



# CPN SYNERGY



**Synergy (sin-er-jee): The interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements.**



Photo courtesy of Sheridan Elementary

## CPN Synergy

Welcome to our October edition of Clinical Practice Network (CPN) Synergy from the Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice in Teachers College on Ball State's campus. We are thankful for all our partners across Indiana as they work with us to prepare our teacher candidates in that all important student teaching phase of their journey.

## Sheridan Grow Your Own

By now, we are all familiar with the implications of the teacher shortage here in Indiana and across the nation. Classes have to double up; some might even be canceled. There is a relentless search for candidates to fill open positions. Enter the Sheridan High School Grow Your Own program for future teachers.

Jill Cali, an outstanding teacher leader, found a willing partner in principal, Rick Davis, to launch a new education pathway for future teachers. The program has been in place for three years with the promise that if students complete the pathway, the district will provide them with an internship at Sheridan Elementary School. Thanks to the efforts of the district's Human Resource Director, Kim DeVaney, the internships are paid positions.

Currently, five Sheridan high school students are working half days in classrooms with Sheridan Elementary School students while also taking classes at various universities including Ball State through the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program. In addition, because of Jill Cali's excellent work, at least 12 more students are already participating in the education pathway. What administrator wouldn't want to welcome back an outstanding student who is familiar with the culture of the schools in the district? A definite WIN!

**"Our goal is that, as these students prove themselves in the classroom and express an interest in returning to Sheridan Elementary School, they will receive internships, complete their student teaching with us, and ultimately have the opportunity to join our staff full-time at their alma mater."**

**-Superintendent Dave Mundy**



Photo courtesy of Sheridan Elementary

# Burris Lab School: A Recipe to Be All You Can Be



It isn't always easy to define a moment when a spark ignites into a flame. Or when that flame catches hold and grows into something with the potential to consume. Dr. Abigail Comber recalls a few conversations that sparked an energy needed to light the way into... MORE.

Those conversations took place with stakeholders of all kinds: dedicated teachers, colleagues from the university campus, and fellow lab school administrators from across the country and around the world. The question, "What does it truly mean to be a laboratory school in today's educational landscape?" continued to spark conversations and fuel ideas for Dr. Comber, principal at Burris Lab School and her fellow administrator Mr. Eli Jones and the teaching staff at the school.

**"IMPACT gives students a chance to see themselves as learners, not just task-doers."**

**-Eli Jones, Director of Academic Innovation & Community Engagement.**

From those many and varied conversations came answers in the form of innovation at every level. Teachers have led additional conversations that helped them formulate new philosophies, structure, and practice in education. The Burris administration works to support teachers as they dream, design and do the work that shapes fresh ideas that invigorate teaching staff and engage students in learning. These kinds of conversations helped to shape IMPACT, Burris' middle school initiative that fuels learning through inquiry-driven, project-based learning. With a solid track record of four years in this initiative, teachers use this time to blend core academic content with collaborative and real-world problem-solving as students in grades 6-8 work in interdisciplinary teams. Teachers facilitate learning as students explore essential questions and develop solutions to real world problems using math, language arts, civics, and science. At every point, teachers skillfully inject the conversations with necessary skills to help students reflect, grow, and move forward in their learning.

The spark that ignited to create IMPACT at the middle school level didn't just remain there. From that launching point, cross-disciplinary learning, intentional student dialogue, and real-world application are catching fire at the elementary and high school level. Teachers are supported in their innovative approaches to educating their own students.

## Professional Development School Liaison Introduction

Stepping through the doors of East Washington Academy (EWA) feels a bit like time travel for Stefanie Onieal, the school's new PDS Liaison. A former elementary teacher in Muncie Community Schools, Stefanie now finds herself working alongside a familiar face, Principal Evan Shroyer, who was once her third-grade student. Their new roles as colleagues and thought partners mark a full-circle moment. One that brings a unique blend of history, experience, and shared purpose to the halls of EWA.



In her new role, Stefanie is focusing on two key goals for the school year: mentoring a new teacher and collaborating with the teaching staff to strengthen math instruction. For October's early release professional development day, she organized an exciting learning opportunity by inviting professors from Ball State University's Math Education Department to lead sessions. These workshops explored the use of math manipulatives, hands-on tools designed to support students' understanding of numbers and operations, aligning with the school's mission to deepen mathematical comprehension. This fall, Stefanie has been fully immersed in the life of the school. She's spent several weeks observing classrooms and getting to know teachers and other staff members, learning about the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum, and meeting with EWA Master Teacher Angie Butler. With Angie's guidance, she's explored the school's emphasis on the Science of Reading, gaining insight into how educators and support staff are implementing research-based strategies for teaching literacy.

In addition, Stefanie continues her work with Ball State University students, who are completing field experiences in EWA's kindergarten and second-grade classrooms.



**Ball State practicum students at East Washington Academy.**

Stefanie has observed mentor teachers in action and is excited that her students are learning in environments where the Science of Reading is demonstrated daily.

With deep roots in the district and a strong commitment to both teacher development and student learning, Stefanie Onieal is bringing new energy and a meaningful sense of continuity to East Washington Academy.



## Great News



**Mount Vernon Community School Corporation (MVCSC) has been awarded the Indiana Department of Education's Robotics Competition Grant for the second year in a row, securing \$24,000 in funding for the 2025-2026 school year.**

This grant allows MVCSC to continue growing its rapidly expanding robotics program. Learn more [HERE](#).

### **CONGRATULATIONS to Monroe Central Jr- Sr. High School's Top 10 Randolph County Lilly Scholarship Finalists:**



### **Indiana Teacher of the Year**

Congratulations to Megan Johnson, fourth grade teacher at Central Elementary in Plainfield, Indiana and 2007 Ball State graduate for her hard work and dedication to the field of education. Megan Johnson was surprised by family, friends, colleagues, and former students as she was announced as Indiana's newest Teacher of the Year! The list of top finalists can be found [here](#).





## Great News

### All Three New Palestine Elementary Schools Achieve Outstanding Third Grade Literacy Success

New Palestine Community Schools (NPCS) is proud to announce that all three district elementary schools have surpassed the state's literacy benchmark for third grade, achieving outstanding reading proficiency rates for the 2024-25 school year.

According to data released by the Indiana Department of Education, third-grade students across NPCS demonstrated remarkable literacy skills, with each school exceeding the state's 95% goal for literacy achievement:

- Brandywine Elementary School - 97.2% literacy rate
- New Palestine Elementary School - 95.7% literacy rate
- Sugar Creek Elementary School - 95.8% literacy rate



**"This is a tremendous accomplishment for our students, teachers, and families," said Dr. Gina Pleak, Superintendent of New Palestine Community Schools. "Reading proficiency at the end of third grade is a key predictor of future academic success, and these results show the strength of our early literacy programs, dedicated staff, and supportive community."**

### U.S. News & World Report High School Rankings

**It is great to see so many familiar names on the list! Our partners include:**



Indiana Academy- Top 10  
Zionsville High School- Top 10  
Carmel High School- Top 10  
Westfield High School- Top 10  
Fishers High School- Top 10

Sheridan High School, Plainfield High School, Pendleton Heights High School, Mt. Vernon High School, Noblesville High School, Burris Laboratory, New Palestine High School, Yorktown High School, Franklin Central High School, North Central High School (MSD Washington Twp). For a full list click [here](#).

# WHO IS OTES-CP?

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