

# School District of New Berlin Expecting Excellence

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## BEYOND the Classroom

Every Wednesday after school and into the early evening hours, a handful of New Berlin high school students get together at the district office's garage and warehouse.

In one corner, you'll find two people donning helmets, a student carefully following his mentor's instructions as he tries his hand at welding for the first time. Another student grips a multi-purpose saw and works diligently to modify a frame, nodding along in agreement as his mentor offers suggestions.

Other students gather around and work on removing a tire from a rim, while a couple others test and replace the battery needed to bring their creation to life.

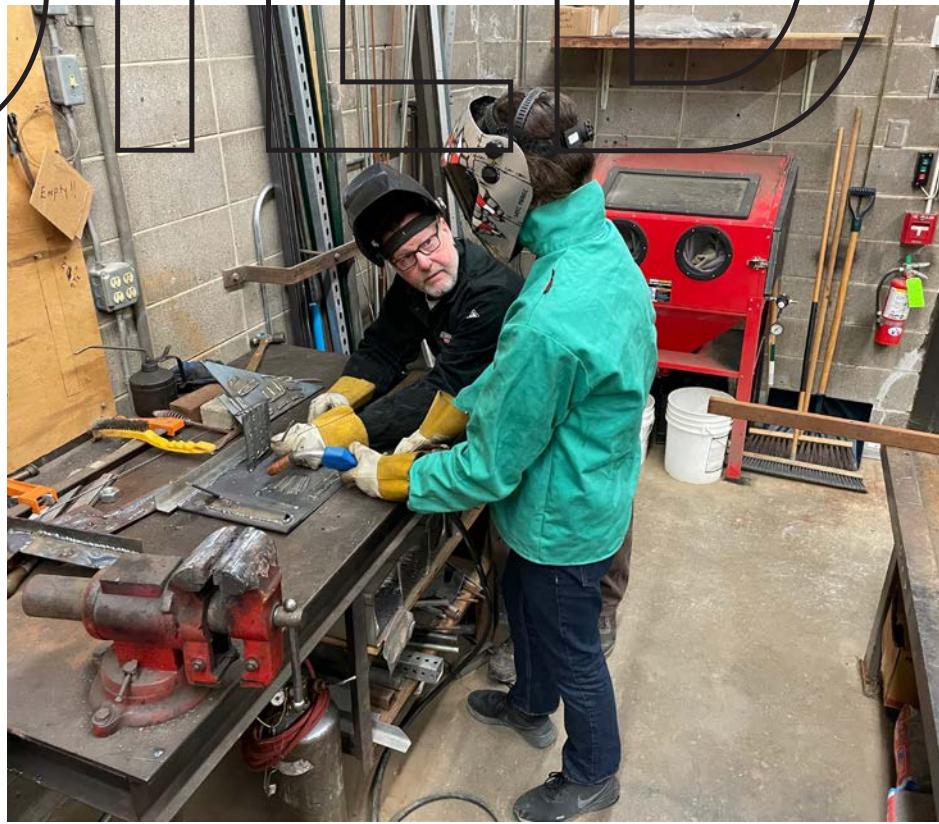
These students - and their mentors - are part of the School District of New Berlin's BUILD vintage motorcycle club. From January through May, the Eisenhower and West students learn the many tasks required to take a street-legal motorcycle and turn it into a flat track racing cycle.

"I'm all about working in a garage and working with my hands and tools, and you get to rip down a bike and build it back up again," West senior Glenn Langer said. "I've learned a lot, and it surely stimulated my passion for cars and motorcycles."

Glenn is one of about a dozen students in the club, which has been offered in New Berlin since the 2014-15 school year. They perform the entire



Eisenhower and West students spend hours each week learning how to tear down and rebuild a motorcycle through the SDNB's BUILD program.



Doug Giesfeldt (pictured above) is one of BUILD's advisors. Giesfeldt is joined by a team of mentors who all share a passion for motorcycles.

deconstruction and rebuild of the motorcycle under the close supervision of their mentors. They can expect to learn how to weld; cut, shape and form metal; use machines such as a lathe, mill and drill press; and learn about the painting processes including powder coating.

But there's more to it than just building a motorcycle. The students are involved in fundraising, manage the team's social media platforms and more. And come May, they will take their bike to several racing venues to compete against other high school BUILD programs from across the state.

"We're a team. We look out for each other and help each other and that's what it's all about," said one of the club advisors, Doug Giesfeldt, who is on the district's buildings and grounds staff.

"They're getting some hands-on skills they might not get otherwise. Myself and the other mentors, we all grew up working on stuff. It's beneficial for these kids. Maybe one of them will turn out to be a motorcycle mechanic, or auto mechanic, but if not, they learn how to fix things on their own car or bike in their garage someday."

The club, which benefits from its many sponsors and partnerships throughout the area, has sparked Glenn's interest in becoming a performance mechanic. What's more, it also raised his understanding - and fondness - of motorcycle culture. He recently purchased his own 1972 Honda, just like the ones the club typically works on.

"There really isn't anything like this (in high school)," Glenn said. "I think it's incredibly important that the district offers BUILD; even if you don't have any mechanical inclination, it's a great way to learn, and to make new friends."

As Glenn alluded to, neither Eisenhower nor West offers an automotive class, but instead, the district partners with Waukesha County Technical College to provide opportunities for students to take various classes for college credit. Many times, the courses offered by WCTC would be too cost-prohibitive for individual high schools or public school districts to offer on their own.

Annually, dozens of SDNB students enroll at WCTC. In 2020-21 alone, SDNB students enrolled in 668 WCTC transcribed credit courses and earned 1,512 college credits, an estimated tuition value of nearly \$215,000.

One of those such students is West senior Matthew Cannon. Matthew remembers learning about BUILD at a STEM fair the district hosted when he was in middle school. He already had an interest in racing and cars, and knew BUILD was for him when he joined as a freshman. Four years later, he is earning his associate degree in automotive technology at Waukesha County Technical College.

"It's really important that the district offers opportunities like BUILD to show students this field that's growing and needs more people in it," Matthew said. "And if they like working with their hands and get bored sitting in a classroom, this is another thing they can do to be creative and use different skills."

***If you are interested in supporting the BUILD program through a sponsorship or financial donation, please contact [doug.giesfeldt@nbexcellence.org](mailto:doug.giesfeldt@nbexcellence.org).***

# BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH INCLUSION

Miranda Loyo is a junior at New Berlin Eisenhower High School. Her sister has special needs, so Miranda knows firsthand how the special needs community is one that more people need to be involved with.

That's why she joined the school's Best Buddies program. Best Buddies meets at least once a month, and brings typically developing students together with students with disabilities in a non-academic setting where they can build friendships through conversations and fun activities.

"I like how simple it is to hang out with people and make friends," Miranda said. "There can be a lot of judgement when it comes to making friends in high school, especially when it comes to mixing kids with special needs and non-special needs students. But there's no pressure to make friends when you join Best Buddies."

Best Buddies is an international program with nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide. Both Eisenhower and West resurrected their programs during the 2019-20 school year and the benefits are widespread.

"The Best Buddies program supports our district's vision and values," said SDNB's Director of Student Services Amanda Mazurkiewicz. "We know that students succeed when they are provided a supportive, caring environment, one that recognizes and prepares them for life in a diverse society. Best Buddies provides authentic opportunities for all students to belong."

So far this school year, Eisenhower Best Buddies have held a karaoke event, went on a scavenger hunt and attended the Homecoming game and dance together. On a cold January afternoon, the buddies had a movie "night", fittingly watching Disney's *Frozen*. At West, students have played UNO and musical chairs, worked on holiday crafts and enjoyed visits to a pumpkin farm and a bowling alley.

"The laughter and the excitement they all share together - they are just happy to be together," said Jody Brill, a retired special education assistant, and one of the club advisors at Eisenhower.

Anywhere from 30-40 West students attend a typical Best Buddies meeting or event, with about 25 Eisenhower students doing the same. Club members actively recruit classmates to join by talking to their peers, hanging posters, passing out flyers and using social media.

Student officers help organize the activities and events. Brill and Kathy Syltie, a speech and language pathologist at Eisenhower serve as advisors for that school's club; Sara Cortichiato, a math teacher, and Tessa Benedon, also a speech and language pathologist, do the same for West's.

The goal is to ultimately pair up peer buddies and buddies together for one-to-one friendships that extend beyond the club's planned activities, matching students with similar interests and fostering friendships that might include going to a high school basketball game together or grabbing lunch on the weekend. Cortichiato said Best Buddies serves as that bridge.

"Best Buddies increases access to friendship," she said. "We are creating a positive atmosphere for anyone who wants to make friends. Those involved with Best Buddies make it known to everyone that we welcome all students. For some students, this club allows them to meet new people and interact with peers that they don't see as often during the school day."



## STUDENT Shout Outs

The **Eisenhower dance** team defended its back-to-back state championships, winning the Wisconsin Association of Cheer/Pom Coaches jazz and pom titles for the third straight year in early February.

New Berlin West senior **Meghan Schultz** became just the third girls player in school history to reach the 1,000-career-point mark. Meghan joined the club with a 28-point effort Feb. 4, joining former Vikings greats Tierra Shirley and Alyssa Nelson at the top of West's all-time scorers list.

In February, more than 300 orchestra members came together to perform at **String Fest**, a live and live-streamed evening concert for families and the community. The elementary schools combined orchestras, middle school combined orchestras, concert orchestras and chamber orchestras were featured on their own pieces and performed together for the grand finale.



## SPONSORSHIPS ENHANCE COMMUNITY BONDS, PROVIDE FINANCIAL BENEFIT

Thousands of guests visit the School District of New Berlin's six school buildings and outdoor athletic facilities annually. They come to cheer at their child's basketball game, to attend a musical or play, or to tour the school during an open house.

They spend hours in a gymnasium or at a soccer field. They attend meetings in the libraries, commons and cafeterias. And they even roam the hallways and stop in at individual classrooms.

The SDNB's facilities are a blank canvas, just waiting for sponsorship opportunities and mutually beneficial district-business partnerships. Earlier this school year, Drexel Building Supply was the first local company to recognize the opportunity and signed a 10-year, \$150,000 agreement with the district that gives the family-owned Wisconsin company exclusive naming rights to the fieldhouse at New Berlin West Middle/High School.

The agreement with Drexel was the first of its kind for the SDNB since the district developed a sponsorship guide during the 2020-21 school year. Weeks later, the district reached an agreement with Aspen Orthopedic Specialists and Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin (OHOW) on a 5-year sponsorship agreement that gives the

healthcare organizations exclusive naming rights to West's outdoor baseball and soccer complex.

"We've teamed up with a couple of incredible partners in the last six months, and we could not be more excited about the opportunities that exist with them," SDNB Superintendent Joe Garza said. "The financial impact of agreements such as these should be viewed as a win for taxpayers in our community, but we're interested in more than just the financial boost they bring to the district."

Drexel, which operates a 130,000-square-foot showroom in New Berlin, will be a great resource for SDNB students in trade classes, the teachers that teach them and the district's buildings and grounds team. Aspen Orthopedic Specialists already was partnering with the district; they have been the sports medicine physician and athletic training provider at West since 2019. Aspen's local hospital affiliation is Orthopaedic Hospital of Wisconsin, which opened its New Berlin Physical Therapy location in 2019.

*Continued on page 5*

### LEARN MORE

Visit [www.nbexcellence.org/community/naming-right-sponsorships.cfm](http://www.nbexcellence.org/community/naming-right-sponsorships.cfm) or contact David Cote at [david.cote@nbexcellence.org](mailto:david.cote@nbexcellence.org).

Drexel has signage on the exterior of the fieldhouse, in the fieldhouse lobby and directly inside the venue, now named the Drexel Fieldhouse. Both Aspen Orthopedic and OHOW will have name recognition on newly erected signage at West's outdoor complex entrance off of Cleveland Avenue.

“

*While naming rights are a new territory for us, we believe it's one we must continue to explore and expand, and we hope (this) is just the beginning. **”***

- Superintendent Joe Garza

"We take pride in being active and supporting the communities we serve, and giving back to those communities is important to us," Drexel owner Joel Fleischman said. "The SDNB provided us with a unique way to immediately give back to the New Berlin community and we jumped on it. We're proud to be a supporter of West's athletics programs, but we're equally committed to supporting students who are interested in the trades and other areas of business become successful once they graduate."

Added OHOW CEO Brandon Goldbeck, "This partnership is an exciting opportunity for OHOW and Aspen to further support the sports medicine needs of the hundreds of student-athletes that use this complex each year."

The SDNB has a multitude of naming rights sponsorship opportunities available to interested partners. The district's sponsorship guide showcases those opportunities in three categories: academics, the arts and athletics. Venues available for naming rights opportunities include the Performing Arts Center, indoor and outdoor athletic complexes and facilities, and many more.

"While naming rights are a new territory for us, we believe it's one we must continue to explore and expand, and we hope our agreements with Drexel and Aspen / OHOW are just the beginning," Garza said.



## EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF NEW BERLIN



### Education Foundation of New Berlin Announces Grant Winners, Scholarship Program Accepting Applications

The Education Foundation of New Berlin - enjoying its greatest number of supporters donating in 2021 than any year since its inception - awarded \$7,800 to two initiatives through its Impact Grant Program. The grants will support physical education and mental health initiatives above and beyond regular programming for all four elementary schools and at a district level.

The Mindful Movement Program will help students quiet their minds by developing a stronger connection to their bodies through guided movement. The equipment provided by the grant will not only be used to support classroom learning but also support the professional development of teachers and staff throughout the district. This award of \$2,800 is presented to Poplar Creek third-grade teacher **Nichole Donahue** and Ronald Reagan kindergarten teacher **Melissa Schmalz** (pictured above).

The First Tee School Program aims to create a safe introduction to golf technique and vocabulary while helping students strengthen their character and confidence through the positive personal and social values associated with the lifetime sport. This program will extend the golf curriculum from the secondary schools into the elementary schools. This award of \$5,000 is presented to physical education teachers **Katie Mulloy** at Ronald Reagan and **Melanie Gearhart** at Elmwood.

### Scholarship Applications

Applications are open through March 31 for the inaugural Peter Michaud Memorial Scholarship which will be awarded to two seniors graduating from New Berlin West and New Berlin Eisenhower, who demonstrate leadership and volunteerism and must have strong community/school involvement. Students must be continuing their education at an accredited post-secondary institution.

Peter Michaud was a beloved elementary school teacher to many in the SDNB; because of his passion for world travel and exploration, candidates will submit an essay expressing their own interest or experience with travel and/or world exploration. The funds to establish this scholarship are proceeds from the Ronald Reagan Student Council Penny Wars as well as generous support from family, friends and the community.



**TO LEARN MORE  
OR DONATE  
please visit  
[www.efnb.org](http://www.efnb.org)**

## Erica Komorowski, Class of 2006

Erica Komorowski graduated in 2006 from New Berlin Eisenhower, where she played volleyball and basketball and was a member of DECA. She then attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she earned a degree in criminal justice in 2010. Upon graduating from the Milwaukee Area Technical College police academy, she was hired by the New Berlin Police Department, where she has served for 10 years. She was selected as Eisenhower's school resource officer in January 2021.

**Q: What are some of your fondest memories from your time at Eisenhower?**

Starting as a freshman at Eisenhower I got to meet new friends, some of which I am still friends with to this day. I loved Mr. White's history class because he had such a positive attitude every day and played the best music before class. I wasn't really into history but Mr. White had a way to make learning history fun. And to this day, every time I hear the song "Rockin' Robin" I think of running laps in Mr. Scheidegger's gym class.

**Q: What was the single-most important lesson you learned from your time as a student in the district?**

Be grateful for what you have. I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to attend New Berlin schools. The community has really helped shape who I turned out to be. My parents raised me to always work hard and help out others.

**Q: When did you know you wanted to be a police officer?**

I had a feeling in high school I wanted to work as a first responder. As a junior, for career day, I chose to shadow at the New Berlin Fire Department. I really enjoyed studying criminal justice in college. While in college, I did internships at the Milwaukee County Courthouse and PathFinders Youth Shelter. I knew I wanted to help people but wasn't quite sure in what way. When I went to the police academy I knew I had found the right fit.



**Q: How does it feel to be the SRO in the same school you once attended?**

It's so strange to come back to Eisenhower and see how kids learn and communicate with technology. In high school I would write handwritten notes to my friends and burn mix CDs for them. I was proud my boombox was the entire length of my dresser. I now have the chance to give back, make a difference and support students in a community I am truly passionate about.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about the SRO assignment?**

I love teaching DARE to 5th graders, getting to hear their promises to be good citizens, and having them learn life skills on how to treat one another. The high school kids have been great and brighten my day in ways they will never know. Having them want to come talk with me when they are having problems feels rewarding and I know I am doing my job right. And the staff at Eisenhower is much like our PD – we are always working as a team for the greater good.

## SIGN UP!

## FOR 'THE EDGE' TO GET THE LATEST SDNB NEWS



More than 6,000 parents, guardians and community members get the SDNB's monthly e-newsletter, The EDGEucation Digest, delivered right to their inbox.

Now in its third year, The Edge gives an inside look at what's happening in each of our six high-achieving schools, includes important updates from the Board of Education and is full of valuable information from the district, including the teaching and learning department, finance and operations and the superintendent's office.

Join your 6,000 closest neighbors and friends by signing up for The Edge today! Send an email to [feedback@nbexcellence.org](mailto:feedback@nbexcellence.org) requesting to be added to our mailing list and we'll be sure to send you the next issue.





## ALL-SCHOOL READS ENGAGE, EXCITE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Getting an entire elementary classroom of students to do the same thing is, well, an artform. But getting an entire school to complete the same task?

That is exactly what Angela Patterson and Jaime Veal, principals at Ronald Reagan and Elmwood elementary schools, respectively, accomplished - with the help of many, many others - with all-school reads.

Reagan initiated the first all-school read last year, with the book *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. Elmwood joined in the fun this fall when its students and families read *A Boy Called Bat*. And Reagan is gearing up for round two, with a yet-to-be-revealed book to be announced right before spring break.

Mrs. Patterson, and Reagan's associate principal Matthew Stich, brought the all-school read idea with them from their previous school districts.

"With our focus on literacy and connecting during a pandemic, it was a natural fit," Mrs. Patterson said. "Seeing all the kids and staff talking about a book together; hearing kids tell me how much they were enjoying it; seeing grandparents from across the country connect via Zoom to read with their grandkids - families and kids seemed to really like the book and the experience."

Last year, Reagan's event included a website with fun book and author information, a trivia contest and videos of guest readers. The school's home and school association was heavily involved. The organization purchased the books for all the students last year and will do so again this spring, when the HSA will also support a family literacy night celebrating the end of the book and tie in the HSA's annual book fair.

Elmwood's HSA also got involved in the same way, purchasing the books for the fall reading and promoting the initiative on social media.

"Our focus was to build the home-school community connection and link in some social emotional learning," Mrs. Veal said. "The main character (in *A Boy Called Bat*) is a boy on the autism spectrum. We continue to have a focus on literacy, but also inclusion and teaching the uniqueness within our school community."

"Our students and families loved reading together and alongside our guest readers. It brought our entire school community together. It was a big hit!"



# School District of New Berlin Early Learning Program JOIN THE SDNB NOW

Enroll in the Early Learning Program Today!

Enrollment is open and filling up fast for the SDNB's Early Learning Program for the 2022-23 school year.

The community-based early learning program is led by qualified staff who provide age-appropriate programming in reading, writing, math and science, as well as focus on social and emotional development in an effort to prepare students for kindergarten and beyond.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- For tuition-based students; students identified, through district screening, as needing kindergarten readiness skills; and students eligible for special education services.
- Half-day sessions in mornings (3-year-olds) and afternoons (3-year-olds and 4-year-olds), (Note: Before- and after-session care options are available.)
- Maximum 10:1 student/teacher ratio.
- Held at Ronald Reagan Elementary, 4225 S. Calhoun Road.

Any child who is 3 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2022, can enroll in the 3-year-old program for the 2022-23 school year.

Any child who is 4 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2022, can enroll in the 4-year-old program. Tuition is \$3,000 for 3-year-olds (4 days a week) and \$3,700 for 4-year-olds (5 days a week). Priority will be given to district residents, but non-residents may apply.

*More information, including before-and after-session care options and registration forms, can be found at [www.nbexcellence.org/prospective/early-learning-program.cfm](http://www.nbexcellence.org/prospective/early-learning-program.cfm).*

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## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Earlier this year, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction issued district and state accountability report cards. As has been the case for the last several years, all six of our schools either "exceed" or "significantly exceed" the state's expectations. What's more, our district is one of just 19 public K-12 districts to "significantly exceed" expectations, an impressive achievement and a testament to our students, staff and families.

And while we are incredibly proud of our report cards, we are never simply satisfied with numbers on a piece of paper or a website. The SDNB is focused on the whole or entirety of each and every student. Yes, we want all students to achieve academic success and be college- and career-ready when they graduate. But we also want our students to be life-ready.

This issue of *Expecting Excellence* focuses on students' opportunities beyond the classroom. Every year, thousands of our students participate in athletics, activities and clubs. As they do, they are not only enhancing their school experience. As they build motorcycles, or friendships, or community bonds, they are gaining skills, traits and passions that can span their lifetimes.

Our stories about our successful naming rights agreements and the great work of the Education Foundation of New Berlin fit that theme as well; in order for our students, staff and schools to be successful, we must have strong support from our partners and our community both in and out of the classroom.

We have that support in New Berlin, and I am excited to see it strengthen and our students flourish as a result.



Sincerely,



Joe Garza, Superintendent  
Twitter: @garza\_joe



## SCHOOL TOURS

Throughout the second semester, the Board of Education is taking its regularly scheduled meetings "on the road", with visits to every school. Each meeting includes a presentation from that school's administrators and a tour for the School Board members and those attending the meeting.

**The Board visited Poplar Creek (pictured) in January and Ronald Reagan in February. The remaining schedule is as follows:**

- March 14 - New Berlin West
- April 11 - New Berlin Eisenhower
- May 9 - Orchard Lane
- May 23 - Elmwood

The community is encouraged to attend these and all School Board meetings, which are typically held at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of the month in the Eisenhower Commons.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In order to be good stewards of taxpayer funds, a cost-effective bulk mailing service was used for this publication. However, there are limitations and the service cannot precisely match the School District of New Berlin's boundaries without adding significant cost. If you do not live within the District and received this publication due to this limitation, we ask for your understanding.