

#SherrardRoars

Vol. 3 Issue 2

Tigers Today Transforming Tomorrow

Aug. - Sept. 2020

In the midst of a pandemic - Tigers persist

Tigers return: almost 80% in-person



Bus riders enter the school at a different entrance than those dropped off by parents so students aren't temperature checked twice. Students are seated socially distant on buses, and no more than 50 are on any single bus.

Photo by Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

Parents were offered the choice of full, 5 day in-person attendance, or fully remote learning to begin the school year. Students haven't been to school in-person in over 150 days - since March 17, when Governor JB Pritzker closed schools in an executive order due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Per the district's approved framework plan, students arrive an hour late to give teachers extra time to prepare for remote learning and

allow custodians more time to implement increased sanitation measures across the district.

Winola Elementary and Sherrard Elementary schools begin the school day at 9:45 a.m. and end the day at 3:35 p.m. Matherville Intermediate School begins at 9:40 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. The JH and SH

start at 8:40 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m.

At the start of the school year, lockers won't be in use - students can use a backpack - to avoid close-contact inevitable during locker-use. To further mitigate the transfer of illness - custodians will clean bathrooms once every hour and teachers will be sanitizing desks between classes. In lieu of water fountains, every school in the district now has a hands-free water bottle filler. Students bring their own water bottles from home and refill as-needed throughout the day.

District-wide percentage of students going remote at the beginning of the year - 22.7%.

Percentages for remote students for each building in the district:

Winola: 30%

Sherrard Elementary: 15%

Matherville: 23.5%

Junior High: 22%

High School: 22%

"We want to make sure we have an excel-

specific details for every facet of in-person and remote learning, is updated on a 'frequently asked questions' page on the website, [//www.sherrard.us/domain/397](http://www.sherrard.us/domain/397). The framework was established with the caveat that plans can change, per state guidelines.

The district is also prepared for a full return to remote learning should the need arise.

Boucher said the framework was adopted following the recent release of the Illinois State Board of Education document outlining requirements for schools, in conjunction with the Illinois Public Health Department - and per school board vote.

Instructional Technology Coach Steve Miller said remote learning looks different now that the district has had time to craft a thorough tech plan - and purchase audio and video technology through grants.

He said a grant from the Looser Flake Foundation totaling \$125,000 for technology-related

"The CARES grant will fund most of our PPE, new computers (bags, Google software and carts) for all first and second graders, a mental health case worker, internet broadcast devices for 2 buses (to be parked in Coyne Center and New Windsor and provide wifi), professional development and software," said Miller.

Miller said the video and audio technology they're implementing will make the difference in ease of use for teachers, and seamless for students, "I'm very confident about what we can do now... We're going to up that interaction for the kids who go remote, and it's just going to look better. A better look - give families more access to technology and the internet... that part is just going to get better for us."

Sherrard's reopen plan can be found on their website under the 'Parents/Students' tab, click 'Return to School'. Revisions will be posted as needed, www.sherrard.us.

Follow the school on social media for updates: Instagram: [sherrardcusd200](https://www.instagram.com/sherrardcusd200) Twitter: [200Sherrard](https://twitter.com/200Sherrard) Facebook: [sherrard-school-district](https://www.facebook.com/sherrard-school-district) Youtube: [Sherrard School District](https://www.youtube.com/SherrardSchoolDistrict).

**"We want to make sure we have an excellent education for all students,"
- Superintendent Alan Boucher**

lent education for all students," said Superintendent Alan Boucher about the myriad of options schools are exploring for safe student return in the fall.

Eleven committees were created to address

purchases, the federal CARES grant totaling \$190,800 meant more than \$300,000 of unplanned revenue for Sherrard to offset advanced technology for enhanced remote learning.



www.sherrard.us



Sherrard CUSD #200 | 507 3rd St. PO Box 369, Sherrard, IL 61281 | Phone: 309.593.4075



From the desk of the Superintendent

Community collab makes school possible



Sherrard Superintendent
Alan Boucher

As the first quarter of the school year winds down, we find ourselves reflecting on how things are going. I have been very pleased with the teamwork. Many parents have been willing to drive their children to school to free up space on the buses, students have been willing to wear their masks faithfully and the staff has been willing to do

things beyond their job descriptions. Everyone has gone the extra mile with communication, working long hours and helping others when needed.

I am very proud to be associated with this great community. The plan is to continue on the same path during the second quarter. Adjustments will be made as new information becomes available.

Someone once said, "What cannot be cured, must be endured." The Sherrard community has endured with poise and grace, and I have no doubt it will continue to shine as we all anticipate a remedy.

The district's Return to Learn Plan has been revised. Find the updated plan on the district's website; summarized on

the last 3 pages.

I want to publicly thank the district staff and students for their hard work to help reduce the risk of COVID transmission. Everyone has done their part by wearing face coverings, maintaining social distance, washing hands and helping to clean the buildings and buses. Though it is inevitable that we will have COVID cases, I am happy to report that we have not had any students test positive for COVID thus far (at the time of this writing, Sept. 23).



First day back since March 17



(Top Left) Sherrard HS Principal Tim Wernentin greeted kids as they returned to school for the first time since since March 17 - when Governor JB Pritzker closed schools in an executive order due to the coronavirus pandemic.



(Bottom Left) School Resource Officer Mike Mendoza was stationed at the bus entrance to direct incoming students where they need to go.

*Photos by Cala Smoldt/
Communications Coordinator*

Sherrard Bands play on



Sherrard HS Band was featured on KWQC TV6 News on Sept. 18. Band Director David Grayson and senior Evan Gagliardo shared what the band is doing to stay safe - and continue developing students' musical talent.

Sherrard Bands perform outside on Saturday, Oct. 3 at 2 p.m. on SHS back band practice field.

Oct. 22, Jazz performance will be at the Pre-emption United Methodist Church from approximately 5-7 p.m. [exact time TBA based on sunset].

FFA Garden Harvest feeds the community

Student dedication means produce for families

COVID-19 may have put a halt to... pretty much everything... but midwest produce production can't be stopped, and that's one lesson Sherrard FFA members learned from Ag teacher Bill Hammes. So far, since harvest began, the students have brought in 2,306 pounds.

The garden, a living outdoor classroom in its fourth year, not quite a half acre - has never seen a harvest so plentiful, so early - and that's even after the derecho knocked down a large section of sweetcorn Monday, Aug. 10.

"There's a lot of people who can't afford to buy food and this is free at the food pantry. It's good because you know you're helping... Not everyone can afford to plant either," said Briar Viager, Junior, FFA president. She faithfully watered the garden every other day throughout the summer. Harvest began over a month ago.

Bo Johnson, junior, FFA reporter said he helped out over summer whenever he could, "It's a way to give back to our community."

"I like being out here with the garden... The virus has made this whole year strange," he said, "We're still making progress even with the virus."

The virus is one main reason Hammes and the

students were compelled to keep it going.

"I know with some people who aren't working, unemployment stopped - (There are) people who can't really afford food right now," said Johnson. He said he prefers a smaller school where teachers get to interact with students on a more one-on-one basis, "It feels like the teachers get to know you and talk to you - and know how you learn. They really do care about their students and FFA kids... they get to know you," he said of Ag teachers Hammes and John Rasty.

Hammes said the kids have taken turns throughout summer working in the garden - and social distancing when they harvest together, "They're still together and building that camaraderie," he said.

"The primary purpose," said Hammes, "helping reduce the level of food insecurity in our area - I don't know specific students - but I know there are students that walk through our halls who don't know where they're next meal is coming from."

This year's garden grew: Tomato varieties, corn, potatoes, varieties of peppers, squash, zucchini and cucumbers. Produce is donated to Sherrard and Milan area food pantries.



Pictured above, FFA vice president, senior Lily Cederstrom said she came to help pick, "Because it's fun and I like it."

Photo by Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

Commended Student: Remy recognized



(Left) HS Principal Tim Wernentin congratulates senior Jeffrey Remy on his accomplishment, Tuesday, Sept.22. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*

"We could not be prouder of Jeffrey! This well-deserved award is testimony to his hard work and dedication to his academics. I know there is nothing but success in his future," Principal Tim Wernentin. Wernentin announced today that senior Jeffrey Remy has been named a "Commended Student" in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. A Letter of Commendation from

the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) was presented to Remy this morning.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise.

Remy placed among the top 50,000 scores out of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2021 competition by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 3 - JH/HS Band Concert 2 p.m., SHS back band practice field.
- Oct. 7-8 - Early Dismissal, 7-12th grade 1 p.m.; K-6th grade 2 p.m.
- Oct. 22 - Jazz performance, Preemption United Methodist Church, to begin approximately 5-7 p.m. [exact time TBA based on sunset]
- Oct. 9 - No School
- Oct. 12 - No School; Columbus Day
- Oct. 13-16 - Fall Break
- Oct. 21 - Board Meeting, 6 p.m. (Check the website under 'Board Docs' for updates on how to view/attend a meeting during COVID-19)
- Oct. 26 - Augustana Visit, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Must register to attend, see Mrs. Drish for details
- Nov. 18 - Board Meeting, 6 p.m. (Check the website under 'Board Docs' for updates on how to view/attend a meeting during COVID-19)
- Nov. 25-27 - No School
- Dec. 16 - Board Meeting, 6 p.m. (Check the website under 'Board Docs' for updates on how to view/attend a meeting during COVID-19)
- Dec. 21 - Jan. 4 - Winter Break
- Jan. 5 - Students Return!

Winola Playground becomes art class pallet

"I like it better this way because it feels like real school - even with masks on. They're not that hard to wear," said 9 year old Winola student Justine. She's enjoying doing art class outside.

Students at Winola Elementary in Viola are integrating art and math to create an interactive path on the blacktop of the school's playground with paint. Restrictions handed down by IDPH (Illinois Department of Public Health) and ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) mean children aren't allowed to

play on the equipment - resulting in an opportunity for art teacher Tony Vermeer to get creative.

Vermeer said the idea was inspired by PE teacher Bev Kruger who had shown him a similar idea using vinyl on the gym floor - but they needed a bigger pallet. They brainstormed how they could create something like the vinyl path - but for the outside blacktop.

Coupled with the unique task Vermeer faced to provide art class to students in their own classrooms - a measure

implemented by the district to reduce the possibility of cross-contamination - sparked the idea to involve his students.

"My 4th grade always starts the year with an expressive painting project in the classroom. To avoid a paint mess in a carpeted classroom, painting outside became the solution," said Vermeer.

He now uses an "art cart" to take the supplies needed for that day's lesson for each class.

"The cart challenges me each day to work on my organization skills,"



Pallet continued on page 4

Teachers make the cut:

News interviews showcase ingenuity in education



Aug. 27 - Riley Strandgard - fourth grade teacher at Sherrard Grade School talked to KWQC TV6 News about what it's like for young students to be back in class. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*

KWQC's Randall Biery will be following two of our teachers, 4th grade teacher Riley Strandgard, and Ag Teacher Bill Hammes, throughout this school year for an ongoing series with local

TV6. Outdoor/indoor footage was shot by the district.

Hammes described himself during the interview as "stubborn oldschool... Overall it's going to be a challenge...



Aug. 28 - Ag teacher Bill Hammes and his Natural Resources class was featured on KWQC TV6 News. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*

I don't give up easy. I'm going to do what it takes to make sure I can provide to the students everything I think they really need," he said. "I felt just about every emotion possible,

I think," said Strandgard. She said the first week was, "Crazy, in a good way." She has four remote learners to plan for - as well as in-class learners, "It's all about balance," she said.

Athletic Calendar

Currently: Golf and Cross Country track are the only sports competing. All other sports, football/volleyball are practicing per state guidelines.

To see team rosters, team photos, game schedules, event locations, and postponed games go to: <http://il.8to18.com/SherardHS>

Sign up for updates:

- Go to the athletic calendar
- E-Mail Alert - on the right side of the page and click the "Click to Join" link.
- Then, "Create New Account"
- Select the sports that you would like to receive email alerts and click - "Add Selected Sports" button.

Also search the Sherrard Boosters Facebook group to stay connected.

Boys Cross Country Undefeated

Football is on hold - Cross Country, Golf take the lead



Michael Applegate/Activities Director

Cross Country

The Sherrard Running Tigers continue to dom-

inate action in the QC area. Last year boys went to state and with all returning runners - they're hoping to do the same this year. The IHSA made a decision to not hold state this year, but that hasn't stopped the Tigers from pursuing greatness.

Led by Jacob Belha who has finished 1st in all of his races this year, the 12-0 Tigers boast the deepest roster around. In a recent tri the boys finished 1st, 2nd- Dayton Hauger, 4th- Alex Wilson

5th- Mike Gorey, 6th- Jordan Maynard. The boys will have home meets in September, we hope you can cheer them on!

The lady tigers have returning sectional qualifiers Addison Knox and Sarah Gibson and added a lot of new members. The girls have continued to improve their times each race and believe they will hit their stride when the IHSA final regional race will be held.

Golf

The boys finished 7th in state in 2018, were

sectional qualifiers in 2019 and they're hoping - with the top 5 returning golfers (Evan Earl, Landen Ernat, Austin Fratzke, Brennan Welch, Blake Wynn) to make another run at State. The boys team has gotten off to a fast start 14-3, but the biggest accomplishment has been the 9 hole school record (140) which replaces a previous record the team set earlier this year (152).

The girls golf team lost 4 seniors and returned only one golfer from last year. 14 additional girls have made the commitment and are improving each and every day for Coach Hutton. The girls won their match on 9/2 against Farmington at Oak Run, but the girls have already won, as

they've learned a new sport and stuck with it.

The Winter sports season remains the same with wrestling, boys basketball, girls basketball, cheerleading and dance - but the spring season will be a completely different look.

This March will have football, volleyball and boys soccer. This May and June - baseball, softball and track will compete. These changes have provided a variety of difficulties for coaches and athletes, but having a season to play is what is most wanted.



Pallet

continued from Page 3



Winola Elementary students take art class outside to begin the school year.

Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

he said, "(it) also forces you to make some changes to your lessons."

Nine year old Aiden painted various colors of pink and red in his circle. "It's worth wearing a mask to get to come (to school)." He said he's glad to see his friends again. He enjoys the hands-on art project. For Aiden, remote learning brought technical difficulties... when he heard he would be attending in person, he said he was, "Pretty happy."

Vermeer mapped out the blacktop and used a graphic design program to determine the size of each section where students would paint their work. Students helped measure and chalk-line the area. The painted sections will make a large 'S' shaped path across the entire blacktop on the playground.

"They're having a lot of fun with the measuring, they're really into the whole construction of it," he said.

Teachers are facing unique challenges across the nation - balancing 'in-person' and 'remote' learning has been an obstacle for Vermeer.

"More challenging than the cart has been the instructional videos..." Vermeer - a guitarist in a local rock band - is used to playing guitar as a teaching tool in his art class, "I am not comfortable when I know the 'record' button has been pressed... I am a much better teacher and guitarist when I can move around, rock out, and adjust my presentation to the audience. I feel too much pressure to perform perfectly for the classroom videos. It's just not me," he said.

Justine was focused on choosing the right colors for her painted section, she said, "I'd rather be here than be at home... I feel like it's a lot easier here than at home. Understanding everything... and making sure

you're getting everything right. You have to email your teacher to ask her a question, and sometimes they can't get

"I want everything to be normal, especially school..."

- Alyssa, Winola 4th grader

back for a little bit."

She said she should be playing volleyball - she missed playing softball and soccer over the summer. She remains hopeful, "When you think about it, it's like, 'Oh my gosh, we're actually going through this - and it's not like a dream or something.'

... It will be a good story to tell people."

Alyse, 9, said she misses softball - and all the other sports. "It's bad. I don't like that it's happening, I want everything to be normal, especially school... Hopefully this school year gets better - and as normal as it can get."

Echoing the sentiment, 10-year-old Jaren said, "I like being back at school because then I can see

my friends."

"This was also a way to take them outside and get some fresh air," said Vermeer. Teaching art to

students outdoors had multiple purposes - since masks are worn indoors at school-

"mask breaks" are encouraged across the district. This has meant altering lesson plans to include an outdoor activity.

The finished project will also involve the viewer - engaging them in physical activity.

Vermeer is passionate about teaching art and though he faces challenges this year, to him it's worth it to have students in-person. He said amidst those challenges are unique opportunities to get creative -

"The interactive playground project has allowed these students a one-time opportunity to express themselves through their art, on a canvas that can be viewed and enjoyed by other students for years to come."



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