

BCnection



Helping Students Build Success Stories

Winter 2025

Superintendent's Office

8542 Byron Center Ave. SW
Byron Center, MI 49315
616.878.6100

Superintendent: Kevin Macina, Ph.D.
Asst. Superintendent: Jeff Wierzbicki
Chief Financial Officer: Meghan Hathaway

Board of Education

President: Brenda Hondorp
Vice President: Amber Swift
Secretary: Thalia Tilma
Treasurer: Brad Wiechertjes
Trustees: Rob Hughes, Tom McCoy
and Tim Oberst

2026

Board of Education Meetings

Jan. 12, 6:30pm (Organizational & Regular Meeting)
Jan. 26, 5:15pm (Work Session)
Feb. 9, 6:30pm (Regular Meeting)
Feb. 23, 5:15pm (Work Session)
March 9, 6:30pm (Regular Meeting)
March 23, 5:15pm (Work Session)
April 13, 6:30pm (Regular Meeting)
April 27, 5:15pm (Work Session)
May 11, 6:30pm (Regular Meeting)
May 18, 5:15pm (Work Session)
June 8, 5:15pm (Work Session)
June 22, 6:15pm (Budget Hearing & Regular Meeting)

Check www.bcpsk12.net board page for meeting specifics and locations.

Work Sessions will be scheduled as needed.

Upon request at least ten (10) days prior to a meeting, the District shall make reasonable accommodations for a person with disabilities to be able to attend and participate. Contact the Facilities Director at 616.878.6100.

There is a time for public participation during a meeting as indicated in the agenda.

Official minutes are available and stored at the administration office.

Stay Informed! Check out Byron Center Public Schools on Facebook and Instagram for information on school closings, upcoming events and more!

A Publication of Byron Center Public Schools

www.bcpsk12.net

Thank You BC Community



Dear Byron Center Community,

Your partnership and dedication to our schools continues to inspire me every day. Byron Center is truly strengthened by the people who call it home, and I am continually grateful for the way our community rallies around our students and staff.

Thanks to your incredible support and trust, our school bond proposal passed in November. This was more than a "yes" vote, it was a vote of confidence in our students, our staff and our shared vision for the future of Byron Center Public Schools.

Because of your commitment, we are able to invest in important improvements across the district. These include enhancing learning environments, increasing safety and security measures and ensuring our facilities continue to meet the needs of our growing community.

Bond work is already underway. We are currently in the design phase, working through logistics and planning so we are prepared to break ground in 2026. The excitement for what lies ahead is shared across our district. Together, we are building a foundation that will help every student create their own success story.

The holiday season is a continued reminder of how much this community cares for each other. Districtwide, BCPS participated in our annual Toys for Tots drive, collecting toys for children across West Michigan. West Middle School once again led a successful food drive through the National Junior Honor Society, providing essential items for local families. In addition, BCPS partnered with Bell House Training Co. for The Big Give, ensuring children in our community experience the joy of receiving gifts for the holidays.

As we welcome a new year, I look forward to continuing our work together to support one another, uplift our students and strengthen the community. I wish each of you a joyful holiday season and a wonderful new year!

Kevin Macina, Ph.D.
Superintendent



DISTRICT News

Countryside named 2025 Blue Ribbon School

Countryside Elementary has been named a 2025 Blue Ribbon School! Countryside was one of only 16 Michigan schools recognized at the highest performing level this year by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools for their academic excellence and progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Each year, the Department of Education celebrates schools that demonstrate that all students can achieve high levels of success. MDE nominated Countryside as an Exemplary High-Performing School, placing it among the state's top-performing schools based on state and national assessments.

"The entire staff at Countryside works together to ensure every student has the best possible learning experience," said Countryside Elementary Principal Cindy Viveen. "The team is dedicated to fostering a culture of belonging where every child is challenged, supported and inspired to reach their full potential."

"The Blue Ribbon honor means everyone does a good job, tries their best and everyone is super nice here," Aubree, 4th grade student

"I think the Blue Ribbon honor means that the school has taught a lot and kids have a lot of fun here," Rafaaz, 3rd grade student



Academic Success

Byron Center Public Schools is celebrating national recognition after U.S. News & World Report named the district's elementary schools, middle school and high school among the Top 25 in Michigan.

The accomplishment reflects the collaboration and commitment from students, educators and community members who contribute to the strong learning environment in Byron Center.



Unified Champion Schools

All Byron Center Public Schools buildings have been named Unified Champion Schools by the Special Olympics. This recognition reflects the district's commitment to promoting understanding, celebrating diverse abilities and creating inclusive environments where every student feels valued.

One of the programs that supports this mission is LINKS, a peer-to-peer initiative built on the belief that all students benefit from learning together. Through LINKS, students work side-by-side throughout the school day, collaborating on academics, building independence and creating meaningful connections with peers with autism and other disabilities.

BCPS also proudly participates in Unified Champion sporting events, which give students of all abilities the chance to experience the excitement of athletic competition. Most recently, Marshall and Heritage Elementary students teamed up for a spirited Unified basketball game, providing an unforgettable opportunity for inclusion, teamwork and fun.



Season of Giving

Byron Center Public Schools collected more than 800 toys for the annual Toys for Tots fundraiser this year. All school buildings participated in a friendly competition to see who could collect the most donations, with Byron Center High School taking the top spot. Thank you to every student, family and staff member who contributed to making the season brighter for children in need!

In addition, National Junior Honor Society students led a Thanksgiving food drive at West Middle School. Students were encouraged to bring in nonperishable food items, and together they collected nearly 2,000 items to support families right here in the Byron Center community.



Bella Voce to perform at Michigan Music Conference

Congratulations to the Byron Center High School Bella Voce choir for being selected to perform at the Michigan Music Conference this January, an incredible honor shared by only three high school choirs in the entire state!

"This is like our Super Bowl, and we are both shocked and thrilled to have been chosen," said Jennifer Metcalf, BCHS Director of Choirs.

Bravo to Bella Voce for representing BCHS with excellence. Way to go!



Byron Center Marching Band

The Byron Center High School Marching Band capped off another outstanding season with a third place finish as a bronze medalist at the MCBA State Championship held at Ford Field. Performing their beautifully crafted show, "Starry Night," the ensemble impressed audiences and judges alike with their artistry and musical excellence.

This marks the eleventh consecutive year that the Byron Center Marching Band has earned a medal at the state level, finishing first, second or third for more than a decade. Their consistent success reflects the dedication of our student musicians, staff and supporters who make this program shine year after year.

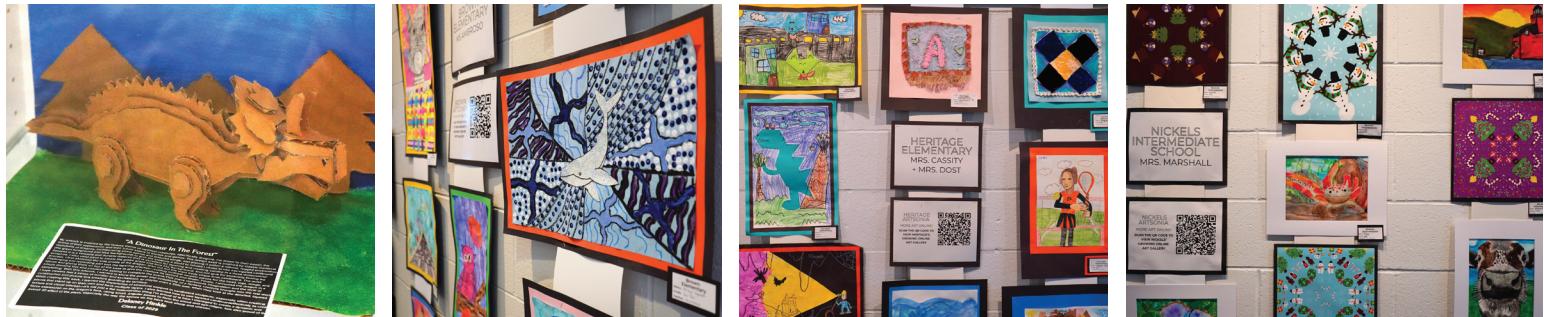


Elementary Choir Performs National Anthem

Fourth grade choir students from all four Byron Center elementary schools had the incredible honor of performing the National Anthem at a Grand Rapids Griffins hockey game. Our young singers represented BCPS with confidence, pride and beautiful harmony.

The students were led by their music teachers: Mikayla Larson (Brown Elementary), Meghan Furney (Marshall Elementary), Mia Zeitter (Countryside Elementary) and Diana Hall (Heritage Elementary). Their dedication and preparation helped create a memorable moment for both the performers and the community.





K-12 Visual Art Showcase

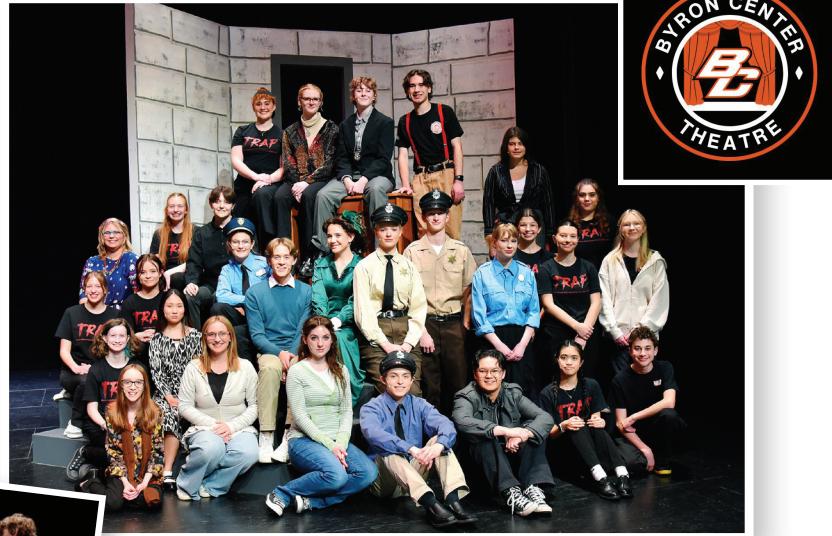
Byron Center Public Schools held its annual K-12 Visual Arts Showcase, highlighting the incredible creativity and talent of our student artists. The Gainey Gallery at the Van Singel Fine Arts Center was filled with a vibrant collection of artwork, including drawings, paintings, pottery, photography and an impressive range of mixed-media pieces.

The showcase provided a wonderful opportunity for families and community members to experience the imagination, skill and artistic growth of our young creators.

Byron Center Theatre

Byron Center High School Theatre brought suspense to the Van Singel stage this fall with *Trap*, a documentary-style mystery about an unexplainable event in which an entire audience suddenly falls unconscious, except one. Told through interviews and reenactments, the production kept viewers guessing until the very end.

With 32 cast members and 10 crew, the BCHS Theatre program delivered a unique and thrilling performance that had audiences on the edge of their seats. An unforgettable fall production where nothing was as it seemed!



Upcoming Productions



ATHLETICS

Boys Tennis

Division 2 State Runner-Up

D2 State Champions
(2-Doubles)

Nolan Booth & Brayden Slot

D2 State Runner-Up
(3-Doubles)

Aidan Banchoff &
Ben Vander Stelt

D2 State Runner-Up
(4-Singles)

Cole Krauss

D2 State Runner-Up
(4-Doubles)

Isaac Sandholm & Brody Slot

Regional Champions

OK Green Conference
Champions

Regional Tennis Coach of
the Year

Andrew Ely

All-Conference Players

Nolan Booth, Terrence
He, Justin Karem, Ryan
McKendry, Casey Schans,
Brayden Slot and
Rylan Vandenberg



Girls Golf

8th in State Finals

Regional Champions

OK Green Conference
Champions

All-Conference Players

Kenna Deters, Caitlin
Hartson, Mallory Johnson
and Kinsley Whitfield,
Honorable Mention:
Lainey VanTol

Honorable Mention:
Averie Hofman



Football

District Runner-Up

All-Conference Players

Tate Bainbridge, Jackson
Bovia, Cameron Payne,
Hunter Pulawski, Chase
Swartz and Aiden VanDam
Honorable Mention:
Billie Butler, Cooper Hickson
and Easton Wychers



Girls Swim/ Dive

6th in State Finals

5th in State Finals 100
Breaststroke

Adrianna Drake

5th in State Finals 200
Medley Relay

Tara Darter, Adrianna
Drake, Lila Ritsema and
Izzie VanDuy

7th in State Finals 500
Freestyle

Izzie VanDuy

7th in State Finals 400
Freestyle Relay

Tara Darter, Adrianna
Drake, Saydee Torralva and
Izzie VanDuy

8th in State Finals 200
Individual Medley

Adrianna Drake

Qualified for State Finals

Addy Antvelink,
Taylor Blomeling,
Tara Darter,
Adrianna Drake,
Lucy Haney, Kloey Hullah,
Lila Ritsema,
Kenzie Schichtel,
Saydee Torralva,
Braylee VanDusen and
Izzie VanDuy

All-Conference Players

Tara Darter, Adrianna
Drake, Lila Ritsema and
Izzie VanDuy



Boys Soccer

OK Green Conference
Champions

All-Conference Players

Brody Bennett, Braylen
Legge, Cooper Mitchell,
Andrew Sinquefield and
Kaleb Smith
Honorable Mention:
Blake Wilson and
Carlos Castro



Equestrian

4th in Regional Finals

District Champions

All District Team
Jillian Vanderhorst



Cross Country

Girls Team 5th in Regional
Finals

Boys Team 12th in Regional
Finals

All-Conference Players

Donna Haaksma, Kailey
Mann and Brady Newman
Honorable Mention:
Emmarie Formsma,
Quinn Middleton,
Kate Olsen, Eric Pierce
and Sophie Wisener





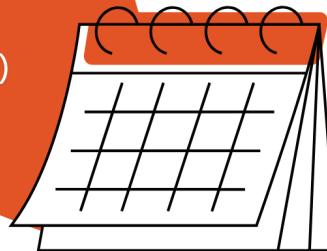
BYRON CENTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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www.bcpssk12.net

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2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR IMPORTANT DATES

- JAN 14-16: K-12 HALF DAY (EXAMS)
- JAN 19: NO SCHOOL
- FEB 13: K-12 HALF DAY
- FEB 16: MID-WINTER BREAK
- APRIL 3-10: SPRING BREAK
- MAY 25: MEMORIAL DAY
- JUNE 3-5: K-12 HALF DAY (EXAMS)
- JUNE 5: LAST DAY OF SCHOOL



BYRON CENTER'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER 2026 INFORMATION:



- PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE: FEBRUARY 17, 2026
- ENROLLMENT OPENS FEBRUARY 18, 2026 AT 9AM

