

# Birmingham Covington School

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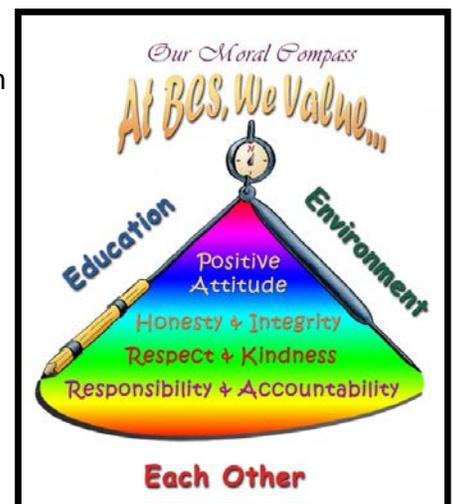
Dear BCS Parents and Guardians,

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Text this message: @bcsf  
To this number: 81010

As we enter August and the end of summer vacation for our students quickly approaches, I am thrilled to be among the first to welcome you to the 2017-2018 school year! As I begin my fifth full year serving this incredible school community, I find myself increasingly energized to partner with staff, students, parents and the greater community to further support our truly unique **BCS vision, mission/purpose, values and beliefs** (see attached).

We enter August having finalized the installation of our new HVAC system and awaiting new desktops for our computer labs as part of the 2015 bond. While upgraded heating and cooling and new lab desktops are exciting for students and staff alike, the new school year also allows us to feel excitement to reconnect to our vision and inspire the students we serve *“to lead in the global community through a passion for learning, innovating, and inquiry & design.”* As we continue to nurture creativity through the [design thinking model](#) whose process begins with empathy, we look forward to this year’s theme being just that – **Empathy**. I hope your family and you have had the opportunity to enjoy our community read, [Save Me a Seat](#), a book that gives us a literary experience of what it feels like to “put yourself in another person’s shoes” through the alternating voices of lead characters Joe and Ravi. We have much planned with this book and our theme upon the students’ return. In fact, each month we will be focusing on a different habit of empathy. The [nine habits](#) we will highlight throughout the year come from the blueprint to helping children acquire “the Empathy Advantage” that Michelle Borba describes in her book, [Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World](#). Check out the nine habits and the monthly rollout of each on [the flyer](#) suitable for your refrigerator. ☺

As a school community at BCS, I look forward to renewing our efforts together living into the components of our [Moral Compass](#). To that end, let’s embrace together our overarching theme for the year, and the design thinking model’s first step: **Empathy!** Aligned with this theme of Empathy, we will continue to make growth this year living into our vision through the areas of inquiry-based learning, leveraging technology purposefully, and building global competencies. Additionally, our **BCS Interdisciplinary Themes** for 2017-18 will help us connect our daily learning across all disciplines. These themes are attached for your reference. Finally, we will continue to work to expand on the idea of purposeful learning through our touchstone, **“Our Moral Compass”** (see diagram to the right or [click on the online link](#)). Together with our students we will recommit to the principles of character education and infuse our 3E’s (education, environment, and each other) throughout all



we do at BCS. This type of commitment to our education, our environment and **each other**, through empathy, will continue to guide our students on the path to being global citizens who move forward with both intention and purpose.

As we continue to prepare for an exciting new school year, Jason and I would like to announce the following staff changes:

- With our 5/6 teacher Andrea Marks deciding not to return, we are excited to welcome **Ryan Arbaugh** to BCS coming most recently from teaching fifth grade at Bingham Farms. With his elementary experience, his middle school language arts and social studies certifications, and his love of middle level students from his 5<sup>th</sup> grade teaching experience at Bingham and student teaching at Berkshire Middle School in 2008, Ryan is thrilled to join our team at BCS. Ryan holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education May from Oakland University including middle level endorsements in Language Arts and Social Studies, and, most recently, earned a Masters of Education in Educational Technology from Marygrove College.
- As our art teacher Amanda Husband will be on maternity leave through the first quarter, we welcome **Charles Bugelli** as long term art guest teacher during Amanda's leave. Charles is a recently retired art teacher from Oak Park who, with his over 30 years of experience in art education, will fill in wonderfully for our awesome BCS art program.
- With Meg Cox shifting her responsibilities to district level support, we welcome **Rachel Goutman** as our new psychologist. Rachel brings with her a Masters Degree in School and Community Psychology from Wayne State University and her experience as a school psychologist for the East Detroit Public Schools

We are excited indeed to add Ryan, Charles and Rachel to our dynamic BCS community! Please be sure to extend your heartfelt BCS welcome when you meet them.

We look forward to seeing you at **Back-to-School Registration** on August 10<sup>th</sup> or August 15<sup>th</sup>. Please use the enclosed "Parent's Guide to Registration" to guide you through this process.

Whether you are a returning family or a new family to BCS, I know that you too will find that BCS is a great place to be as we embrace our theme! While Maya Angelou suggests that *"we all have empathy...we may not have enough courage to display it"* and Stephen Covey contends that *"When you show deep empathy toward others, their defensive energy goes down, and positive energy replaces it. That's when you can get more creative in solving problems,"* let's make it a year where we all find the courage to **lead with empathy!**

Sincerely,

*Mark*

Mark Morawski

P.S. Be sure to stay connected with BCS-related information via <http://www.bcsonline.info/> and sign up for important **text reminders** by texting @bcsf to the number 81010 or [click on this link](#) at enter code bcfs to sign up (see attached for directions)!



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# Vision, Mission, Values and Beliefs

## Vision Statement

BCS inspires students to lead in the global community through a passion for learning, innovating, and inquiry & design.

### We commit to:

- educate the whole child, supporting the needs of all learners.
- foster and nurture a learning community of character valuing integrity, diversity and acceptance.
- prepare students, through original and authentic learning experiences, to create solutions meeting the challenges of tomorrow on a global scale.
- adapt purposefully by efficiently utilizing the resources around us to ensure academic excellence in our evolving world.

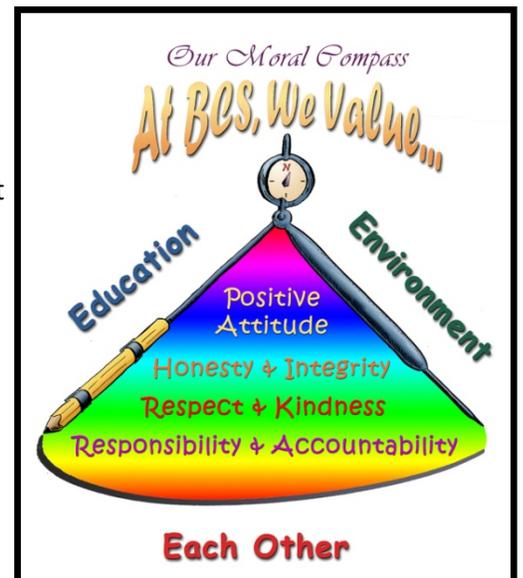
## Mission/Purpose Statement

BCS is a dynamic and collaborative learning community. We cultivate an engaging environment that embraces all students and empowers them to pose questions, integrate resources, synthesize, evaluate and apply their knowledge to positively influence our diverse and ever-changing world.

## Value & Belief Statements

In our Community of Learners, we value and believe....

- people learn best in an atmosphere of curiosity, high expectations, collaboration and diversity.
- innovation and application enhance the process of learning.
- people need to be significantly challenged beyond their current academic levels of performance.
- opportunities for community leadership and service are an integral part of learning.
- people learn most effectively when they pose questions, integrate knowledge, and apply what they have learned to the world around them.
- each person has intrinsic dignity and worth and deserves to be treated with respect.
- family support and involvement are essential to academic success.
- each person deserves to learn and work within a safe and accepting environment.
- thoughtful and responsible risk-taking is expected.
- each of us has responsibilities and rights as a member of a global society.
- all people can become self-directed and responsible learners.
- mistakes are an integral part of the learning process.
- fostering positive relationships among each of us is essential.



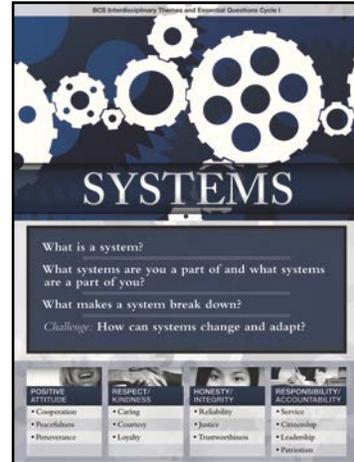
# BCS Interdisciplinary Themes – 2017-2018

Integrated learning is a critical element in all classrooms at BCS. The ability to understand big themes common to human experience, past and present, provides students with the framework for thinking about themselves and their world. The themes and essential questions for this year have been carefully chosen by the staff to connect and to link all curriculum areas.

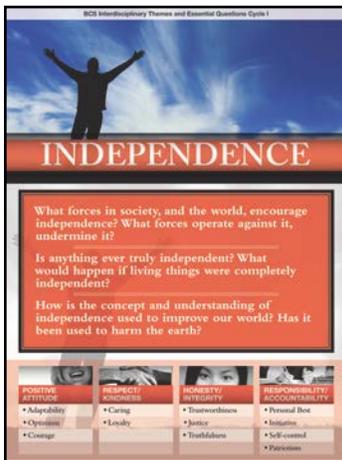
## 3-4 SYSTEMS

- What is a system?
- What systems are you a part of and what systems are a part of you?
- What makes a system break down?

*Challenge: How can systems change and adapt?*



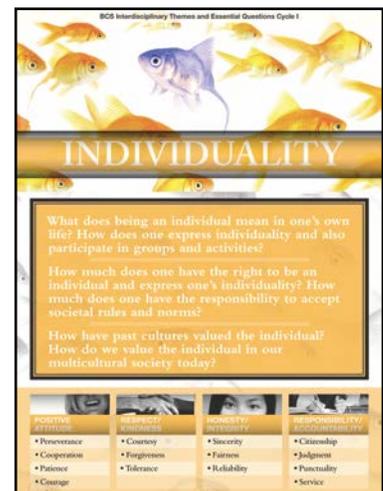
## 5-6 INDEPENDENCE



- What forces in society, and the world, encourage independence?
- What forces operate against it, undermine it?
- Is anything ever truly independent?
- How is the concept and understanding of independence used to improve our world? Has it been used to harm the earth?

## 7-8 INDIVIDUALITY

- What does an individual mean in one's own life? How does one express individuality and also participate with groups and in activities?
- How much does one have the right to be an individual and express one's individuality? How much does one have the responsibility to accept societal rules and norms?
- How have past cultures valued the individual? How do we value the individual in today's multicultural society?



Mark Morawski would like you to join  
BCS Families!

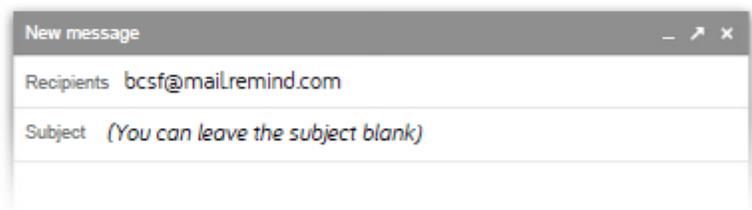


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