

#SHERRARDROARS

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Tigers Today Transforming Tomorrow

July - Sept. 2021

Sherrard teachers, board ratify three-year contract



Above, Rhys Fullerlove (left), school board president, Robert Wilson (middle), 6th grade science teacher at Matherville and lead negotiator for teachers and Tammy Crippen (right), high school english teacher and Sherrard Education Association president, signed the ratified contract. *Cala Smoldt/Communications*

The Sherrard School Board and the Sherrard Education Association, SEA, ratified a three-year labor agreement Friday, Aug. 6, before

the beginning of the school year. "If there was any positive experience that came from COVID, it's taught us all to have

more empathy and understanding for the difficult situations that teachers, staff, students, administrators and the board had last year,"

Sherrard School Board President Rhys Fullerlove said.

The contract gave teachers and staff a much deserved raise - and other benefits - while keeping in line with the district's budget, according to Fullerlove.

"We continue to have one of the lowest school tax rates in the area," he said. "It is a win-win."

"Negotiations were amicable; there was a good spirit of collegiality. We think we were able to come up with an agreement that meets the needs of the staff while preserving the financial health of the district," Superintendent Alan Boucher said.

Highlights of the new contract include:

- Bonuses each year for three years
- A base salary increase
- A stipend for college classes
- Communication from the superintendent to occur to the staff and faculty before the com-

munity

- Paid single insurance
- An increase in sick days

"This contract is just the positive start to the 2021-22 school year that the district needed," said Robert Wilson, sixth-grade science teacher at Matherville and lead negotiator for teachers.

He said changes would mean an increase in bonuses and adding two additional sick days for employees who were full-time during the 2020/2021 school year for a total of 16. New employees will receive 14 per year.

Wilson explained how the contracted bonuses work, "Certified staff bonus is \$3,000 per year." "ESP (Educational Support Professionals) bonuses vary: 12-month ESPs receive \$800 per year, 4-to-8-hour per day ESPs receive \$600 per year, and ESPs who

Contract ratified
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It's great to be back: A look at the first days of school



Pictured at left, Emma Schlehuber is a new student at Winola Elementary - she's in Mrs. Litchfield's kindergarten class. Her dad, Matthew, moved their family to the area when he began his new position at the Rock Island Arsenal. Their photo was posted on the district's social media pages where the community graciously welcomed the Schlehuber's to the Sherrard School District Community. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*



Pictured at above, Sherrard Elementary Principal Casey Wyant helps students find their bus as the new year begins *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*

Back to school gallery
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Paving the way for the future



Sherrard Superintendent Alan Boucher

Sherrard School District has a long tradition of having great facilities. A regular routine of renovations, repairs and upgrades is needed to maintain excellence. Recently, the Board of

Education voted to embark on a 14 million-dollar construction plan. The projects include the following:

- Addition on the north side of Sherrard Elementary (includes gym, 2 classrooms, bathrooms and office space)
- New roof over the library section of Sherrard Elementary
- New windows in the original portion of Sherrard Elementary
- New windows in the original portion of Matherville
- New HVAC systems in the classroom portion of Matherville
- Replace the roof over the Matherville gym

- New HVAC systems at Winola Elementary
- New greenhouse at the high school
- New south roof at the high school
- New east roof at the junior high
- New roof on gym 1
- Restructure the boys and girls restrooms near gym 2 into four single-use restrooms
- Renovate the high school science rooms
- Replace the hallway carpet at the junior / senior high schools
- Replace the narrow lockers at the junior / senior high school with traditional-width (wider) lockers
- Renovate the junior /

senior high school locker rooms to allow for more privacy

- Renovate gym 2 at the high school
- Repair exhaust fans for all restrooms
- Pave a portion of the bus barn parking area

There will be numerous funding sources for these projects. The 2014 bond is being restructured to generate 11 million dollars for the projects. The current bond rate will be maintained to avoid a tax increase. Other revenue sources include sales tax money, federal ESSER 3 money, the state's School Maintenance Grant, Health-Life-Safety revenue, and

the transportation cash reserve.

Construction on the high school restrooms will begin over the winter break. All the other projects will start in May. Preparing our community's children for the adult world is the most important thing we do. It is a whole lot easier to do in safe, clean, and up-to-date facilities.

To read more thoughts from Mr. Boucher - go to sherrard.us, on a mobile device, click the 3 lines in top right corner, choose 'Departments', then 'Superintendent', click the plus sign, then 'Supt. Journal'.

Contract ratified continued from front

work four hours and below per day get \$200 each year."

He said the board also came up with a solution for employees in the "retirement loop."

"(They) will have their bonus(es) placed into a 403b retirement account," he said. "Otherwise, they could not get the bonuses because the district could be fined by TRS (Teachers' Retirement System) for allowing the employees to exceed their 6% early retirement loop cap."

Retiring teachers gain access to their 403b account after they fully retire from the district.

"This is new language that the BOE and SEA came up with that, as far as we know, is not used anywhere else in the state," Wilson said.

"It was great being able to work with the same board members again. The bargaining process has run very smoothly the last two contracts. I would like to thank Mr. Boucher and the board members for their time and efforts through this process."

Negotiations began in June. Tammy Crip-

pen, Sherrard Education Association president and high school English teacher, said it took over 80 hours to reach the final agreement.

"It was a very positive and enjoyable experience," she said. "The board and Mr. Boucher listened and understood our concerns. As always, it's a wonderful day, week and year to be a Tiger."

Fullerlove said there was never an "Us-verses-them" mentality.

"We all worked together toward a shared understanding - doing what was best for our students and families of the district," he said.

The contract affects about 200 district teachers and support staff, with the exception of those in non-union job classifications and takes effect retroactively July 1 and runs through the 2023-2024 school year.



Treats at recess: Sherrard Fire Dept.



Sherrard Elementary school's neighbor to the east - Sherrard Fire Dept - brought freezer pops, and served the kids right from the firetruck in August. Volunteer Angie Nelson, pictured above and top right, along with Jaynie Henry, pictured above right, on left - passed out the treats at Sherrard Elementary.

It was a hit with the kids. During morning announcements, Principal Casey Wyant helped build suspense when he told kids to be on the lookout for an afternoon surprise at recess.



Heroes remembered - Football game held on 9/11



Flags representing the branches of the military were flown to help commemorate the day.

Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

When Activities Director Michael Applegate realized the home football game between Sherrard and Erie-Phoetstown was rescheduled for September 11 - he knew we should do something special to commemorate the solemn anniversary.

Before the game, the family of BJ Luxmore took to the field where his jersey number was proudly displayed and officially retired from future use.

It was a surprise to the Luxmores who found out during the announcement.

Leonard Luxmore, BJ's dad, said they were caught off guard by the honor, "It's quite humbling. It's something we certainly didn't expect." He said the last nine years since BJ's passing have seen friends, strangers and organizations honor his son.

"A lot of Gold Star families are concerned that their sacrifice would be forgotten. It's things like this - it's heartwarming that people do remember and always will remember. Not only his sacrifice but everyone who lost their lives on 9/11."

"The Luxmore family means so much to Sherrard. This should have been done a long time ago," said Applegate. BJ played quarterback/corner back on the football team and he played baseball as well. Following his graduation from college in 2009, Luxmore enlisted in the military. Corporal Luxmore was killed in action in 2012 while serving in Afghanistan at the age of 25.

Applegate never got to meet BJ, but he's insistent his memory lives on through Sherrard sports programs, "I have some great coaches on

staff that continue to tell me stories and I laugh at each one. I know he would be somebody right now that would be a true inspiration to the kids if he was here."

"The Luxmore name is again, one of those that's just forever embedded at Sherrard," said Applegate.

Also during the 9/11 remembrance ceremony, senior Fern Ericson was recognized as one of the "Players of the game". She recently enlisted to serve in the Marine Corps following graduation.

"I think that's really important to serve and protect our country and hopefully we can protect it enough to not let anything like that (9/11) happen again."

Two other Sherrard seniors, Noah Bradarich and Ben Scott - have also enlisted to serve in the Marine Corps.

40 Marine Corps enlistees participated in the events, including raising the American flag and a moment of silence. Flags representing all the branches of the military were placed on the opposing team bleachers.

The Sherrard Serves Country and Community organization set up a display lining the sidewalk to the entrance



The family of Bryant "BJ" Luxmore was honored on Sept. 11 before the home football game.

Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator



Left to right, senior Fern Ericson, Marine Corps recruiter Sgt. Steven Touhy, Sgt. Major Tim Gerlovich, and senior Ben Scott.

Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

of the football field recognizing Sherrard and Winola high school graduates who served or are currently serving in the military as well as police officers and firefighters.

Television news stations KWQC and WQAD were on-site to cover the ceremony.

Three Sherrard seniors enlist in Marine Corps



Left to right, senior Noah Bradarich, Marine Corps Recruiter Sgt. Steven Touhy, senior Ben Scott, and senior Fern Ericson. *Photo submitted*

Three Sherrard seniors enlisted in the Marine Corps in August: Ben Scott, Noah Bradarich and Fern Ericson.

Ericson said she has always wanted to be in the military, "My family has been past military members, I wanted to continue the legacy of being in the military and I thought Marines was a good option."

She said her grandfather is her inspiration, "He was in the Navy during the Korean war. He passed away in 2017, and I just hope I'm making him proud up there

by being in the military and being a Marine."

"I think it's really important we keep trying to protect our country," said Ericson. She leaves July 11, 2022.

Scott said, "I wanted to fight and make a difference, that's why I decided infantry." He ships out June 6, 2022.

"My mom and dad were both in the military, so I knew I wanted to be in the military. I was going to go Army, because I knew I wanted to fight," said Bradarich. After more research he chose to enlist in the Marines because, "The

Marine Corps seemed a little tougher, more of a challenge... and that was that."

He said the sports programs at Sherrard have influenced his decision - "I've built some grit from cross country and wrestling."

"I'm definitely excited, I'll be shipping out July 18 of 2022," Bradarich said he would go sooner if he could.



Back to school photos
continued from front

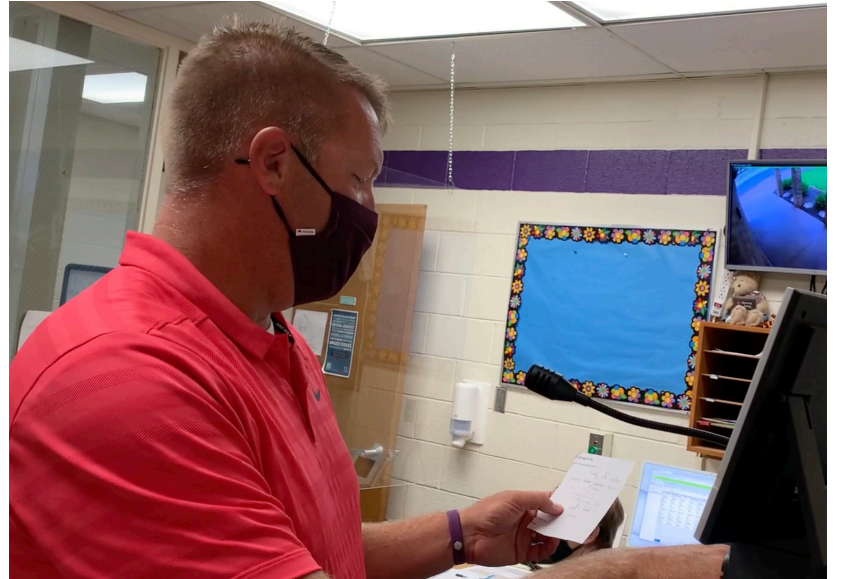
Back to School Gallery



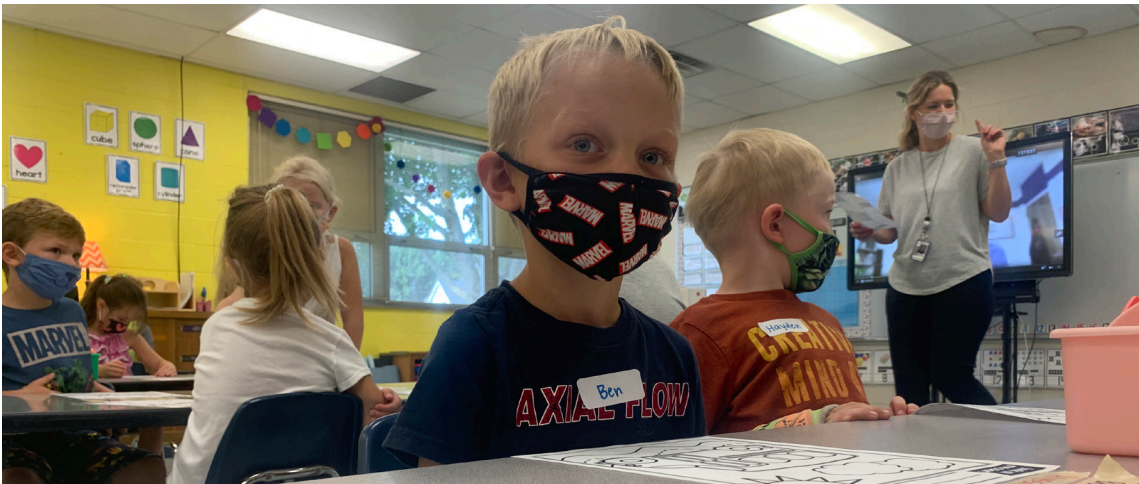
Lane (left) and Shelby Shivers (right) arrived with flowers for their teachers on the first day of school at Winola Elementary, Tuesday, Aug. 10. Mrs. Minch (left) and Mrs. Hoover (right) loved the surprise! Their mother, Tiffany, said it's important to help our teachers feel appreciated.
Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator



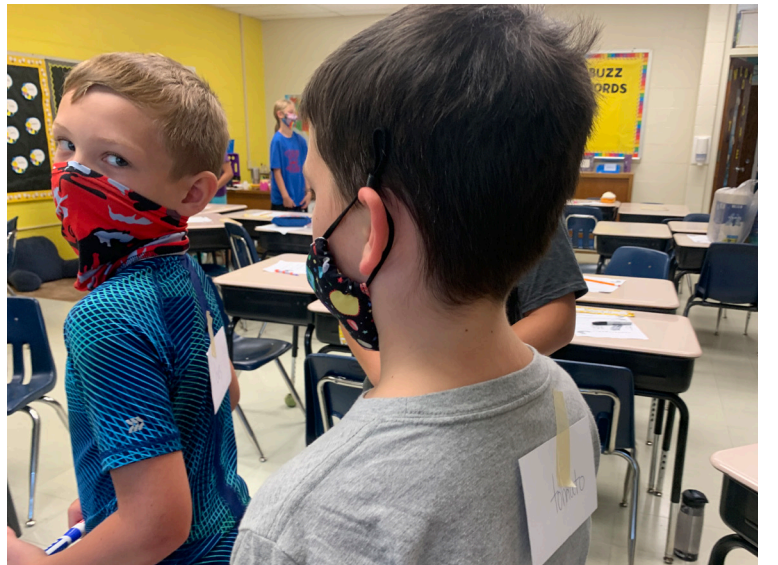
Above, Matherville Intermediate Principal Jeff Shillinger and school counselor Tayler Walker greet students as they enter the building.
Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator



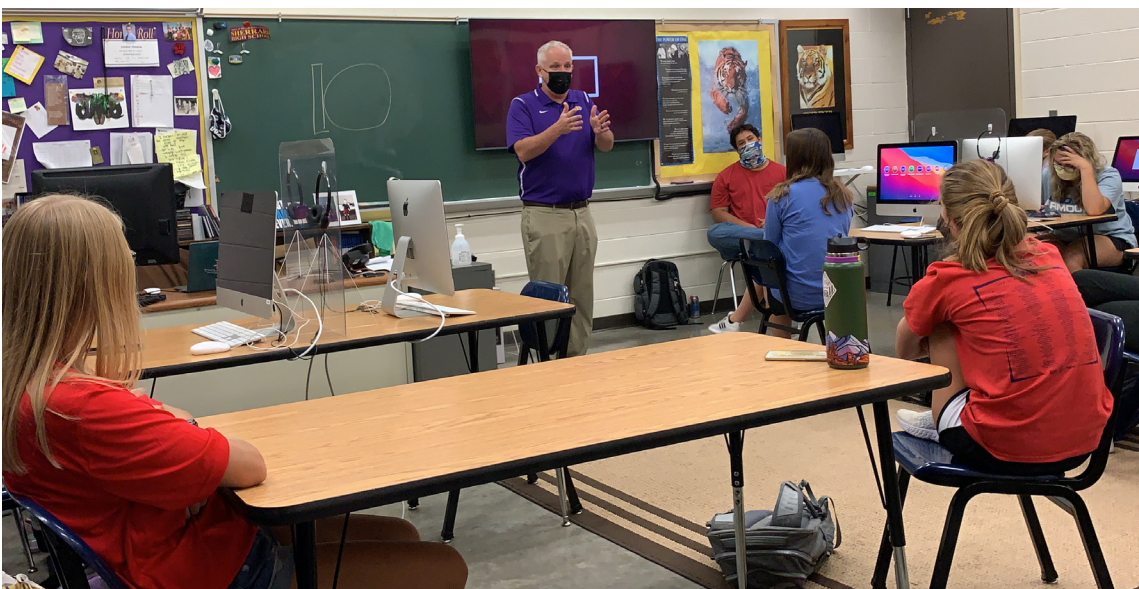
Above, "Why do golfers wear extra socks? In case they get a hole in one." Principal Jeff Shillinger begins morning announcements at Matherville Intermediate with a 'dad joke' each day.
Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator



Above, Ben and Hayden sit next to each other in Stephanie Bohnert's kindergarten class as she goes over a lesson. Below, high school social studies and media production teacher Brian Hutton gets animated as he teaches how attitude affects life experiences.
Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator



Above, In Jackie Kelly's 4th grade classroom at Sherrard Grade - students played a game called, 'Guess who I am?' Yes or no questions could be asked while students tried to determine the word on their own back. Keegan and Landyn worked together to figure it out before time ran out. Below, HS and JH students talk on the way in to the building.
Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator



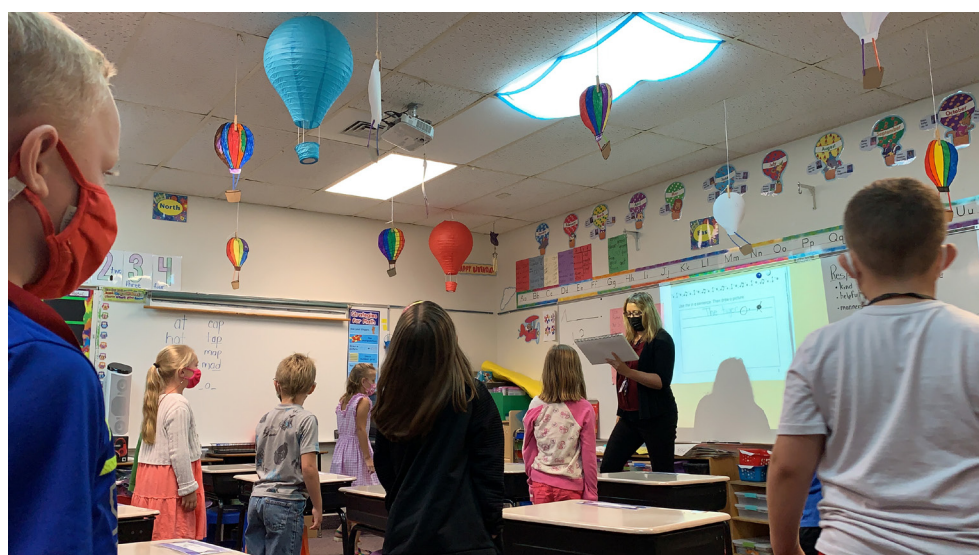
... Back to School Continued



Above, (left to right) Activities Director Michael Applegate, Asst. Principal Alex Johnson and HS Principal Tim Wernentin greet students as they enter. Below, First grade teacher Heather Barber reviewed letter sounds with students. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*



Above, The self-proclaimed "8th Grade Science Squad" is working on mass/matter in Mrs. Dingman's class. Below, MV 5th grade teacher Dana Pickens had students take whatever amount of toilet paper they chose, and then told them they were to come up with one thing about themselves for each TP square. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*



Homecoming court



Front Row - Left to Right, Allison Slavish, Lexi Smith, Addison Knox, Ella Spengler, Kacie Swanson, Brenin Krack, Jacob Werner
Middle Row - Left to Right, Jadea McCray, Clayton Matkovic, Sydney Adamson, Terryn Krup, MaKenna Cameron, Annabelle Anderson, Nadia Anderson, Violet Meskan
Back Row - Left to Right, James Blackwell, Aidan Terronez, Blaine Lucas, Peyton Maynard, Sawyer Mital, Dylan Russell, Payton German *Photo Submitted*

High honor roll recognition



Above, High honor roll achievers pose for the camera. High school Students who made high honor roll both semesters, or high honor and low honor roll each semester during the 2020/2021 school year were awarded in early August. They were recognized with ice cream, a Sherrard School letter and pin. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*

Footloose!



Left, HS PE teacher Sarah Souhrada prepared students for the outdoor homecoming dance with a fun unit.... Students learned the moves to Footloose, to go with the dance theme. Souhrada said homecoming week is her favorite of the school year. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*



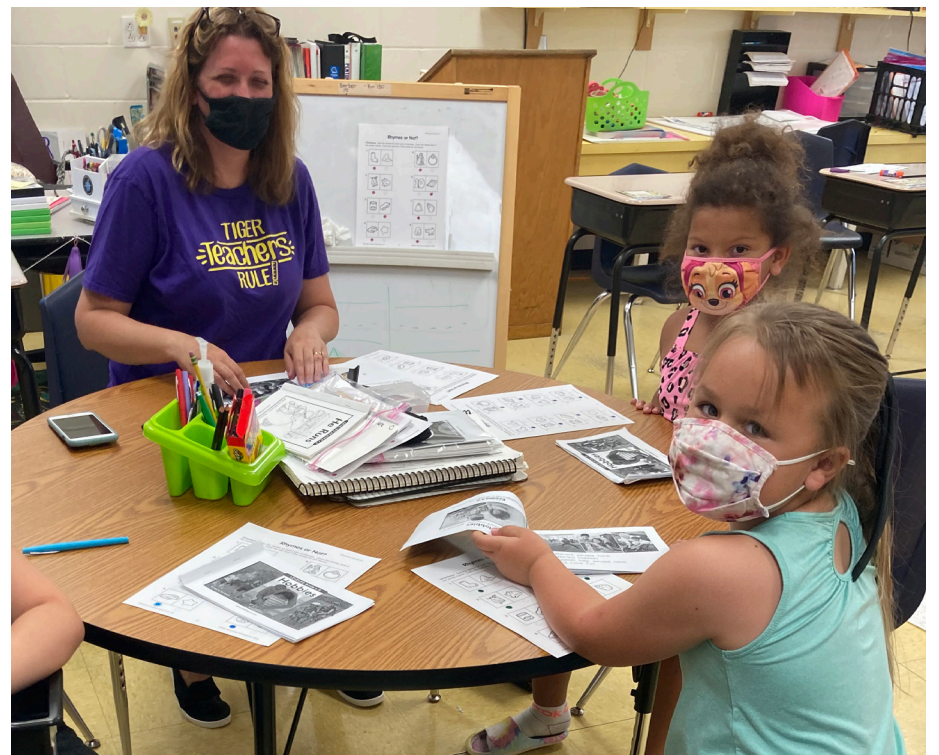
High school garden efforts span school years



Pictured at left, Spring planting means fall produce! Ag Science classes help plant the garden in the spring, FFA members help keep the garden weeded throughout the summer, and incoming classes (pictured at right) get to harvest in the fall. As of Aug. 16 the classes have brought in 1,698 pounds of produce. Students deliver to local food pantries to help feed the community. *Cala Smoldt/Comms. Coord.*



Summer learning - Turned summer camp



Winola Elementary teacher Heather Barber (pictured above on right) was one of the teachers who helped students throughout the summer. Maureen Basala, Sherrard Elementary Reading Specialist summarized how summer school had more of a camp feel, “Most of the teachers tried to make the student’s experience hands-on. Kiddos learned math problem solving through games. Students were focused on themes and we did as much buddy work as we could - safely. Older kiddos reading with younger ones etc. students were learning phonics skills by building and solving secret words.” She added “Moustache Monday” was a big hit (see center photo below).

Maureen Basala/Reading Specialist



Mercer Co. Farm Bureau feeds teachers/staff



The Mercer County Farm Bureau served a pork chop lunch to teachers and staff on Aug. 6 after morning training sessions. It was well-received by all.
Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

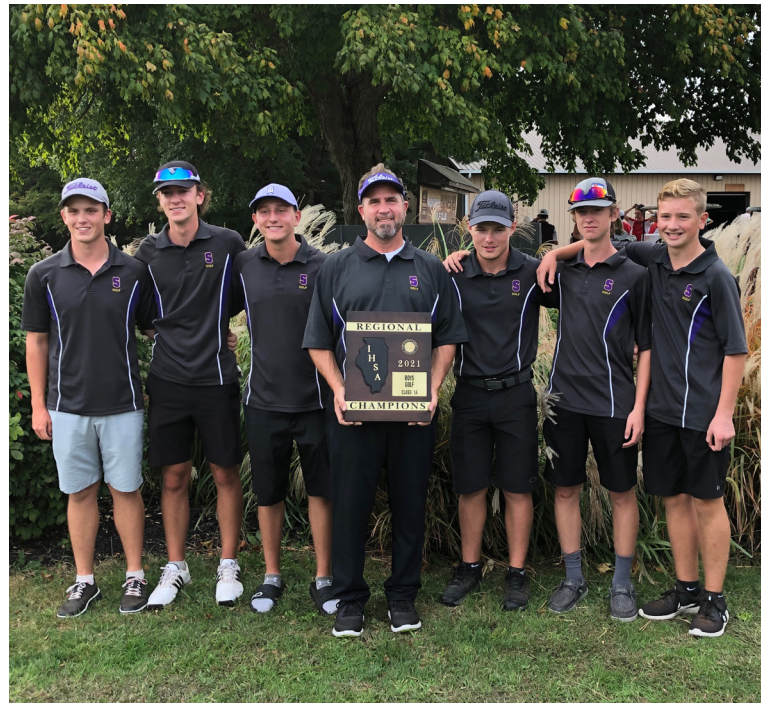
Cross country conference champs



Sherrard Girls Cross Country won the Three Rivers Conference championship meet at Bureau Valley and compete in the IHSA regional on Oct. 23. Congrats to Coach Lopez and the girls. *Photo Submitted*



Boys golf takes regional



Boys golf won the regional championship at the Class 1A Galva boys golf sectional at Midland Golf Club. *Photo Submitted*

Sherrard stars rise over the water

The Sherrard School District houses four students with a unique talent... water skiing, in the air in a pyramid formation. They're part of the Backwater Gamblers water ski show club out of Rock Island.

For nine year old Audrey Foster, water skiing is life. She said she's been doing it her whole life, "I learned how to climb four tiers, I did most of the pyramids and I started straps - a type of water skiing where you sit on the guy's shoulders and do harder moves than conventionals." She said 'conventionals' are the same thing - but with a harness and a rope.

Foster enjoys practicing her moves at Fyre Lake.

She talks like a true expert in her art, "It doesn't really depend on muscle, it depends on skill and agility... sometimes flexibility especially for the handstand."

Foster's favorite part is, "The Press - pressing off the guy's hands that are raised up," while extending her legs out horizontally while raised in the air. "All the pressure is on your stomach

- not really your hands," she said.

Backwater Gamblers is a family sport - the rest of Audrey's family is also a part of the team, including her younger brother Hunter, age seven, who has also been water skiing his whole life.

Audrey's mom, Trista, has been with the show for over 30 years. "This is an organization in which I'm able to participate with multiple generations of my family, including my husband, kids, mother, stepfather, sister, brother-in-law, and nephews and nieces. Additionally, my teammates have become family also. It's wonderful to be able to share something I enjoy so much with the people I love," she said.

Ten year old Kiera Shillinger said when she first started at age six it was a little scary, and every now and then it still is when she's on the top, "Sometimes it's a little wavy depending on how choppy the water is. Sometimes when the water is smooth it's fine, but it's a little scary up there when it's wavy."

She explained how

it works to climb pyramids, in the air, while water skiing, "You stand on a guy, put your foot on the guy or girl's leg, and climb all the way up. If you want to do a four-tier, you'll climb all the way to the top."

Shillinger said judges place the teams based on how they perform, "How many falls we have. If our staging is good, then we'll get better on that too - and how high our pyramids are."

"It's really fun," she said. Shillinger's older sister Kennedy, 13, is also on the team and their parents serve as support staff.

The team has 120 people of all ages, as young as 18 mo. and as old as

68 serve as support staff, sound, stage, boat crews and around 50 members ski in the shows.

Numerous Sherrard alumni have been part of the Backwater Gamblers show team over the years.

To end the 2021 season the team placed 2nd in the Central Regional Tournament in Wisconsin and 5th best in the country in the Show Ski National Championships.



Kiera Shillinger is pictured on the top far left pyramid; Kennedy Shillinger is in the middle pyramid - one tier below the top on the left; Audrey Foster is at the top on the far right pyramid. *Photo Submitted by Trista Foster*

Innovation lab planned



WQAD reporter Josh Lamberty (at right) met with Sherrard Technology Coach Steve Miller (left) about what the district is doing with a \$97,000 grant from the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation. The interview aired on WQAD in several news spots on Sept. 10 and continuing. *Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator*

The Sherrard School District was granted \$97,000 from the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation, a private foundation administered by the Quad Cities Community Foundation. The District will be able to take multiple approaches to its commitment to innovation, from outfitting an innovation lab for junior high and high school students to providing ongoing teacher training.

“These grants will aid investments in some amazing tech—but no one piece of equipment captures how far their impact will reach,” said Kelly Thompson, vice president of grantmaking and community initiatives at the Quad Cities Community Foundation. “Students will see the benefits of a strong foundation for years to come, and the entire Mercer County community will be better off for it.”

For Steve Miller, Sherrard instructional technology coach, preparing students for the future means equipping them to solve problems with technology, including coding and robotics. While this curriculum will set students up to excel in the area’s agricultural and manufacturing industries, it will also equip them with uni-

versal skills like critical thinking and collaboration.

In upgrading the junior high and high school’s library and media space into an innovation lab, Sherrard is taking a cue from its own success with a similar project in its elementary and intermediate schools, also supported by the Looser-Flake Foundation.

According to Miller, flexible, modular technology and furniture will take the connectivity teachers and students learned last year with remote classes to new heights.

“We want students to be able to pick up their chairs so they can work in a group or gather around a monitor to collaborate,” said Miller. “And we’re creating spaces that kids want to be in.”

According to Miller, Sherrard’s teacher trainings will welcome educators from partner districts so that as many teachers—and students—as possible will benefit. “We may be in Sherrard, but we want kids in Orion and Rockridge to thrive.”

The advancements supported by the grants also show surrounding areas just what Sherrard is capable of. “A lot of people think of us as a

school in a corn field; they don’t expect us to be able to offer this type of technology or education,” said Miller.

“The Looser-Flake Foundation has accelerated what we can do, and we’re only getting started. We’re so grateful—I don’t know another word for it—for the way we can expand our education for teachers, students, and the community.”

For the last four years, the Looser-Flake Foundation has granted over \$600,000 to educational technology projects in support of the Mercer County Better Together Action Plan’s aim to strengthen supplemental education opportunities for Mercer County students. While the combined funds requested by the Sherrard and Mercer school districts exceeded the original budget for this year’s education grant program, Looser-Flake’s trustees found the requests so compelling that they fully funded both.

To see the full interview aired on WQAD visit our YouTube channel, “Sherrard School District” under the playlist, Sherrard SD on TV.



Above - the JH/HS library in it’s current state. Remnants of old tech can still be seen, like tube TV’s mounted in some areas. *Cala Smoldt*



Above - the potential 3D floor plan showing what the lab may look like once complete. Currently, the plan is to keep the giant yellow reference desk on the east side of the library. *Cala Smoldt*



Above - An up close depiction of the comfortable, modern seating area designed with student collaboration in mind. *Cala Smoldt*



Above, an already completed Innovation Lab at Sherrard Elementary. Funds from the Looser-Flake Foundation made it possible for both elementary schools in the district to recreate the space. *Cala Smoldt*



Forward-thinking Sherrard, tech ready

How do educators engage remote learners? What if teachers could teach students from home? What kind of technology does it take to teach both in-person and remote students... in a pandemic? These, and a plethora of other questions plagued school district's across the country in March 2020 when officials announced the Coronavirus pandemic had entered the United States.

Sherrard School District was already on the forefront of technology use as a tool in classrooms. They had already successfully adopted a 1:1 (one to one) chromebook technology initiative in 2015 that provided chromebooks for students in 3rd - 12th grade. Existing infrastructure, like Infinite Campus, was already a familiar tool for parents and students to use for real-time access to administration, instruction, communication, curriculum, reporting and more.

Since schools were shut-down following spring break 2020, officials had to get creative, and fast.

At first, for one Sherrard technology coordinator, Jay Wyckoff, it was a strain. From March - May 2020 he said he would fix chromebooks and transport them back and forth

to Sherrard Elementary for students there; parents would drop off and pick-up at their child's building location in the district. It's Wyckoff's job to make everything work from the single chromebook up to the whole general network, and everything in between - equipment-wise.

Once school started back up in August 2020, Sherrard was one of the only districts, locally,

been very supportive of technology. Not only policies, but with money. We were very prepared for this," he said.

In his public superintendent journal, written in September 2020 found on the Sherrard school website, Superintendent Alan Boucher discussed technology limitations, "While some of our students have all the connectivity they need to fully participate in

"I am proud of what we are continuing to build out here in Sherrard."

- Tech Coach Steve Miller

offering in-person, five-day week learning, with modified start times to accommodate teachers who also had fully remote/elearners.

Wyckoff said there was no significant difference for his side of district tech once August hit. "From my standpoint things were already in place that would've needed to be in place. The network infrastructure, remote abilities were already built in because students were taking their chromebooks home on a nightly basis and doing their homework.

"Once we went full remote it was just an extension of that... Kudos to the board - our community and superintendent have always

remote learning, some don't. Some families cannot afford an internet connection and some families live in internet dead zones that cannot get an internet signal. Internet connectivity must become a national priority if we want to reap the awesome benefits of technology."

In the following months, the district found ways to get internet access to remote students.

Outdoor wireless internet access was installed at two locations in the rural district, one in New Windsor the other in Cable, for those families and students with limited internet access. WIFI was also extended from the school buildings to cover large areas of school parking lots. The district covers a vast 182 square miles.

Sherrard's second technology coordinator, Janette Finch, handles the software side of district tech. She said the biggest change for her was how attendance was recorded for remote students.

"It created a lot of issues - previously only had to mark present, absent, etc., now they're requiring us to tell specifically, 'Is the student a remote learner or in-person learner.'" She said the technology already in place made that change more convenient, "Because we use the virtual piece - it was easier to do attendance than other districts who had



Janette Finch, Sherrard technology coordinator, works behind the scenes to keep necessary data turned in to the state, including testing scores and attendance. Thanks to Finch the school's website has been modernized to fit mobile devices and is more user friendly.

Cala Smoldt/Communications Coordinator

to record info on spreadsheets," she said.

Finch also handled the new website that had to be recreated in the midst of the pandemic. The district website, www.sherrard.us is now mobile friendly, "It didn't change because of the pandemic, the template we were using was retired - it got more modern," she said.

Behind the scenes, Finch uploads all the users for testing and reports data required by the state.

Wyckoff and Finch work in tandem, "She handles more the data. Over the years, the more software products we use, and with testing requirements, she's almost full time working with that kind of data," said Wyckoff.

Sherrard technology coach, Steve Miller, handles classroom level technology challenges. He has researched, applied for grants, and implemented technology used district-wide to enhance student and teacher success. He said upwards of \$221,000 came from the Looser-Flake Foundation, CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act and ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) grant funds totaling around \$378,544

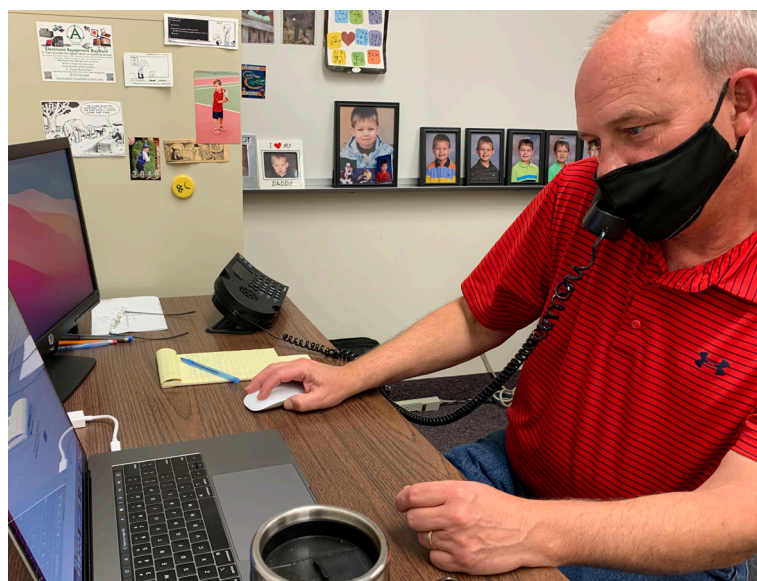
- for technology and student access, combined - almost \$600,000.

He explained how technology was instrumental in academic continuity during the 2020/2021 school year.

"When a teacher went into quarantine following contact tracing, yet they experienced little to no symptoms, they could choose to continue to teach both in-person and remote students from their home. Thanks to the work done by district leaders as they planned for every eventuality throughout the (2020) summer months," said Miller - who was instrumental in coordinating the logistics for the in-class technology needed to succeed at such a feat.

"The Juno audio system in the teacher's room makes it seem like they're in the room with their students as well. They could also utilize Google Classroom so students can access and submit assignments and assessments." The Juno Audio System also amplifies teacher voices when in the room with a pendant worn around the neck - this is helpful to project their voices when it would otherwise be muffled by facemasks. Miller said using mul-

District tech
continued on page 10



Above - Jay Wyckoff, Sherrard technology coordinator manages the district's chromebook 1:1 (one to one) system, including repairs, and software updates. He also troubleshoots and repairs school-issued computers and laptops for staff and teachers, among other things.

Cala Smoldt Communications Coordinator

District tech

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multiple digital tools is a type of, "Appsmashing, where you're basically using multiple applications and tech tools to create a learning experience; in this case a full digital learning environment."

Teachers used Google Meet on their device at home that then connected to the student's Chromebook in the classroom. A classroom facilitator projected the teacher's screen for the whole class to see. The teacher could then interact with students live.

"This kept the relationship factor in place as education is always all about the relationships between people first and foremost," said Miller.

He said teachers used all the Google Meet tools to enhance the learning environment so they could mirror the physical learning environment as much as possible during remote teaching - and elearning.

Boucher said many of the technology solutions the district implemented will likely endure.

"We all grew up completing assignments and turning them in using paper. Remote learning has forced us to increase our utilization of electronic assignments and tests. Students now upload their work into a learning management system and no longer have to worry about putting their names on their work... I think it is too early to know exactly how our district will be changed as a result of this pandemic, but one thing is certain: it will."

In the early months Miller was constantly problem-solving and helping teachers and students learn new tools and find creative solutions, "I love seeing teachers feel success with their students and choose tools for the classrooms that can enhance the instructional environment. I'm just the anesthesiologist for the educators; behind

the scenes and feeding teachers at the right instructional moments to create successful learning outcomes."

The technology needed had to evolve overnight - when on March 17, 2020, when Illinois Governor JB Pritzker shut down schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Teachers used creativity to connect with children, during that final quarter of 2020 when education was completely remote.

Matherville Intermediate math teacher, Stacy Harroun, said the way she taught math was varied, "I think math is such a tricky subject for remote learning because students learn math in so many different ways, and one-on-one connection is so important."

"I tried to make it sound like I am in the classroom with them teaching from my Clevvertouch so it feels as normal as possible for them. The only difference is that I sometimes had small assistants, a three year old (Ella) and five year old (Evelyn) (at the time), who liked to chime in and "help" teach every now and then," said Harroun.

When students had questions, she made specific videos tailored to them.

For intermediate language arts teacher, Elisabeth Tomlin, it was important to go the extra mile to keep students engaged, "I climbed a tree for the first time in many years, jumped on a trampoline, showed them my mini donkeys, and even wore a talking Chewbacca mask to get a few laughs," she said. "I've just tried to make it as interesting of a thing as possible. If doing something out of my comfort zone brings a smile, it was worth it."

While all students are in-person at Sherrard Schools this school year

- Miller said technology in the classroom means they're well equipped for remote - but supporting relationships is the priority, "We should never get too comfortable with a plan. One day things could work flawlessly and the next day those same variables could all fall apart. We have to be ok with that and

"Tough times don't last, tough people do." - Superintendent Alan Boucher

still know that it's our actions and attitude that can be controlled during those times. Students will learn more from us during those times than anything else."

The tech trio create a technology driven, problem-solving force. Miller said the technology it took to operate a district during a pandemic took the three of them to, "Operate and flow on a daily basis." He gave credit to Wyckoff and Finch, "Their knowledge base is off the charts when it comes to the understanding of infrastructure and informational data. They will never get enough credit for what they do because it is never seen, but I am grateful to have them by my side, especially during such a heavily digital educational time."

The high school's Chromebook repair course that began in 2017 as a way to teach students to solve problems simultaneously solved its own. At the time, they didn't know just how crucial the class would become.

Two years after the inception of the district's 1:1 chromebook initiative, "It was evident I would need help to keep up with the demand," said Wyckoff. He completed nearly 1200 repairs to the chromebooks by himself - until the repair class was created. The class allowed him to

focus on other technological responsibilities - last year, namely - remote learning.

Through special grants related to covid, the district was able to expand that 1:1 initiative and provide chromebooks to 1st and 2nd grade students last school year.

"I'm involved in the repair process by checking student work, training students and consulting on more difficult repairs, but almost all of the repairs are completed by the students," said Wyckoff. As students in the repair class help other students - it means a faster turnaround for waiting students. Time is a crucial component as many teachers rely heavily on online resources. By the end of last school year, Chromebook repairs exceeded 4,000.

Miller is constantly looking for new ways to support teachers and students efficiently. Plans are in the works to convert the junior high and high school library into an "innovation lab". Another grant from the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation totaling \$97,000 will go a long way to that end.

Funds from the foundation in the past have already established innovation labs in place of 'old-school' computer labs in the elementary schools.

Miller said, given the evolving nature of technology - mistakes will be made along the way, "but that's part of the process." He said, "The teachers in this district are authentic. What they do here on a daily basis is find ways to make the learning experience better for students.

They constantly ask themselves how they can create better opportunities for kids. While technology could lag at times and circumstances can change from day to day... these educators are up to the task and don't back down from whatever is in front of them. "I

am proud of what we are continuing to build out here in Sherrard,"

Boucher - who is set to retire at the end of this school year, said in his superintendent journal entry, "Tough times don't last, tough people do... To quote A.A. Milne, 'You are braver than you believe, smarter than you seem, and stronger than you think.'"



Mrs. Crippen: On the road



Sherrard High School English Teacher Tammy Crippen along with her daughter, 2017 Sherrard grad Claire Crippen went to see the Today Show in New York where they also saw Keith Urban perform early September. This trip will cross off several items from Tammy's bucket list, something she uses as a teaching tool with students each year.

"I have been doing this for years. It's a great goal setting assignment. I tweak my bucket list and share it every year with the students."

She said when she saw an email from the Today Show with an opportunity to see a Keith Urban concert for free she applied.

On Aug. 25 she received a call from a producer of the Today Show granting her ticket.

"On my bucket list is a trip to New York, meeting Hoda Kotb, seeing Keith Urban, traveling with my kids, seeing the 9/11 Memorial... My seniors are so excited, and I am beyond the moon," Tammy said prior to the trip.

Photo Submitted

Hollins: Lessons from the field



Steven Hollins pictured with his crop of sweet corn. Photo submitted

Eleven year old Steven Hollins, 6th grader at Matherville Intermediate, learned how to manage a plot of sweet corn last summer. He said it all started when he got a text from his dad asking him if he would like to grow his own half acre section.

"I thought about what a cool experience in the summer it would be, this was like two weeks before the end of the school year," said Steven.

According to his dad, Jamie Hollins, Steven was involved in every

task, "From plowing to planting to putting up an electric fence, to creating a way to sell it. He has made a record book with expenses. He really has done a ton of work," said Jamie.

The plot was at his grandpa's house near Milan, "I plowed a sweet corn patch over at his house - I asked him if I could have some of his land."

"A bunch of people helped me out..." Steven said a nearby farmer friend donated fertilizer and the use of some

equipment.

"We went to a farm show and I got a plow and a disc, the disc we got was filled with potatoes so we couldn't use it."

"My dad was also a really big help because he works for Martin Tractor in Aledo, he already knew how to do this."

Steven said they installed an electric fence to protect the crop from pests, "My grandpa was so judgy about it - he put his foot under and said, 'my foot can fit under, a raccoon can get under there'... I looked the next day, not a single thing was taken down," he said proudly.

He told a story about his dad checking the electric fence, "The funny part was - he grabbed

the electric fence, he grabbed it - and zap! he went 'OW!' I could hear him across the cornfield," he laughed.

He learned how adverse weather affects crops, "The sad part was - went to pick a batch, a storm happened the previous night. Half of the corn in the batch was down. It was very hard to get through there and pick. The old batch that was already sold out, the storm didn't even touch it!" Steven said.

His first batch was sold by his grandparents at the end of their drive - since he was out of town. "My grandma said, 'You did \$180', I was surprised how much people would buy!" said Steven.

He donated half his earnings, about \$500, to MLB First Baseman



Above, Steven sold his sweet corn by the dozen for \$5. Photo submitted

Anthony Rizzo's family foundation to support pediatric cancer patients and their families.

"We thought it was cool that he came up with this idea of donating to the Rizzo foundation," said Jamie, "We are very proud of what he has done," said Jamie.

The lessons keep coming, his dad said, "We are teaching him how to open an account and how to write a check plus balance his checkbook."

His parents helped him tally how much he owed for seed, and other expenses.

"It was an amazing summer project," said Steven. The other half of his earnings are saved to do it all again next year.



Jamie Hollins is in the tractor with his son Steven as they fertilize his half acre of sweet corn field together.

Photo submitted



Sherrard FFA for the win: Horse Judging



Left to right, Abby Weber (kneeling), Lily Passno, Anna Taylor, Ag Instructor and FFA Advisor Bill Hammes, Alexis Wehrheim, Andrew Wehrheim, and Kylie Foster (kneeling). Cala Smoldt

"We all have our own expertise that went into winning - so we were consistent with our scores," said Alexis Wehrheim, a Sherrard sophomore about her team's win.

The Sherrard FFA team won first place in the Non-Reasons division out of 46 schools in the Illinois State FFA Horse Evaluation CDE (Career Development Event) competition held at Black Hawk East, Kewanee on Saturday, Sept. 18.

The team has four members, Wehrheim's twin brother Andrew and juniors Anna Taylor, and Lily Passno.

Sherrard Ag teacher and FFA Advisor Bill Hammes explained how horse judging competitions work, "In a contest, they will have four animals in the class. The contestants will place them first through fourth place, depending on how they see it. Their placing is compared to the officials, and how the professionals place them,

and the points are given on how close or far away they are to them. Fifty points is a perfect score."

Hammes said it's amazing to him that individually, none of the kids placed in the top 10 as individuals, "Their individual placings ranged from 14th to 25th. Their consistency is what carried them through."

He said in the four Performance (or riding) classes, students judged things like whether the

FFA Win

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FFA Win

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horse and rider complete the pattern correctly, if the horse resisted any of the commands, the height the horse carries it's head, head bobbing, does the horse fully extend its legs when at the walk, trot and canter, along with good attitude/character, etc.

In the four halter classes students judge the horse's conformation and balance, how defined the horse's muscles are especially in the gaskins and between the stifles, "If the horse has too long of a neck, or too big of a head, it looks goofy, so you would place another horse over them," said Alexis Wehrheim.

Andrew said the purpose is to, "Get to know the horse, and figure out the horse world," to help develop the skills for choosing their own quality horses depending on

their use.

He explained the process, "We're on opposite sides (of the arena), all spread apart. We really had to trust each other to try to make it work." He said there were so many other people, they had to try to cut in front of them, "Otherwise you can't see. You get like 15 minutes for each class to judge it."

"I wasn't expecting to get that far," when Mr. Hammes told Anna Taylor they placed first, she had a big reaction, "I was about to start crying, I was just so happy."

Alexis said they only practiced a handful of times - and they were all shocked they won, since they signed up for the competition so late in the game.

"We already had an idea of what to look for... Our knowledge and what Mr. Hammes taught us - it came together and we all pulled it off," said Alexis.

Taylor said she already knew what some of the judges would be looking for since she has shown horses from age 10. But she said her favorite part was working as a team.

Alexis said when they first arrived, they were nervous by the large number of competitors, "We just went for it." She said she was surprised when she heard they won, "It was over the moon happiness."

Each team member comes from a long background of showing horses and riding which proved invaluable.

In the Non-Reasons Division they do not move on to the next level - but they plan to prepare in advance for next year's competition and sign up for the Reasons Division. Had they won first in the Reasons Division they would go on to compete at the National level.

Mexican Parade

The Sherrard Student Cultural Exchange Club (SCEC) (pictured below) walked in the Mexican Independence Day Parade of East Moline, held on Sept. 19.

Club sponsor, spanish teacher Ana Lopez said, "This celebration of hispanic heritage is a great experience for the students."

"The opportunity allowed students to experience hispanic culture, food and traditions included, in a more real and personal way."

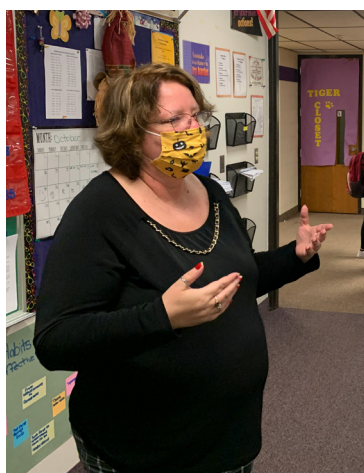
Kayla Easley, Samantha Avila, Sandra Avila Dilay Acar, Isabel Lee-son, Emma Mulkey, Katie Barnhouse and Gina Steckel participated.



Members of the SCEC pose for a photo during the Mexican Parade. *Photo submitted*

High school earns gold standard: Financial literacy

Sherrard High School was awarded the Gold Standard by Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF) in September. NGPF is a non-profit with a mission to ensure



Lori Arnold teaches several business courses at Sherrard High School. Among those include: accounting, marketing, business ownership and law. *Cala Smoldt*

every high school student in America takes a personal finance course by the year 2030. The organization has provided curriculum, teacher professional development and advocacy tools to over 53,000 financial educators at no cost.

Montana State University researchers teamed up with NGPF to evaluate thousands of high school course catalogs and graduation requirements on the following scale: Bronze Standard Schools offer some personal finance instruction in less than one continuous semester, often by embedding it into other courses (e.g. Economics); Silver Standard Schools offer

at least one semester of personal finance as a standalone elective OR offer a standalone personal finance course as one option among multiple that can fulfill a one semester graduation requirement; and Gold Standard Schools ensure all students take at least one standalone semester course in personal finance before graduation.

Outside the six states (AL, MO, UT, MS, TN and VA) that currently guarantee every high school student will take a personal finance course, researchers identified 1,591 Gold Standard Schools, Sherrard High School is among them. You can see the entire state's data on NG-

PF's Got Finance? Map.

High School Business Teacher, Lori Arnold said, "I really enjoy teaching personal finance to juniors and seniors. These are real life lessons on how to budget, complete a 1040 tax form, financial depositories, credit cards, loans, credit scores. School is where life-changing financial education can reach all young adults."

NGPF co-Founder Tim Ranzetta said, "Gold Standard Schools show remarkable leadership, surging ahead of state progress on financial education instead of waiting for a mandate. The teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community leaders

in these schools show what can happen when a coalition commits to build the financial capability of the next generation."

K-12 financial education has recently found the spotlight with 26 state legislatures introducing bills to expand access to financial education in public schools in 2021.

"We are so blessed at SHS to have forward-thinking teachers who understand what students need to be successful in the 21st Century. This is kudos to our business department for their continued outstanding efforts," said Sherrard High School Principal Tim Wernentin.



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