

FLEX ACADEMY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



In November, classmates Samara and Kenson attend a Flexcursion (field trip) hosted at LCASD by Fallen Timbers staff and Flex Academy Teachers.

In this Newsletter:

- Introduction- 1
- Staying True to Our Pillars- 2
- Family Spotlight- 3
- Supporting Learner Coaches- 4
- Governance Council- 5
- Increasing Student Achievement- 5
- Highlights - 6

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOCUS

HEIDI SCHMIDT- FLEX ACADEMY PRINCIPAL

Welcome to our quarterly newsletter. While we communicate weekly with our families around the highlights and logistics of our school, we wanted to share with our larger community on a regular basis what makes Flex Academy a very special education option for our families. We pride ourselves in providing an enriched educational experience for kindergarten through eighth grade which is grounded in our three pillars: Personalized Learning, Health and Wellness, and Service Learning.

Flex Academy started as an idea in 2012 and turned into a reality in 2014 when our doors were first opened to 50 students and 4 teachers. Our first "home" was located in the Little Chute Civic Center, where the majority of student learning took place until June 2018.

On September 13th, 2018 Flex moved into our forever home in the LCASD 5-12 complex with 100 students in 4 different gradebands. Our Flex Team includes; Ms. Schmidt- Principal, Mrs. Lamers- K-1 teacher, Ms. McDaniel & Ms. VanSambeek- 2-3 teachers, Mrs. Lemm- 4-5 teacher, Mrs. Stormer- 6-8 teacher, Mrs. Sheleski- Special Ed teacher, and Mrs. Peyton- Administrative Assistant.

Enjoy our first quarterly newsletter and check out our [website](#) for more information. Thank you for your support!

~ Heidi Schmidt, Principal of Flex Academy



Siblings, Olivia and Ethan, participate in Flex's Family Festival in the comfort of their home back in December.





We will Learn,
Serve, and Be
Well!

STAYING TRUE TO OUR PILLARS

KELLY LAMERS- K-1 GRADE TEACHER

The mission of Flex Academy is to provide a “Flex”ible learning environment promoting student success and total wellness through the use of a personalized approach to learning. We focus on supporting all learners in developing their communications, curiosity, and critical thinking skills needed for 21st-century success.

In fostering the “Flex”ible learning environments for our students overall success and wellness we foster their development through 3 Pillars; Personalized Learning, Service Learning, and Health & Wellness. Our focus is that students should be mastering curriculum while targeting students' specific learning styles. We believe that each student is unique, and so learning experiences must consider the abilities, interests, learning styles, and preferred ways of expression of each student.

A day in the life of a Flex Academy student at school can include a focus in each area of the 3 Pillars. Our day may start out by doing a Service Learning project in the morning that is gradeband specific or whole school inclusion. While moving to a Health & Wellness mindset for Community Time, a time where our students focus on building strong relationships with their peers. Followed by an afternoon of Personalized Learning lessons during our PLT (Personalized Learning Time), where instruction is focused on areas where a student may need more support.

When a child attends the Flex Academy, we provide them the opportunity to learn in a variety of settings. We believe that primary education does not need to happen behind brick and mortar classroom walls. For this reason, we participate in experiential learning opportunities by attending an average of 15 “Flexcursions,” field trips, participating project based learning activities, and out of school activities.

During this unique time of COVID, there can seem to be obstacles for education to adhere to the “traditional ‘flex-ible’” Flex Academy model. Though, that may be the mindset, the Flex Academy community has adjusted to continue to provide a solid foundation of learning for our students through the 3 Pillars. One way this has been possible is through continuing to offer alternate options to the Flexcursions we have offered our students. In collaboration with the team at Fallen Timbers Environmental Center, the Flex Academy has been able to alter the educational experiences that would have otherwise taken place on the Fallen Timbers grounds, and bring them to life on the District grounds. Fallen Timbers has been exceptional in bringing the wilderness to a grassland in preparing lessons that are both educational and engaging. Our students have had the chance to learn about Living and Nonliving, Weather, Ecosystems, Mapping, GPS, and Winter Sports such as snowshoeing and skiing. It is wonderful to see that even during this time of uncertainty our students continue to shine!

Watching our students keep a base of the Flex normalcy has been such a joy. We are able to see our students learning through exploration, exploring the outdoors with big smiles and happy hearts!



NEVER STOP LEARNING



I have learned the value of environmental education and playing in nature to improve emotional health. I have learned that I don't have to do everything perfectly for my kids to learn.

Do you have any tips for other Learner Coaches?

One of the most important things you can work on early with your kids is teaching them to be responsible and accountable for their own school work. They learn independence and lifelong skills and it makes your job as a learner coach much more manageable. Also, your school at home days probably look completely different than any other family's school at home day and that is completely fine and wonderful.

FAMILY SPOTLIGHT

KELLY PETERSON 4-YEAR VETERAN PARENT

Why did you choose Flex?

When our son was in 4th grade at a traditional school, he was struggling with anxiety and going to school every day. We choose to homeschool for the second half of the year. Right before 5th grade started, a friend told us about Flex, the school her kids attended. We loved the idea of the split schedule, 2 days a week at Flex and 3 days doing school at home. We were able to get him started at the beginning of the school year. The teachers were amazing and helped support our son, teaching him using a growth mindset to encourage him to overcome his anxiety. They were compassionate and engaging. Our son finished 8th grade in 2020 and we have 3 younger kids attending Flex now.



WE LOVED THE IDEA OF THE SPLIT SCHEDULE, 2 DAYS A WEEK AT FLEX AND 3 DAYS DOING SCHOOL AT HOME

What have you learned as a Learner Coach?

I have learned so much. I have learned that school can look different for each student, while we learn together as a community of learners. I have learned to embrace growth mindset. I have learned how there are endless opportunities to serve in our community.



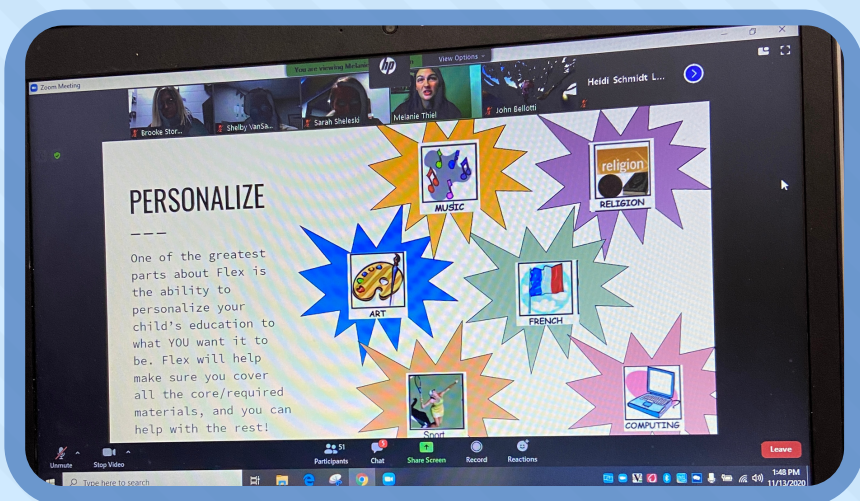
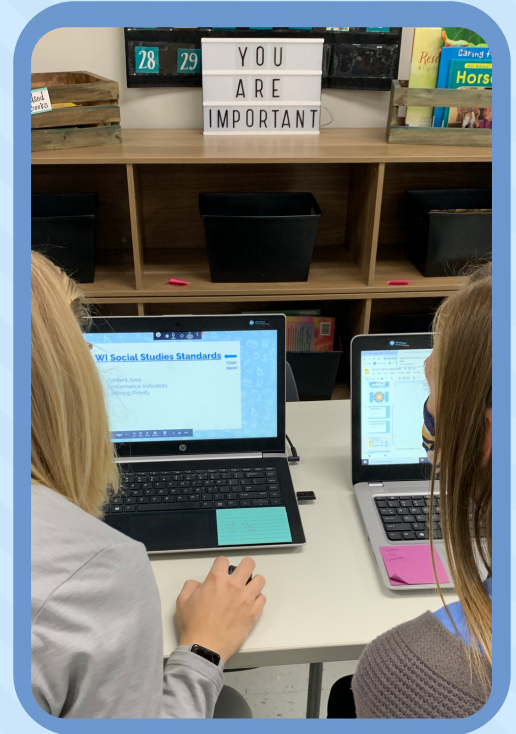
SUPPORTING LEARNER COACHES

BROOKE STORMER- 6-8 GRADE TEACHER

Learner Coaches are a pivotal part of how Flex Academy operates; that is why the staff at Flex Academy takes pride in helping our Learner Coaches to be the most successful versions of themselves. The role of a Learner Coach is no small task. The Learner Coach is a pivotal piece in the education of each student and thus requires a time commitment to working one-on-one with the student(s), at home, on a weekly basis. During at-home days, it is required that a Learner Coach dedicates a minimum of 4 hours per day to work individually with a student. The Learner Coach provides structure and guidance, administers the Flex Academy curriculum, and oversees the expectations for service, wellness, and Flexcursion requirements.

The staff at Flex Academy works with both the Learner Coach and the student as part of our triad to make sure that the student reaches their maximum learning potential. The Flex Academy staff supports Learner Coaches in completing these tasks at home by offering Learner Coach Development opportunities, community meets, weekly newsletters, and opportunities for gradeband collaboration. Learner Coaches are provided these opportunities to help them to feel successful with their students at home, and are in constant communication with their gradeband teacher to make sure their students' needs are met both at Flex Academy and when they are working at home.

Learner Coach Development is a unique opportunity for the Learner Coaches at Flex to receive the information they need in order to be more successful with their at-home learning days. These developments occur four times each school year, once a quarter, and build on concepts that Learner Coaches want to see covered by their gradeband teachers. Topics that have been discussed so far this year include: our service learning pillar, MAP testing, iReady diagnostics, daily schedules, and self-care for Learner Coaches. One of the other most important resources for Learner Coaches at Flex is the weekly newsletter sent out each Friday. This newsletter gives important updates, upcoming events, weekly health and wellness activities, and shoutouts to our families. We also have our very own Flex Academy Parent Page, that when paired with our weekly newsletter, will give Learner Coaches all the tools they will need to feel successful.



Offering community meets and collaborations is one way that the Flex Academy staff can ensure that our Learner Coaches are getting opportunities to meet with one another. No one knows the role of a Learner Coach quite like another Learner Coach! Just like educators need time to collaborate, we have found that many valuable lessons can come from these Learner Coach collaborations. Making sure Learner Coaches feel supported not only by their Triad, but the other Learner Coaches around them can help them to reach their full potential as a Learner Coach.



GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

HEIDI SCHMIDT- FLEX ACADEMY PRINCIPAL

Little Chute Area School District hosts two charter schools, Flex Academy and Little Chute Careers Pathways Academy and collaboratively they are supported by the Governing Council. This eight-member Council meets monthly and agendas and minutes can be found on the LCASD website.

Members of the Council have diverse backgrounds and invested interests in the charter schools which allows them to offer input and provide guidance through staff sharing reports and posing questions.

The Governing Council is currently **recruiting new members** who are looking to make an impact on the unique missions of our charter schools. If you have an interest in contributing, you are encouraged to check out our Council By-laws and our contact information on our [LCASD website](#), and contact Mandi Dornfield, our Governing Council President, or Heidi Schmidt, Flex Academy Principal.



INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

SARAH SHELESKI- SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

One of the foundational pillars of Flex is personalized learning. In looking at personalized learning and growth for all students, Flex continues to work intentionally as a team with support from Learner Coaches to foster each student. Knowing that each student comes with different strengths and areas of need, we continue to review data to intentionally plan lessons and support all of our learners.

Utilizing grade band lessons, at home support with learner coaches, and data review to provide intentional support we are reflecting on student needs on a regular basis. During weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, we as teachers are reviewing data. A success for our team has been in student growth for students receiving Tier 2 support.

From September to February, Flex has provided additional support to 13% (12) of students to assist them in progressing towards grade level expectations. As of February, 7% (7) of those students were at grade level expectations following this additional support and 6% (5) of those students continue to receive support or have qualified for special education services to best meet their needs. Through the collaborative efforts of Flex teachers and learner coaches, 94% of students are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations and 100% are receiving personalized learning to meet their needs!

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**A SUCCESS FOR OUR
TEAM HAS BEEN IN
STUDENT GROWTH FOR
STUDENTS RECEIVING
TIER 2 SUPPORT.**

Tier 2 interventions are additional programs and strategies provided to students who require support in addition to universal support. The purpose of tier 2 interventions are to reduce the risk of academic or behavior problems. Students are receiving additional small group support, matched to their needs at their instructional level. Teachers are able to explicitly teach needed skills towards grade level expectations and fill gaps in learning. Students are given the opportunity to learn, practice, and build confidence in their skills.



HIGHLIGHTS



POPCORN & PJS

Comfy in their pajamas, Flex Families participated in our virtual evening event on March 18th. Flex Academy provided families with popcorn and staff members read-aloud some favorite short stories, for a relaxing community event.



QUARTER 3 SERVICE LEARNING

Each quarter Flex students participate in Service Learning days. Quarter 3's upcoming Service Learning days will focus on mental health and spreading kindness power through NAMI.



CHIPOTLE FUNDRAISER

Each semester, Flex sets up a fundraiser through Chipotle. Acquired funds are used to purchase materials for special events. Our upcoming fundraiser is on April 17th from 4-8 pm at W3198 County Road Kk Ste A. Order online with code 7K9VZ4F, or tell your cashier you are there to support the Flex Academy!

INFORMATIONAL NIGHTS

REGISTER NOW

All families interested in enrollment at the Flex Academy are required to attend an Informational Meeting prior to receiving an enrollment application. Upcoming meetings are on April 8th and May 17th. Meeting registration can be found on the Flex Academy Website.

QUARTER 3 HEALTH & WELLNESS



Each quarter Flex students participate in Health & Wellness days. For the Quarter three upcoming Health & Wellness days, we will focus on wonders that each Gradeband has been thinking about. .

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP



Flex students participate in quarterly lessons on Digital Citizenship. These lessons are great for teaching responsible technology usage, achieving digital literacy, and ensuring cyberbullying prevention. Our families are encouraged to have at-home discussions regarding digital citizenship.

