



# Gaitway Gazette

September 2020

Staff Phone: 440-708-0013 (extensions below)

Forfia-152 Schmelzer-158 Cline-156 McSherry-157 A. Hendrickson- 154 C. Hendrickson-153 Shannon-151

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## A Note from the Principal-Mr. Forfia

It seems like it was just yesterday that I was emailing with opening paperwork and providing new instructions to address Covid-19 safety procedures at Gaitway this school year. We are now at the beginning of the Fall season. The trees are starting to change and the morning temperatures are getting colder. I want to thank all parents and guardians for their frequent communication and positive support for all of the changes this year. Our staff is doing a remarkable job making sure that Gaitway is safe in every way for our students. We've recently installed our desk shields for an added level of safety and security.

Our students are doing an amazing job adapting to all of the changes this year. Wearing a mask throughout the day is a tough thing for everyone to adjust to but they are doing a great job. I'm appreciative of how many students wear their own mask each day. Luckily, the weather and temperature have allowed the students and staff to have lunch outside on many occasions. Students enjoy this as it provides a little break from the monotony of being inside. It also allows them a quick break from the masks! Some students have even been able to throw a football around during our lunch time. Please remember to have your student pack their lunch at night so that it is ready to go in the morning. We have three microwaves and a refrigerator/freezer to store lunches as students arrive in the morning. I do have Ramen Noodles/bowls if students occasionally forget their lunch.

I want to share with all of you our daily schedule so that you know where your students are at certain times throughout the school day. Our 9th/10th grade students start their school day with either Animal Care Internship or Transition Options 2. These courses assist our students

with building those crucial skills needed in any workplace environment. Our Animal Care Internship students have done a phenomenal job filling water buckets, cleaning muck buckets, and renewing the boot mats in the barn. As it gets colder, students will need to wear warmer clothes and hats in the barn!

Our 11th grade students and a few 10th graders are able to complete their job training experience outside of school at various locations such as Tractor Supply, Marci's Hair on the Square and Parkside Church. Mr. Hendrickson will provide more information below about our transition services to prepare students for life after high school.

### Daily Schedule

- First Period:** 7:45AM-9:00AM
- Second Period:** 9:00AM-10:15AM
- Third Period:** 10:15-11:00AM
- Lunch:** 11:00AM-11:40AM
- Fourth Period:** 11:45AM-1:00PM
- Fifth Period:** 1:00PM-2:15PM
- Dismissal** is at 2:15 each school day.

This Friday, September 25, 2020 will mark the date of our first Project Based Learning assignment for our students. This PBL will account for 20% of the students class grade for the first grading period in each of the students' classes. We will be emailing you a copy of the PBL and a description of what it will entail for the first quarter. Please be on the lookout for this email either at the end of this week or over the weekend. Our first PBL is an assignment about the Supreme Court and Ruth Bader Ginsberg. We will follow a shortened class schedule on **(Cont.)**



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PBL Fridays with 40 minute academic classes during the morning and our afternoon class session devoted to the PBL.

Please remember that communication between our staff members and parents/guardians is tremendously important for a successful school year. Our staff will be

communicating with you through phone calls and emails. This communication should be ongoing throughout the school year. Please reach out to me personally if you ever

have any questions or concerns. Our staff email addresses are listed below

## Gaitway High School Staff Email Addresses

- Bruce Cline: Intervention Specialist- [bcline@escwr.org](mailto:bcline@escwr.org)
- Anthony Forfia: Principal- [afortfia@escwr.org](mailto:afortfia@escwr.org)
- Aaron Hendrickson: Intervention Specialist Job Training- [ahendrickson@escwr.org](mailto:ahendrickson@escwr.org)
- Cindy Hendrickson: Educational Aide/Job Coach- [chendrickson@escwr.org](mailto:chendrickson@escwr.org)
- Bill McSherry: Intervention Specialist- [bmcscherry@escwr.org](mailto:bmcscherry@escwr.org)
- Kathy Schmelzer: Social Worker- [kschmelzer@escwr.org](mailto:kschmelzer@escwr.org)
- Morgan Shannon: Intervention Specialist- [mshannon@escwr.org](mailto:mshannon@escwr.org)
- Karen Terrill: Job Skills Trainer- [kterrill@escwr.org](mailto:kterrill@escwr.org)

## Social Studies- Mr. McSherry

We will be examining historical documents in all of our social studies classes during the first quarter. We began with the discussion of the difference between primary and secondary sources, their effectiveness, and validity.

Both of my **U.S. Government** classes have started with the examination of the historical record from the Declaration of Independence, embedded with the ideas from political philosophers of the Enlightenment period, and our Constitution as it exists today. We have examined the roots of democracy through the use of primary sources such as the Magna Carta, Mayflower Compact, and The Declaration of Independence all while incorporating the

democratic political framework of self-government into the *Great American Experiment*. We have also been examining the political framework of a confederation as our country's first attempt for self-government under the Articles of Confederation, and the necessity of its revision into our present day Constitution (our next unit).

My two **American History** classes have reviewed Reconstruction and determined through research what American life was like after the Civil War. They have also discussed its lasting effects on our political landscape. From the South we moved Westward as with the rest of the continent's expansion, driven by the construction of the



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Transcontinental Railroad and supported by the concept of Manifest Destiny.

As we pursued these events of Westward expansion over the last week or two, both classes were able to enjoy a video, *Frontier House*, of what frontier life might have been like in 1883. Three modern day families ventured to Montana and participated in an experiment questioning whether these modern families, strictly adhering to the confines of life in the 1880's, would be able to prepare themselves enough during their 5 month trial and be able to survive the brutal Montana winter. Their results mirrored the results of the pioneers of the 1880's and 2 out of 3 families would not have been able to stay and survive.

### Social Skills- Mrs. Schmelzer

Welcome back to our students, parents, and IEP teams. It is so good to see the students face to face! Our students were very successful showing a great amount of resilience and grit as they jumped right into remote learning last March. It still seems a bit unreal but we made it through the last year and I am very proud of our students and all those who supported them during the past year. Now we are back and I do believe the students are happy to be here. Coming back has brought a variety of stressors. It is obvious that anxiety levels are higher and it is taking less for a student to be irritated or depressed. What we are seeing is the effects of some long term or chronic stress. Adults may have experienced chronic stress prior to the pandemic due to illness of self or loved one, unemployment etc. We would like to think our students have not had to deal with ongoing stress that is carried around every day before this. I think what is important at this point is to make sure the kids

My three **Art History** students have been utilizing our SmartBoard technology to follow the online Virtual Learning Academy course materials. They have been working with interdisciplinary content including artifacts and art collections pertaining to different cultures. Using the SmartBoard allows us to view the impressive art on the larger screen as it should be seen.

know they are not alone in this and that expressing their anxiety and working out their stress are great strategies for lessening some of it. Deep breaths and mindfulness are helpful to keep grounded and in the moment. Being aware of the higher level of stress can help us to understand outbursts and uncharacteristic behavior. Helping your child to vent or just talk in a safe space lets them know they have your support. We don't have to attempt to fix anything, just be there holding space allowing them to let go and relax.

We have started our social skills groups. Ninth and tenth grade have a group on Wednesdays; while eleventh graders meet on Fridays. Matt Petersen from Lake Recovery Center has again volunteered to co-facilitate the group as he did in the second semester last year. We are aligning the group topics to Mr. Hendrickson's curriculum Skills to Pay Bills.

Our students have the opportunity to once again work with the prevention department of the ESC. They will go through a process of identifying a cause that the group can



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unite to problem solve, offer a service etc. The group will have its first meeting Friday October 2.

I am meeting with students individually to address IEP social/emotional goals as well as to provide help with calming or problem solving.

I am looking forward to a full and successful school year. Stay healthy.

## Transition Options/Job Training- Mr. Hendrickson

We are glad to be back and hit the ground running. In transition option class we have started right away getting our hands dirty, learning about taking care of horses and learning how to build skills to pay the bills. We are learning the soft skills from the curriculum “*Skills That Pay The Bills*”. These skills are seen in all job settings and many employers have listed as the top needed skills to be successful for employment. Some skills as, effective communication and controlling emotions in stressful situations just to name a few.

Job Training students are off to a great start. COVID-19 has changed the world as we know it. Students have adapted to the business demand and have learned the necessary measures businesses need to take to be safe.

We are also looking for additional job opportunities that our students can use to learn various job skills to prepare them for postsecondary transitions.

## Science- Mr. Cline

It is so great to be back at Gaitway High School and to see returning and new students! Last year’s final quarter presented some unique challenges; this year presents them as well, but staff and students are committed to make things work in the face of the COVID-19 health crisis. Most students agree that being here in person assists them in achieving their academic and social/emotional goals. They are doing their best to follow protocols to make this a safe and healthy environment! Mr. Forfia and the team at Gaitway are committed to helping us achieve these goals. The majority of students are working this semester on Physical Science. For some, it is a blend of face to face and

online instruction; for others, it is just face to face. We have covered Newton’s Laws of Motion in the opening weeks, and students had the experience of pushing my car and recording their observations in terms of force, impulse, and momentum, and acceleration. We have been focusing on the precision that is required to describe observations in science. Ask your student the difference between speed and velocity or weight and mass--they should be able to tell you. I have been impressed to see them correct one another in a respectful manner when one of their classmates “slips” in this regard!



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In Environmental Science, students are working to plan for the use of the greenhouse we will erect with grant monies we received last year shortly before the schools were closed

last spring. I have a Biology student receiving support in VLA whose most recent work was determining different types of cellular passport. It is a pleasure to explain

concepts when students need the help, and the blended approach to learning is a great way to have the best of all worlds.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns you may have about your students' progress. As you have heard so many times before--we're in this together!

## Project Based Learning/Independent Study- Ms. Shannon

Welcome back! I am hard pressed to believe that we are already this far into the school year! Our ten students in Independent Study are focusing on seven diverse courses, both out of the book and online through Virtual Learning Academy.

In **Algebra I**, students just concluded learning to solve multi-step equations with unknown variables on both sides. In order to master this concept, students learned the real number system and its properties, order of operations, absolute value, combining like terms, and translating expressions, equations, and inequalities. Next, we will move on to absolute value equations and multi-variable (literal) equations. Students in **Algebra I, pt. 1** are following closely behind! They have mastered multi- step equations with variables on one side. Following a review of some geometric terms and basic constructions, we dove into line segments and angle relationships in **Geometry**. Students taking **Algebra II** are currently focused on linear functions and systems of equations. After a review of the various equations of a line, students are beginning to learn about linear regression through real-world application.

Students enrolled in online **Health and Physical Education** hit the ground running this semester. They are required to complete 1.5 hours of independent activity (signed off by a parents or guardian) for each of the 18 lessons. Many students have been very motivated outside of school to get their hours in before the weather gets too cold.

## PBIS Reminders for the 2020-2021 School Year

Gaitway was once again awarded with the Gold Recognition for school year 2019-2020! We are proud of our students who daily show us how they are Problem Solvers, Accountable, and Respectful (PAR). Please ask your student about our PBIS Program at Gaitway. If you are interested in learning more about our PBIS program, please contact Mr. Forfia or Mrs. Schmelzer.