

# FLEX ACADEMY

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Flex students enjoying recess time using our brand new multi-purpose turf!

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## MESSAGE FROM MS. SCHMIDT

We have had a great start to the 2022-23 school year. Each year we challenge ourselves to reflect on the past and plan for the future while looking at data, our enrollment, strengths of our staff and most importantly the families we serve.

This fall we have recruited a representative group to revise our contract. Each charter school in Wisconsin needs to have a contract which meets a set of benchmarks and upon review, we wanted to ensure our contract reflects our current practices while also allowing us flexibility to be responsive.

Our committee is made up of counsel members, staff, and parents. The focus of the three meetings have been on grounding in the mission, vision, delivery model, and the measures to ensure we are providing a rigorous academic plan which aligns with our three pillars. We intend on sending our revised contract to DPI in December. We will report back in our next newsletter.

Enjoy our first quarterly newsletter of our 22-23 school year and check out our website for more information. Thank you for your support!

~ Heidi Schmidt, Principal of Flex Academy





We will Learn,  
Serve, and Be  
Well!

# STAYING TRUE TO OUR PILLARS

**SARAH SHELESKI- SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER**

“When I grow up, I want to be a teacher, a veterinarian, and a singer!” Do you remember your first career aspirations as a child? It is impossible not to look back at these lofty goals without smiling and reflect on where I am today. One out of three is not too bad; I am in my twentieth year of teaching, but haven’t managed to balance that with veterinarian school or going on tour to sold out auditoriums!

Looking back at the people and situations that led me onto the path of education, it is not without pause that I see the deep roots of my own education and the role that we all play at Flex for our students. Flex Academy Staff intentionally plans time to pause, reflect, be responsive, and plan for the coming school year. We are ever evolving to meet diverse learner and family needs while staying focused on our core values of Personalized Learning, Health and Wellness, Service Learning, and our school community.

One way that we continue to grow and develop these core values is through our STEAM program. Our STEAM program is one that families continue to express a deep interest in; as well as fueling our learners to be highly engaged and more confident in their problem solving and risk taking skills. Building on these strengths, we are connecting students in a new way to amplify their passions and provide them with an opportunity to explore STEAM through Career Exploration.

Each quarter, students will have the opportunity to participate in a Career Based STEAM day that will culminate with a Family Career Fair. There will be activities, problem solving, and community members educating students about different career options. In the afternoon, students will delve deeper into their learning through a project based learning experience to further enhance their experiences from the day. We are beyond appreciative of our community and the experiences they are sharing with your students! We cannot wait to see what our students will “be when they grow up!”



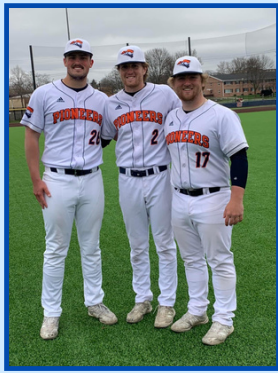
## Quarterly Career + STEAM Focus

	October 13	February 1	February 16	April 27	May 11
Career Focus	Agricultural & Environmental Community Volunteers: U.S. Fish & Wildlife and Vande Hey’s	Technology & Art Community Volunteers: FVTC and Hazelmade Art	Health Science and Aeronautics Community Volunteers: Theda, Air Force, CERT	Public Safety & Food Community Volunteers: Fox Valley Metro and LC Food Services	Family Career Day Parent/Family Volunteer Fair to share their expertise with students
STEAM	Dissecting Fish, Making Blueprints	Virtual Reality, Business Owner	Human Body, Flight, Rescue	Recipes, Break Out Rooms	Community Building / Exploration

\*Volunteers are subject to change based on availability\*







## WHO IS MR. KLEIN?

Hi, My name is Griffin Klein and I am the new 2nd and 3rd gradeband teacher at the Flex Academy. I am from Kaukauna where I went to Kaukauna High School. While at Kaukauna High School I was involved in Baseball, Basketball, and Musicals. I just graduated from Carroll University in the spring and am very excited to be a part of the Flex team. In my time at Carroll University I was a part of the baseball team. During my free time, I enjoy sports, working out, and traveling. Flex stands out to me because of the flexibility that the school allows as well as the core beliefs that we follow. Flex's ability to prioritize service learning, personalized learning, and health and wellness is something that really stood out to me and made me want to be a part of the team. I look forward to being a part of the Flex family as well as sharing my bad jokes and entertaining personality. So far in my time at Flex I have really enjoyed getting to know all of the Flex students and families. I have had many fun experiences with the students on Flexcursions, team-building days, and career days. This has given me a better opportunity to learn about what the students enjoy about Flex and the community it is a part of. My favorite moment of Flex so far was playing Twister at family game night. This was a fun experience because it allowed me to build relationships with members of Flex that aren't usually in my class. I also really enjoy teaching Mystery Science lessons where we create experiments such as clouds in a cup, bridges, and unlock doors with magnets. I really enjoy seeing students push their understanding and question why things work the way they do.

## A Little Q&A with Mr. Klein

**Q: What is your favorite ice cream flavor?**

**A: Vanilla**

**Q: What is your favorite Movie?**

**A: Waterboy**

**Q: What is one thing on your bucket list?**

**A: Go to Dubai**

**Q: What got you interested in teaching?**

**A: Being able to help students**

**Q: What was the last book you read?**

**A: The Mamba Mentality by Kobe Bryant**

**Q: What's your "dance like nobody's watching" song?**

**A: Good Feeling by Flo Rida**

**Q: What advice would you give your younger self?**

**A: Have Fun**

**Q: Where is your favorite place to vacation**

**A: Hawaii**

**Q: If you could have dinner with any 3 people, who would they be?**

**A: Kobe Bryant, Hercules & Colonel Sanders**



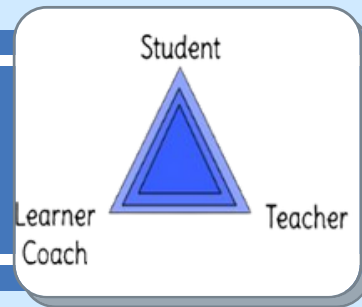
### Joke of the day:

**Q: Why did the boy throw the butter? A: Because he wanted to see a butterfly.**



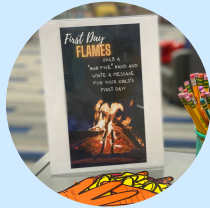
# SUPPORTING LEARNER COACHES

KELLY LAMERS K-1 GRADEBAND TEACHER



Learner Coach - A term that holds so much here at the Flex Academy. But, what exactly is a Learner Coach? Well, it is a parent, guardian, or adult figure that takes on the at-home learning experience for a student enrolled at the Flex Academy. The Learner Coach is a pivotal piece in our Triad, thus requires a time commitment to working one-on-one with student(s), at home on a weekly basis. This person works side-by-side in a collaborative effort with students and parents to engage in the best overall academic experience for students from a range of locations including home, community, and school.

Upon enrollment into the Flex Academy, you become a part of the family community here. Due to the unique nature of our school, our close knit community begins to operate with family dynamics. The dynamics operate to create a solid foundation and building block for all to grow. ALL being the key word in that statement. In developing that solid foundation for our building blocks to grow, we start our school year off by focusing on our Learner Coaches.



To start off our school year, we take time to prepare our Learner Coaches for the utmost success by holding Learner Coach Orientation. This time includes both our “Veteran” (families who will be going on year 2+) and New Families (who will be joining us for their 1st year). Our focus is on all aspects of our school, from; logistics of the 3 Pillars (Personalized Learning, Health & Wellness, and Service Learning), to the nuts and bolts of what to expect throughout the year, down to plans and how to keep things organized. Giving our New Families the chance to learn side-by-side with our Veteran families opens up the floor for collaboration and partnership for a successful school year.

Learner Coach Development, otherwise known in the Flex community as LCD, was our next opportunity to bring each of our Learner Coaches back together for connection and collaboration. Our 1st LCD of the year took place on September 9th, which followed our first official week of school. In our planning, we wanted to be intentional about what day we chose and picking one that was sooner rather than later to allow for the collaboration. Learner Coaches were divided into 5 different groups, each focusing on a different part of our school. The next 30 minutes were then spent in these small groups with a more focused mindset on these given topics. Following that time, we mixed up our groups through a “jigsaw” activity. Everyone was organized into different groups that had someone from each group, creating 4 new larger groups. It was so fun to get to see and hear the differences in Learner Coaches structures or routines for at home days, overall mindsets on given topics, as well as the different ways they each complete tasks. There were wonderful ideas shared and ability for growth for all families!

Support for Learner Coaches outside of face to face connection, we as a staff are continually gathering and preparing resources for our families. As our school is a blended opportunity, we are always looking for ways that we can support our Learner Coaches and students during their at home learning days. One way we find that we can best support them is through finding resources for them to work on with their students. Providing teacher approved resources allows for a continual flow of academic practice for students, Learner Coaches, and teachers.

Taking on a role such as a Learner Coach can bring on many new challenges, but also so much excitement and triumph. As a Learner Coach here at the Flex Academy we are continually finding ways to support, encourage, and empower guardians for their efforts in their child’s education. After all, this role is a pivotal piece in bringing together our Triad. We are so thankful for all of the work they do!





# GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

HEIDI SCHMIDT- FLEX ACADEMY PRINCIPAL

Little Chute Area School District hosts two charter schools, Flex Academy and Little Chute Careers Pathways Academy, which are collaboratively supported by the Governing Council. This Council meets monthly with their agendas and minutes found on the LCASD website.

This year our format includes a specific focus that both charter schools will present each meeting. September's focus was supporting students and families for a new school year and October's was marketing. In November we will focus on student achievement data, reporting statewide and district assessments.

We are currently open to adding interested community members to our Council. If you have any interest in being part of our Governance Council, contact our GC president, Carl Rambo, [crambo@littlechute.k12.wi.us](mailto:crambo@littlechute.k12.wi.us)

These meetings are open to the public. Here are the remaining meeting dates:

- November 7, 2022
- December 5, 2022
- January 4, 2023
- February 6, 2023
- March 6, 2023
- April 12, 2023
- May 1, 2023
- June 7, 2023



# INCREASING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

BROOKE STORMER- 6-8 GRADEBAND TEACHER

## Changes to the 6th, 7th, & 8th Grade Schedule

The beginning of each school year always brings new and exciting change. In particular, the six, seventh, and eighth graders at Flex have a new schedule opportunity for the 2022-2023 school year. Students are still required to come for one instructional day (Tuesday) and one enrichment day (Thursday). Students then have the choice to either work on curriculum at home or come into the Flex space to work on curriculum on Mondays and Wednesdays. This means that students can attend Flex up to 4 days each week, which differs from Flex's traditional two days per week.

I wanted to better meet the needs of my students while also giving them the opportunity to build their stamina for high school by giving them the option to come four days. When students come into Flex they have the opportunity to work on their math, language arts, science, social studies, health and wellness, and service learning either independently or with teacher support if needed. These days also allow us to focus on building essential skills and strategies students will benefit from in high school such as note taking, writing down work in math lessons, organization, and time management.



DREAM BIG,  
WORK HARD,  
- MAKE IT  
happen.



So far this school year each week I have had eight of my thirteen students take advantage of these work at Flex days. Students have commented that the environment on these work at Flex days is less distracting, beneficial if they get locked out of a quiz or do not understand a lesson, helps them to know they are taking notes and doing practice problems correctly, and gives them more opportunities to have social time with their peers.

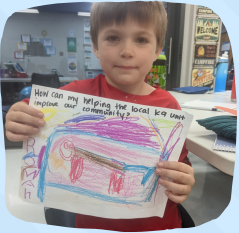
I have also loved having all of my class come in for their instruction and enrichment days on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This full class size has allowed for opportunities such as working with all of the peers in their class and grade level collaboration in science and social studies. Overall, I have seen a benefit in this change when I compare the beginning of this school year to previous years. I feel my students have made closer connections to one another and are all able to be met with what they need in terms of their curriculum.



# HIGHLIGHTS

## PILLARS DAY

At the start of the school year students created a driving question for their Service Learning Project. On the first half of our Pillars Day students were able to dig deeper and find an organization that supports their driving question. The second half of the day students learned about SMART goals and created their first Health and Wellness goal of the school year. We ended the day with a few movement games.



## GAME NIGHT

Flex Academy families brought in their favorite family game to share on game night this year! It was a great opportunity for families to play, work collaboratively, and also have fun with a bit of some friendly competition.



## INFORMATIONAL NIGHTS

All families interested in enrollment at the Flex Academy are required to attend an Informational Meeting prior to receiving an enrollment application. An upcoming meeting is on December 6th. Meeting registration information can be found on the Flex Academy Website. We hope to see you there!



## TEAM BUILDING

We started the school year dedicated to building peer relationships with some fun! Our kindergarten through third grade students went to the Warrior Jungle and fourth through eighth grade students went to Urban Air.



## PILLARS CLUB

Students started out our biweekly after school club with paint filled squirt guns. Before they painted, students took masking tape to create a picture on a piece of paper. Then they let the paint fly! Once dry they peeled the tape off to reveal their masterpiece.



## FLEXCURSIONS

Our first Flexcursion (field trip) was out to Fallen Timbers in October. Kindergarten through third grade students explored the outdoors using their senses and investigated insects' uniqueness. The fourth through eighth grade students enjoyed geocaching and identifying features in skulls to determine which animal they came from. Then we all came together for a hike around Fallen Timbers to inspire us to create a watercolor picture.

