-one, handling artifacts, and learning about life in the 17th and early 1800s at the fort – Mr. Whitfield got to experience a firsthand historical perspective that he could then share with his students and fellow staff. Attendees went through catalogs of transcripts and historical markings and got to view various collections and artifacts with supporting documentation.

"The work being conducted at the Fort Ticonderoga site is truly inspiring and something to be shared with our students at BKW," shared Mr. Whitfield. "This is such a valuable resource for anyone seeking to visit New York's historical treasures. I'm fortunate to be able to share this information with my students in the classroom."



Teachers continue to work on their craft during the summer months to engage students during the school year. Mr. Whitfield and many others commit to learning more about their subject matter to help their students become successful.

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School Resource Officer (SRO) program returns with county assistance

We are pleased to announce that our district will continue to have a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) on our campus for the 2024-25 school year. On Aug. 29, school officials, joined by various public officials, participated in a press event with Albany County Executive Daniel McCoy and Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple that highlighted the return of the SRO program to Berne-Knox-Westerlo.

County Executive Daniel McCoy has recently announced several safety initiatives in the region aimed at protecting school communities while keeping Albany County Sheriff's Office resources available for the BKW community at large. Funds from the BusPatrol program will be used to fund the district's SRO program. The BusPatrol program allows school districts to receive funds directly from fines given to motorists who illegally pass school buses. To learn more about this program, visit the BusPatrol website at <http://www.buspatrol.com/>.



The district will continue to have a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) presence on our school campus for the 2024-25 school year. Funds from the BusPatrol program will be used to fund the district's SRO program this school year.

"We are thankful to Albany County Executive McCoy and Sheriff Apple for their dedication to protecting schools in the region," said Superintendent of Schools Mrs. Kane. "Our school community appreciates their responsiveness in allowing our district to retain this critical program for our students, faculty, and staff."



ParentSquare: What to know

We continue to encourage our families and community members to sign up for ParentSquare. This district-wide communication platform will allow the district, administrators, and teachers to effectively communicate with families.

If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to sign up for ParentSquare and download the app on your phone. Please visit www.parentsquare.com and sign up using the contact information on file with the school district. This platform will allow you to share up-to-date communication on a classroom, building, and district level.

ParentSquare features an app and website, which allows for direct messaging, attendance notifications, sign-ups for parent conferences, and more. Sign up today!