

Principal's Report: November 2024
Bethlehem Elementary School
SAU35-Wide Goal Alignment

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Focus Area 1: Serve All Students to Ensure Academic Achievement by Fostering the Development of the Whole Student

Fall Benchmark Testing

Our fall benchmarking assessments are complete, providing valuable data to guide instructional strategies and identify areas for targeted student interventions. Teachers are actively using these results to adapt their instruction and ensure we are meeting each student's unique learning needs.

Professional Development Day – October 11th

The school-wide choice training day on October 11th offered staff opportunities to participate in sessions aligned with their instructional goals. We now have access to Khanmigo AI, which provides AI-enhanced, time-saving templates and curriculum resources for teachers. Staff will need additional time to explore its potential for supporting our instructional and planning needs.

Enrichment Program

Our enrichment program is underway, offering students a wide range of engaging activities and opportunities. Students can participate in robotics, "Trout in the Classroom," storytelling on Scratch Jr., game development through Code.org, and a newly established school government initiative. The school government structure, developed by sixth-grade students, is designed to empower their peers, foster leadership skills, and create opportunities for authentic civic engagement and advocacy.

As part of the school government initiative, students will participate in elections on November 8th, with candidates delivering speeches as they run for various roles. Each class will elect representatives, each grade will have a senator, and the government will include co-governors and three judges. This structure provides students with enrichment through hands-on experience in leadership and civics, equipping them with essential skills in advocacy and public service while supporting their social studies curriculum.

Additionally, students in grades 4, 5, and 6 are participating in outdoor programming with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), which provides hands-on environmental learning experiences. For sixth graders, the WILD program further enhances outdoor and leadership skills, offering experiential learning that builds resilience, teamwork, and environmental stewardship.

Mental Health and Behavioral Support

Our counselor, Ben Woo, is onsite one day a week and joins student support meetings each Wednesday. The Guidance team is now prioritizing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support, and guidance is no longer a regular special for fourth grade, allowing us to focus on more targeted interventions for those who need it.

Upcoming Training

Our Kindergarten and first-grade teams will participate in a one-day science literacy training on November 8th, funded by a Title II grant. This training will enrich early science literacy instruction.

Focus Area 2: Build Culture to Create Safe, Positive, and Inclusive Environments for Students, Staff, Faculty, Parents, and Community

Library/Media Space Renovation

With new carpet now onsite, our volunteers are ready for installation. We are waiting for time to install without students in the building.

Community Engagement

- **Parent Survey Feedback:** A recent parent survey provided valuable insights on our school community's strengths and areas for growth.
 - **Strengths:** Parents highly appreciate the caring, supportive environment at BES and the meaningful teacher-student connections. Both students and parents feel safe and welcome, with 89.5% of students and 94.7% of parents responding positively. Enrichment programs, such as robotics, "Trout in the Classroom," and our student government initiative, were particularly well-received.
 - **Areas for Improvement:** Suggestions included more consistent academic challenges for advanced students, streamlined communication (especially for field trips and end-of-day routines), and greater parental involvement options, such as a BES parents Facebook page, more PTA visibility, and volunteer opportunities. Nutrition was also highlighted, with requests for greater variety, healthier options, and interest in free meal options for all students.

Halloween Parade and First Grading Period

Thanks to the Bethlehem PTA our Halloween parade brought excitement to the school, providing a joyful event for students and staff. As the first grading period concludes, teachers are reviewing student progress and planning the next phase of the academic year.

PTA Line Dancing Fundraiser

We're excited to announce a PTA-sponsored line dancing event as a fundraiser 11/8/2024. We look forward to seeing everyone there and appreciate the PTA's efforts in organizing this event.

Greenhouse and Elevator Updates

The greenhouse's electrical work is complete, and we are awaiting the final power connection/inspection. The elevator's electrical work is also done, with the next step being a sump minder. The construction was delayed to January 2025.

Focus Area 3: Lead with Integrity and Courage, Improving Consistency in Collaboration, Communication, Expectations, and Accountability

Certification Update

I have completed the four months towards certification and submitted the initial paperwork for the competency and oral board requirements. Stefan has finalized his initial certification plan and now has a mentor from Lafayette to support him through the certification process.