

BEN.25 | connect

A Benjamin School District 25
communique connecting schools
and the community.

Benjamin District 25 publishes **BEN.25 Connect** for parents and residents.



SPRING 2018

Dear Friends,

*"You don't need to know the whole alphabet of safety. The A,B,C's will save you if you follow it: **Always Be Careful.**" ~Colorado School of Mines Magazine, August 1918*

School Safety

The top priority of Benjamin School District 25 is to protect the safety of students, faculty, and visitors. Sadly, our nation continues to experience violence occurring in schools. School safety is everyone's responsibility including students, staff, parents, and community. Students are reminded to be vigilant and report any suspicious behavior or activity to an adult.

Numerous safety measures are in place to safeguard students and staff to ensure an atmosphere conducive to learning. Our school safety protocol includes:

- **Emergency Crisis Operations Plan** – The detailed plan is regularly refined based on best practices and review by first responders.
- **Safety Drills** – Numerous types of drills are conducted on an ongoing basis. First responders observe and critique some of the drills to continuously improve our practices.
- **Emergency Training** – Each school conducts a variety of emergency preparedness training periodically such as ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training.
- **Controlled Access** – Each exterior building door is remotely controlled and/or monitored.
- **Visitor Registry** – All visitors must register in the front office using the Raptor Screening System and receive a

temporary identification badge prior to having access to the school.

- **Identification Badges** – All staff display district-issued identification badges when at school.
- **Interior and Exterior Cameras** – Digital cameras throughout each school monitor activity inside and out.
- **Law Enforcement** – A representative of the local law enforcement agency regularly visits each school to be familiar with the building and address any issues.
- **Comprehensive Communication Plan** – The purpose of the plan is to swiftly and accurately communicate essential information about a situation to first responders, district faculty, and community members. The safety of children and staff is the focus throughout the situation.
- **Reunification of Families** – There is a detailed plan for the reunification of parents and their children in case of a major emergency necessitating the relocation of students.

Together, we will continue to provide a safe and secure learning environment. I welcome your ideas, comments, or concern that you may have regarding school safety.

Positive Results of Referendum Bond Sale

The recent sale of the \$4.9 million referendum will result a debt service tax rate decrease of 17 percent instead of the



Philip Ehrhardt, Ed.D.
Superintendent

projected estimate of 16 percent. This means that the impact on the owner of a \$250,000 house will save almost \$78 rather than the projected estimate of \$75 for the upcoming tax year.

Strong Schools, Strong Community, Strong Future

Please see the article in the newsletter explaining the planned projects which will be completed this summer to improve safety, educational programming and maintenance. It is planned to set up a camera in the construction areas so anyone can go to our website www.bendist25.org to view the progress being made. There will be an open house in the fall for the public to observe first-hand the improvements that have been accomplished to enhance safety and security, educational programs, and maintenance. Our community has high expectations of our schools, and we continue to diligently work to meet and exceed these expectations.

Sincerely,

Philip M. Ehrhardt, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Debt Service Tax Rate Decreases More than Projected

With the passage of the April 2017 referendum, bonds were planned to be sold in February 2018. We communicated to taxpayers that the debt service tax rate would be reduced by 16 percent which would have resulted in a \$75 decrease for an owner of a \$250,000 house.

The bonds sold on February 12, 2018, and the debt service decreased more than we had projected to pay off the bonds! The debt service tax rate actually will be decreased by almost 17 percent (16.95 percent) which will impact the owner of a \$250,000 house with a \$77.90 decrease.

Dr. Philip Ehrhardt, superintendent, credits the school district's tax payers for the favorable financial impact for selling the referendum bonds. The extensive and far-sighted financial planning also contributed to the favorable financial outcome. He states, "Thanks to our tax payers for passing the referendum last April so the debt service tax rate will be lowered, and the education programming, facilities maintenance, and safety/security measures are being improved which benefits our students and staff for years to come."

Where Are They Now?

In this feature, we take a look at Benjamin District 25 alumni, Joe Sosnowski, one of the many shining stars for whom Benjamin District 25 provided a solid educational foundation and helped lay the roots for blossoming careers.

Education

He attended Evergreen Elementary School, graduated Benjamin Middle School (1991), and received a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Political Science from Northern Illinois University (2010).

Career

State Representative Joe Sosnowski currently serves as the Illinois State Representative for the 69th District in Northern Illinois, representing residents of Boone and Winnebago counties.

First elected to the General Assembly in 2010 and he previously served on the DeKalb City Council from 1999-2003, and the Rockford City Council from 2005-2010. Currently a member of Next Rockford, he was a recipient of the Rockford Chamber of Commerce's 40 under 40 Award.

Rep. Sosnowski serves on several House committees, including Elementary and Secondary Appropriations, Revenue & Finance Committee, Executive Committee, and Audit Commission. Rep. Sosnowski is an Illinois Licensed Real Estate Broker, and is Director of Institutional Advancement at Rockford Christian Schools.

"As a legislator, I strive to improve the economic and business environment and to grow jobs and careers for our future generations," states Sosnowski. "Making Illinois business friendly will help us grow and be more successful."

In his career as Advancement Director for the Rockford Christian Schools, he works to improve educational offerings in all career-oriented and degree-focused areas and to enhance technology and its integration into the classroom in addition to promoting careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM).

Issues of Highest Priority In His Field

"Advancing educational opportunities for



State Representative Joe Sosnowski is a member of the Benjamin District 25 Class of 1991.

students within my district and implementing positive reforms in the Illinois General Assembly for Illinois families," answers Sosnowski, who helped to pass Scholarship Tax Credit legislation that allows for more choice in educational opportunities.

Family Ties

Sosnowski lives in the city of Rockford with his wife, Roxanne, who is a practicing attorney at SosnowskiSzeto LLP. They have three children, Aidan, Roman, and Ellie. His brother, Matt, now lives in Arizona and sister, Debbie, in Nevada.

How did Benjamin District 25 help prepare you for the future?

"My time in middle school helped create the educational foundation for me to be successful in my future studies. The teachers focus on delivering a high quality education in the core subject areas, was important to future success."

Benjamin District 25 Grads On The Front Lines As First Responders

We are extremely proud of our many first responders who are Benjamin District 25 alumni. While some work in highly sensitive positions and cannot be listed here, we do want to honor all! So whether you are photographed or not, we thank you for your service to our communities and nation!



Matt Tessler, Benjamin Class of 2009, firefighter/paramedic, North Palos Fire Protection District



Matthew Lisciandrello Alvarez, Benjamin Class of 2007, firefighter/EMT, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina



Improvements to be Completed This Summer

This will very busy summer at both Evergreen Elementary and Benjamin Middle Schools to improve safety/security, education programs, and maintenance. Watch the progress being made this summer by going to our website www.bendist25.org to view the cameras at each site. An overview of the improvements are depicted below.

Improvements	Timeline
Replace student technology devices and related infrastructures	Late May
Install playground poured rubber surface	Mid June
Replace Benjamin Middle School cafeteria/gym worn-out floor	Mid June
Replace sections of roofs at both schools	Early July
Reconfigure Evergreen School front entrance access	Early August
Convert Evergreen School cafeteria to multi-purpose room	Early August
Replace non-working windows	Early August
Relocate Evergreen School art room	Early August
Improve Evergreen School STEM space	Early August
Repave parking lots	Early August
Update Benjamin Middle School science labs	Early August

IEA Honors New Teacher of the Year

By Jake Voight, Benjamin Middle School student reporter

In case you haven't heard, Benjamin Middle School Band Teacher Matthew Turek has been named the Illinois Education Association's New Teacher of the Year! He was chosen out of 135,000 Illinois teachers from more than 850 districts across the state! The new teacher award celebrates great teachers in their first five years of teaching.

Turek was honored on April 9 at the Benjamin District 25 Board of Education meeting and April 19-21 at the IEA assembly meeting in Rosemont.

Q: How do you feel about winning this award?

A: I am honored because it will bring good attention to this school.

Q: What have you done to motivate students?

A: I try to find what makes each student tick. I also make a lot of bad jokes.

Q: What are some challenges with teaching?

A: We are a team of sometimes 30 members. I have to give attention to all of the members because band is like a sport with each member equally important.

Q: Do you think teaching band is important?

A: Absolutely! Through band you can learn a lot of life skills like teamwork. Being part of band is completely different from other subjects because it teaches students to love the beauty of music. Plus, we have a lot of fun.

Q: What do you like about teaching at Benjamin?

A: I love the students and my colleagues. I think the students are hungry for music because we try new things all the time. My colleagues help me with so many things.

Q: What is your favorite instrument to play/teach?

A: Which ever instrument I'm currently playing—I like all instruments. I really want to learn to play the bagpipes.

We'd really like to hear him play the bagpipes, too!

According to Philip Ehrhardt, Ed.D., the Bob Haisman New Teacher Award recognizes a new teacher and IEA member who shows outstanding accomplishments including involvement in the local, state, and/or national association, professional achievement, the promotion of public education, and enhancement of the image of "new teachers" in the school and community. The award is named in honor of retired Hinsdale South High School social studies teacher and coach Bob Haisman, who served as IEA president from 1993-1999.

"Our band program is thriving because of Matthew's expertise and enthusiasm, states Dr. Ehrhardt. "He is a great example of the wonderful teachers here in Benjamin School District 25."



Matthew Turek, IEA Bob Haisman New Teacher of the Year Awardee



Creativity Takes the Stage



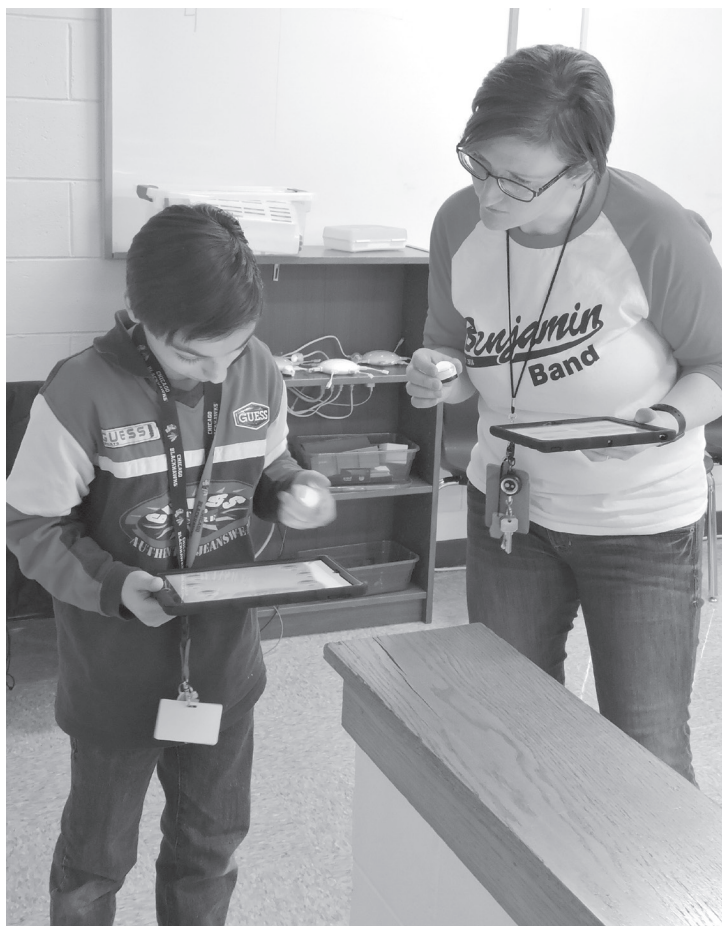
Benjamin Middle Schoolers receive rave reviews for their performances of "How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying."



"Possibilities," was a celebration of life and the "endless possibilities and opportunities" our Evergreen Elementary School 3rd and 4th grade students showcased on the journey of life.



Creativity To Power Summer STEAM Camp



Science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics will take center stage at Benjamin District 25's STEAM camp this summer. The camp will provide students with fun and unique learning opportunities incorporating science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics.

Advertise with Ben.25 Connect

Newsletter mailed to more
than 4,000 residents!

For advertising information, contact Philip Ehrhardt, Ed.D., superintendent, at the Benjamin District 25 Administrative Services Center at 630-876-7800.

Advertising also appears in online newsletter at www.bendist25.org



Real Estate Broker

kw PREMIERE
PROPERTIES
KELLERWILLIAMS
Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated
45 S. Park Blvd., Suite 300
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

630.806.1403

Julien.Benter@kw.com
Julien-Benter.kw.com

JULIEN BENTER

Proud graduate of Evergreen and Benjamin!

#1 REALTOR
RE/MAX
Great American North
Each office is independently owned and operated
Libby Hocker
Associate Broker
40W160 Campton Crossings Dr.
St. Charles, IL 60175
Direct: 630-940-0209
Cell: 630-750-9472
Office: 630-513-6100
Fax: 630-513-1060
Email: LibbyHocker31@yahoo.com

Calling All Benjamin Alumni

Upcoming Spotlight Columns To Feature Healthcare & Caring



If you are a Benjamin District 25 graduate currently working in the healthcare field as a doctor, nurse, specialist, researcher, hospital administrator, radiology technician, phlebotomist, nursing assistant, home caregiver, or are one of many individuals providing health care and caring to others, please let us know!

We would love to include you in an upcoming photo feature of our grads. Please send us your name, year of Benjamin graduation, your job title and location, along with a high resolution (300 dpi) headshot photo for inclusion in an upcoming community newsletter.



Board of Education:

Jodi Krause, President
Anna Taylor, Vice President
Vince Engstrom, Secretary
Jack Buscemi
Tammy Mastroianni
Dennis Peterson
Lisa Willuweit

Superintendent:

Dr. Philip M. Ehrhardt

BeN.25

A Benjamin School District 25 communique
connecting schools and the community.



connect

Please note that because Benjamin District 25 mails its publications by postal route, some individuals who do not live within Benjamin District 25 may receive this mailing.

ECRWSS
POSTAL
CUSTOMER

NonProfit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 179
West Chicago, IL 60185

Social Media

FRIEND us on Facebook and **FOLLOW** us on Twitter and Instagram for Benjamin 25 news, photos, and more.



Facebook.com/BenjaminDistrict25

Twitter.com @Bendist25

Instagram.com @benjaminsd25

Make The BeN.25 Communication Connection!

Building and maintaining open lines of communication with members of our Benjamin District 25 family are key ingredients to making a difference in the lives of the children we serve. A variety of communication methods is available to share a compliment, address a question or communicate a concern to Dr. Philip Ehrhardt, superintendent. They include:

Written: Administration Service Center, 28W250 St. Charles Road, West Chicago, IL 60185.

Phone: 630-876-7800

E-Mail: pehrhardt@bendist25.org

Fax: 630-876-3325

Online: www.bendist25.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BenjaminDistrict25

Twitter: www.Twitter.com/Bendist25

Instagram: www.instagram.com/benjaminsd25



Mark Your Calendars

April 18

Red, White & Beautiful Open House, 6:30 p.m., Benjamin Middle School

May 3

Evergreen Pride Night, Book Fair, 6-7:30 p.m., Evergreen Elementary School

May 4

Preschool Screening, 8:30-10:30 a.m. and 12:30-2:30 p.m. Evergreen Elementary School, Call 630-876-7810 for an appointment
Half-day School Improvement, 11:40 a.m. dismissal
Evergreen Elementary grades K-4, No AM or PM preschool

May 7-11

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 9

Early Dismissal, Preschool & Kindergarten, 2 p.m.
Early Dismissal Grades K-4, 2:15 p.m.
Early Dismissal Day at Benjamin, 1:45 p.m.
Jazz Band, grades 7 & 8 Spring Band & Choir Concert, 6:30 p.m., Benjamin Middle School

May 10

Grades 5 & 6 Band Concert, 6:30 p.m., Benjamin Middle School

May 11

Half Day School Improvement, Benjamin 11:10 a.m. dismissal
Evergreen Elementary grades K-4, 11:40 a.m. dismissal, No AM or PM preschool

May 14

Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m., Administration Board Room

May 15

Last Day for Preschool/Picnic

May 16

Spring Sports Awards, 6:30 p.m., Benjamin small gym

May 18

Fourth grade Springfield trip, all day

May 22

8th grade graduation, 7 p.m., Community Fellowship Church

May 23

Evergreen Elementary School Field Days for all grade levels

May 24

Evergreen Elementary School Field Days for all grade levels rain date

May 29

Last Day of School grades K-4, 11:40 a.m. dismissal
Last day of school for Benjamin grades 5-8, 11:10 a.m. dismissal

June 11

Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m., Administration Board Room

Additional calendar dates may be found on the district website at www.bendist25.org

SAVE THE DATE

SWINGING FOR STEAM GOLF OUTING
SATURDAY JUNE 9TH, 2018
TEE-OFF AT NOON

AVAILABLE OPTIONS:

- GOLF ONLY
- GOLF & DINNER
- DINNER ONLY

*ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE DISTRICTS "STEAM" PROGRAM

KLEIN CREEK GOLF CLUB, WINFIELD IL

