

Partnership FAQ's

Where is the school located?

Berrien Springs School District is conveniently located in downtown Berrien Springs, just behind McDonald's and close to the Fairgrounds' west entrance. See the Contact Us page for directions. Students are not required to spend any minimum amount of time on BSPS campus.

What are the Partnership office hours?

Partnership staff do not have an office on campus, but have an inbox at the Central Office (STEM/Central building) on campus. Our hours are the same as Central Office, M-F, 8-4:30, following the school calendar. We are best reached via email and we do our best to return messages in a timely manner.

If I join, am I committed for the year?

Registration is on a semester by semester basis. You may change any or all classes at the start of a new semester. Fall registration does not continue into spring.

Are teachers background checked?

Berrien Springs Parent Partnership strives to ensure the safety of all students by conducting and/or requiring thorough national background checks of all off-site and ancillary teachers in contact with our students in the course of Partnership classes out in the community. These background checks are in compliance with mandates by the State of Michigan for public schools.

Can my student be part of another school and this Partnership?

Students must be not be full-time public school students in any school other than BSPS. Students **may belong** to any homeschool program, such as co-ops and networks, and be members of the Partnership. Students **may not** be registered full-time in any public school, including publicly funded (free) virtual (online) schools, academies (**except for programs provided by Berrien Springs Public Schools**), and so on. Students may not be enrolled in another district's adult education program for the purposes of GED study or otherwise. Students **may be full time students in any private or parochial school as long as they live within Berrien Springs School District**. Private school students living outside of the District are not eligible. Students may not be part of another partnership at the same time.

My child will not be 5 by Sept. 1st, is there a waiver?

Yes, as long as your student will be 5 years of age by Dec. 1, you can sign an early enrollment waiver available after you have registered with the Partnership - be sure to notify the Director.

Are vaccination records required?

No, homeschooled and private school students are considered "non-public" students. Private school students must abide by the directives of their school. All of our classes are taken at home and in the community.

Are there attendance requirements?

Yes, students are expected to attend at least 80% of each class on the schedule and must "pass" every class. Attendance for virtual field trips is kept by partnership staff. To maintain the integrity of the program, we need to demonstrate an overall excellent rate of completion of classes taken by our students. Each Community Project Based Learning class teacher takes their own form of attendance, whether held in-person or virtually; if a student consistently doesn't show or participate, then we will drop them **from that class and the family may be responsible for payment incurred up to that point**. Failure to consistently attend any of the classes chosen, including virtuals, will result in the student losing Partnership privileges. Academic achievement in each class is ultimately determined by the parent, with feedback and/or tangible evidence from teachers and projects.

Do I need to use a certain curriculum at home?

No. The curriculum you choose for your core classes or any other class is entirely up to you. The school does not inquire about your core subjects. You may use curricula from anywhere, including online providers **unless** that provider is a public school (K12, Connections Academy, Great Lakes, Michigan Virtual, etc) other than Berrien Springs Public Schools. You may be part of the Berrien Springs Virtual Academy and the Parent Partnership according to the Virtual Academy's policy.

Are there any limits on the Community Classes we choose?

No more than 4 elective classes per student in grades K-12. *The number of choices allowed for on-campus BSPS students may be limited by building guidance counselors.* We encourage a balanced schedule each semester to promote maximum student exposure to all non-essential subject areas, such as art, communication, physical education, technology, etc., therefore students cannot take more than 1 class per category(K-12). Music is the only exception in that students in grades 6 - 12th may take a second music class from the group music category.

I'm new to homeschooling, where do I find curriculum?

No problem, there are more options than you can imagine. Email Sharon for a list of suggestions on how to get started: shaynes@homeoftheshamrocks.org

What is the Berrien Springs Virtual Academy?

If you want your kids to be at home, but don't want to be responsible for teaching the core subjects, Berrien Springs' Virtual Learning Academy may be right for you. They serve students in grades K-12, provide all curriculum and live mentor teachers through online access and testing at the Lab across from the Middle School. Virtual Academy students may also take Partnership electives according to the following policy:

Virtual Academy students may sign up for up to 2 Partnership classes (K-12), not including Dual Enrollment which is part of the Virtual Academy's schedule. Virtual Academy students must also complete a project for each elective partnership class chosen on his or her schedule. See [Project Requirements](#) for more information.

For more information on this program, contact the Director at 473-0500.

Does the Partnership provide books or computers for students?

All core classes (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Government and History) are taught by parents at home, using any curriculum they choose. **Partnership classes are strictly elective in nature.** The Partnership does not supply books or such materials. Laptops are available to borrow in rare cases where the internet is not available at the student's home and the student is unable to come to the Virtual Lab during after school hours to work on their virtual classes. The computer lab at the Virtual Academy (across from the middle school) is open to Partnership students from 3:30-5:30 M-F.

Where are classes held?

All community classes are held in locations all over the tri-county area. For the 2020-2021 school year, some will not be able to be held in-person and may or may not be able to be offered virtually. It is up to each location to decide how to offer their class. Field trips will be in a virtual format and will no longer be considered a separate class. Consult the Community Resource Class links for individual class locations, contact information, Covid-19 policy and other important details.

All these classes are free?

Yes! There are **no class fees for any of our virtual or community resource classes** except for Independent Music Study lessons lasting longer than 30 min. (parents pay the difference). The only expenditures are for expected items that may need to be purchased as a natural consequence of participating in a particular class. For example, if your student begins guitar lessons or ballet, you will need to borrow or buy a guitar or ballet shoes. Basic music lesson books are included. Dual enrollment college classes: tuition, regularly assessed fees and books, are paid for by BSPS up to a maximum limit. Dual enrollment book rentals must be returned to the college on time.

*Please note: it is important to make as informed a decision as possible when choosing your student's Community Resource classes. Most locations will allow a student to drop a class after one meeting, at no charge, if it wasn't a good fit for the student, but not all. Some classes plan ahead based on the number that have signed up and have purchased materials, hired teachers, etc. and there might be a fee for class time or materials given to the student if the student drops after one or two sessions. The school cannot pay for classes that students do not complete, so choose wisely; **if you do not take the class off of your student's schedule by the deadline, you may be asked to pay for the class time incurred prior to dropping the class.**

Are grades or credit given for any classes?

Neither traditional grades nor official credits are given for homeschooled and private school students for any class (except college classes), they are either pass/fail or complete/incomplete as appropriate. **Partnership students who fail to meet the minimum attendance requirement for classes remaining on their schedule as of the end of count month or who otherwise fail a class will receive a 'NC' (no credit) in BSPS' PowerSchool record. The student may be disallowed from taking the same, similar or any future partnership classes at the discretion of the Partnership Director.** Failure to submit a project at the end of the semester also results in 'no credit' and jeopardizes continued participation in the program.

Can my student be disqualified from Partnership participation?

Yes, continued participation in the partnership is dependent upon abiding by all requirements. Examples of non-compliance:

* lack of or late weekly mentor teacher conversations and lack of thoughtful answers to the project-based questions posed by the mentor teacher's weekly question

* poor record of attendance in one or more courses (less than 80%)

* failure to turn in projects for classes

- * failing grade or withdrawal in one or more dual enrollment courses without reimbursement to BSPS
- * any disruptive or injurious behavior to self or others during partnership participation
- * rude and threatening language made against the program or school
- * discovery that a student has graduated from high school or is no longer within the state's age limitations
- * discovery at any point during the semester that the student is registered in any other (than BSPS) public school, including online virtual schools. Students may not be enrolled in another district's adult education program for the purposes of GED study or otherwise. Attendance at an out-of-district boarding school, even if the student remains a resident of the BSPS District, disqualifies the student. The only exceptions are programs within the BSPS District and single courses within a student's home district brought to the attention of and approved by the Partnership Director in advance. Such a discovery will result in immediate termination from the Partnership, a 'fail' in every course on his or her schedule and ineligibility to participate in the future.

How are classes added and removed from the program? [Class Selection Policy](#)