



# BCSD Buzz

Welcome Back! Vol. 10

## BCSD's "Building a Brighter Future" Process Takes Another Step Forward

Bedford City School District Board of Education earlier this month selected the GPD Group as the architect for part of the district's "Building a Brighter Future" initiative.

A panel of district representatives heard presentations from five architectural firms that responded to the district's request for qualifications. The panel narrowed the list, recommending two firms to the school board.

The community committee will begin its process shortly.

The district will reconvene a Facilities Project Committee from those who indicated a willingness to participate. The district is committed to ensuring broad representation of our community and stakeholders. This Committee will build from the work completed by the 2019 Committee that was interrupted by the pandemic. The Committee will hear what the community, parents, business people and government officials would like to see in the future of our buildings and our programming.

"Our students deserve the most up-to-date, state-of-the-art facilities available," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Cassandra Johnson. "For too long, our students have seen the facilities of surrounding districts get updated, improved or even rebuilt. It's time for our students to see that updating and improvement too. This is our time."

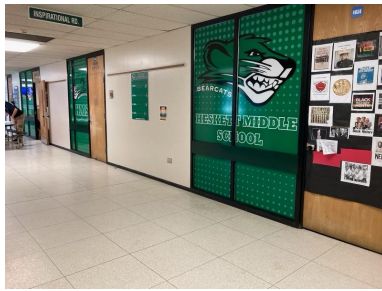
The Facilities Project Committee will meet this fall and winter to review possible options and costs. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Education about the best course forward. Residents and stakeholders will also have opportunities to voice their opinions during the process. The Bedford Board of Education, with recommendations from the Committee, the community, and district leadership, will ultimately decide what to ask residents to support in an anticipated bond issue.



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**The BCSD 2022-23 school year kicks off**

The 2022-23 school year is off to a great start at BCSD!



Our students returned starting Aug. 23 for a new year of learning. Students, many of them accompanied by their parents, returned to classes, greeted by enthusiastic teachers, administrators and staff.

The day before classes resumed, teachers and administrators welcomed students and families back to the buildings with open houses at each school. Students got to meet their teachers and visit their classrooms and parents and caregivers learned about what each school day will entail.

Building upgrades greeted Heskett Middle School students when they came back for the new year.

"While we're planning to build new schools with the community's support, any new construction likely won't be completed for many years," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Cassandra Johnson. "In the meantime, our students and our staff use our buildings to teach and learn so we needed to address some of the structural issues at Heskett including the roof. We weren't going to ask students and staff to spend another school year with buckets in classrooms and hallways. We needed to fix it before the new school year."

Using federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds, the district installed a new roof to address the leaks that plagued the building, its students and staff for years. The district had to use that round of ESSR money last year.

The federal dollars were also used to boost the appearance of the school, making it more welcoming. Window decals and film were applied to office windows and in other areas of the school to make the environment more attractive and inviting.



## Bearcat Family Additions: Kenya Harrington

The Bearcat Family has some new staff this year.

Many new teachers and staff join the ranks this school year



and the district also welcomes some fresh faces to its administrative team.

Kenya Harrington joins BCSD as its executive director of academic achievement.

Q: What was your most recent position before coming to Bedford?

A: Previously, I served as the Director of School Improvement for Akron Public Schools.

Q: What's your hometown?

A: I'm originally from Alliance, Ohio.

Q: What is your educational background?

A: I attended the University of Toledo and received my Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education, English. I received my Master's degree in Educational Supervision & Administration from Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA. Currently, I am completing work toward my PhD in Cultural Foundations at Kent State University. I am in the "All but dissertation" (ABD) stage.

Q: What do you want to share about your family?

A: I am married to my beautiful wife, Maya, and we have 10 children.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I enjoy exercising, reading and spending time with my family.

Q: Why did you decide to enter education as a career path?

A: I always wanted to work in the field of education. It was an area that I considered at a young age. Therefore, I continued investigating different areas during high school so I had a complete understanding upon graduation and transitioning to college.

Q: Why did you decide to join the Bearcat Family?

A: I believe that the district continues to be progressive and moving in the direction that is supportive of our students and staff. Additionally, Dr. Johnson's vision and leadership are what I would consider transformational. In previous years, I had the opportunity to work with students from the high school and they continued to impress me with their motivation, dedication and willingness to explore learning. These are just a few examples why the decision to join was the right one.

Q: What's something most people would be surprised to learn about you?

A: I try to be more transparent and not "surprise" others. Therefore, I like to be engaging, collaborative and communicate to alleviate areas of concern, thus ensuring I am supportive to our educational community (students, staff & families) and our partners.



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## Who's got Bearcat spirit?



Interim Superintendent Dr. Cassandra Johnson launched a fun contest for staff, challenging the schools to compete for the title of "Best Bearcat Spirit."

The staffs of Central Primary School, left, and Excel Academy, below, donned their Bedford Bearcat shirts, skirts and pants to win the first challenge this month and were treated to breakfast as their reward.

Dr. Johnson plans to issue the challenge the first Friday of each month this school year.

"It's just a fun way for everyone to show their spirit by wearing their gear and filling our schools with green and white," she said.



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## BCSD welcomes new staff

The Bedford City School District last month welcomed about 70 new employees across most departments.

The welcome began with a "Spotlight on Education" breakfast and program at Catered Elegance in Oakwood Village.



The new employees learned about using the various technology platforms in place in the district and reported to their respective buildings to familiarize themselves with classrooms and procedures.

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## Employees honored for dedication, hard work

BCSD employees gathered last month at the Cuyahoga Community College Eastern Campus to launch the 2022-23 school year with Opening Convocation.

This marks the first school year kickoff with Interim Superintendent Dr. Cassandra Johnson at the district's helm and she laid out her vision. School Board President Eva Boyington welcomed employees, encouraging them as the school year begins. Attendees also heard from Meryl Johnson, a member of the state board of education, and members of the Bedford City School District Foundation about that organization's mission and goals.

The district leadership team also recognized employees of the year who were nominated by their peers and departments.

Recipients of awards and recognitions:

- Bedford High School Principal Khalisha Lewis, Transformational Leader of the Year
- Darnise Stephens, Teacher of the Year
- Sarah Keeton, Rookie of the Year
- Earnest Colston, Maintenance/Custodian of the Year
- Tex Bardwell, Security Employee of the Year
- Sandy Ball, Nutrition Services Employee of the Year
- Sam Cardinal, Technology Employee of the Year
- Lou Neptune, Transportation Employee of the Year
- Chrissy Browning, Clerical Employee of the Year
- Jasmine McCalister, Paraprofessional of the Year
- Laura Hogue, Social Emotional Employee of the Year

Congratulations to all and thank you!











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## BCSD pitches in for Bedford Rotary Ribfest



The Rotary Club of Bedford provides thousands of dollars in scholarships each year to Bedford High School students in addition to supporting our young learners throughout the year in other ways.

The club's annual ribfest is its biggest fundraiser, drawing people to the downtown square to sample everything from french fries and funnel cakes to lemonade and fried veggies and of course ribs.

This year BCSD pitched in to help. Staffers and board members volunteered at the Rotary booth and the Bedford High School Bearcat Football team emptied trash cans throughout the three-day event.

"Because the Rotary does so much for our students, we wanted to pay that back and help out," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Cassandra Johnson.



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## BCSD celebrates National Teddy Bear Day

On Friday, Sept. 9, BCSD primary and intermediate schools celebrated National Teddy Bear day.

Students were permitted to bring a plush pal to school as long as it was small enough to fit in

a backpack.

The day honors the popular children's toy created after then-President Teddy Roosevelt refused to shoot a bear cub while hunting in 1902. The incident made national news and inspired a Washington Post cartoon.

The cartoon prompted a New York store owner to develop the stuffed toy that became a staple of children's toy boxes across the country.

### Glendale Primary Students Show Off Their Fuzzy Friends





## Celebrating Grandparents

Central Primary School welcomed grandparents to a drive-through Grandparents' Day celebration Sept. 12.

Teachers filled gift bags with goodies and gathered with students to distribute them as grandparents, waving and honking their car horns, drove around the circle at the back of the school.

