

Ukulele Music

Keith: Welcome to the LeeCoSchools Edcast #18 with Erin Redden! Kyle, why did we talk to Mrs. Erin Redden?

Kyle: So Erin Redden is the music teacher at Beauregard elementary in job title but she does so much more than that and so as one of the very few true music teachers that's like that her only job we wanted to sort of talk with her a little bit about what she felt about music's impact on education we want to talk to her about some things that they do in the school and you know I've known Erin for a number of years and boy she's a she's a ball of fire she's fantastic she does a lot of stuff for that school

Keith: when we were talking to her the first time she mentioned this thing I was confused when she first talked about the steam room Rob I thought maybe

Kyle: what a sauna or something

Keith: yeah like we're not in Russia or why we have a steam room that it is the science technology engineering arts and math right it's they add the A to stem field

Kyle: yes stem is a hot button word in education and no no saunas in Beauregard Elementary

Keith: well and the arts part of it is very important I was listening to a different podcast just recently and they were talking with a NASA astronaut and he was talking about how important adding arts is to those fields how it all ties together and that's one of and that's one of Erin's issues and then they're all equally important

Kyle: that's right and you know not to jump off on a limb here but you know there's been a lot of talk in the last decade or so people trying to talk about how important the arts were and how sometimes it's a real easy line-item when they're trying to cut different things yeah the arts is an important part of the development of a child and yet there's been studies and and lots of things about it and so we get the talk with someone who's really sort of in that fight

Keith: yeah and very passionate about so after listening to Mrs. Redden if you have any questions, comments, complaints, criticisms, compliments, colloquialisms, conundrums, or concerns, you can find us on the web at www.lee.k12.al.us/EdCast, on Twitter and Instagram @LeeCoSchools, on Facebook at facebook.com/leecoschools, we have our own little icon on the Lee County App which you can find in Google Play or the Apple App Store. Finally, you can email us at edcast@lee.k12.al.us Kyle take it away

Kyle: Heeeeeeeeere we go!

Funky Transition Music

Kyle: so before we get too far started I guess just introduce yourself tell us a little about who you are and your professional journey everything ok

Erin Redden: um my name is Erin Redden and I have been at this school Beauregard Elementary 20 years Wow this is the only school I have been at in my entire career of teaching really it is I adore this school and more so the community I have the pleasure of teaching elementary music and because of that I teach every child in the school and so when we hurt when I first started at the high school we shared a

building with the high school and I had a clothice (closet office) the cloffice then I shared with the PE equipment

Kyle: Oh fun

Erin Redden: and so the first third of the windowless cloffice was a desk and filing cabinet yeah and the rest of the cloffice was filled with PE equipment and stuff so and I traveled by cart aha and went to each teacher's classroom really I did and I also taught choir at the high school level and back then we had almost a thousand students just at the elementary school K-4 now we're averaging

Kyle: in that building but

Erin Redden: sharing with the high school yes

Kyle: I have spatial issues with that how did they even fit I mean that's not a big building that's not anywhere close to the size of Beauregard Elementary today

Erin Redden: oh not at all but there's two hallways where we all fit somehow into two hallways and back then there were even like ten teachers per grade level and the community changed sure you know in the closing of Uniroyal but if you will close it was in those early years so I started in nineteen had Maddie I was pregnant with Maddie when I interviewed so I started my first year teaching in 1998 Wow and had Maddie in October so I was a brand new teacher yeah I took the six weeks I didn't take anymore I was too afraid to take it right I was new at the job and jumped right in back teaching had great in-laws praise the Lord because I was married to a band director at the time at Beulah oh yeah so that Uniroyal must have closed 2000 around there I don't know yeah somewhere in that time but we did we lost some families and then you know some of the rural properties are changing outright and it's becoming a little bit more commercialized in some areas but it's great teaching in a county school and teaching out here in Beauregard hmm so 20 years teaching I did high school choir like I said but it just was overwhelming for me to do high school choir and then come and teach in the afternoon kindergarten kids the change my dad was like whip whiplash yeah so I did eventually get to be full-time just at this elementary school and have loved it it's to the point now where I've started teaching student's children I came in did the orientation for kindergarten parents the other yeah yeah for the Miss Hillier and Miss Ennis and I was looking out at the parent and I thought I taught you and then I looked at this guy and I said did I teach you guys it says seven of the parents I had taught and one of the parents my husband had taught at Beulah when he was at Beulah

Kyle: Wow it's a defining moment in an educators career I had lots of I spent a lot of time in the band when I was coming through well I remember when you I'm sure you know rusty Courson when he started going through that he about the time that we were just getting out of school he was like oh starting to remember these people interesting times

Erin Redden: yeah my husband started his career over at smiths station that's

Kyle: I took band with Roger

Erin Redden: oh did you do that's right

Kyle: my B & C band were with him he actually taught me something that I used to this day what's up he said he told everyone he said early is on time and on time is late and I remember that I could see him standing up there the podium

Erin Redden: and that's gonna be on the podcast because my moments you know when you go into interviews and they're like to find your strengths and your weaknesses I'm one of those that if the meeting if you know you're there at 9:00 I'm 9:04 that's just how I am and that's so not good but I'll be willing to stay an extra hour right but so Roger and I do differ a little bit so I've heard several people say that

Kyle: that's funny

Keith: you just like to make an entrance

Erin Redden: I do exactly it's all that exactly totally diva style yeah that's it

Kyle: I've seen the way your room has been decorated for several years and lots of glitter

Erin Redden: yes lots of glitter I once had a student come in my room and I heard him kind of under his breath say but maybe I don't like coming in here and I was like baby what you don't like music me you said you don't like this ready I'm so sorry what's what's because I just always leave it covered in glue I said well that's true to say that's true but I do like I am a fru fru girl I guess but I am also extremely structured I'm extremely involved in classroom management tools I don't have behavior problems yeah I just there's something I think there's a nice line and I saw a quote yesterday about creativity and crazy and it being a fine line and I like to jump rope with that line that's totally true yeah we'll have as much fun as you want to have in my classroom we will learn we will go outside of the box you will get all the Wiggles out we'll explore but if you cross the line behaviorally I'm gonna pull back the reins really quickly and that allows me to do stage shows I put the entire grade level on the stage oh yeah and during rehearsals ask their teachers to step out of the room go have an extra planning period because if you have too many chiefs it gets hard to control that 150 children up there and they know how I roll so it works yeah it works so we're able to make some fun music and that's important to me get them on the stage yeah because in this day and age they're so involved in sports they're so involved in extracurriculars that they don't know what it feels like to do a performance in front of a lot of people and in front of their peers and I think that's hope that whole thing is part of building the self confidence of a child

Kyle: yeah absolutely and I've seen some of the performances you gotta be down here as I've coming through and I've not ever seen any behavioral issues on there and they say they have a good time and how much work goes into putting on one of those performances

Erin Redden: I try to pick the musicals and whether I purchase an already prepared musical or I pull songs based on a theme and it's also got to be age-appropriate yours for whatever grade level I try to pick all those towards the beginning of the year yeah and the fall I concentrate on teaching that music because I go in order for fourth grade down to kindergarten and so fourth grade performance usually happens August or October and so day one which we start and a lot of it's memorization and that's key what a lot of people miss or what they misinterpret about music is you know they have five songs memorized when they go up onto that stage and some of its difficult right and you know and when you see fourth graders do it it's not as surprising but then you watch those kindergartners get up there and

sing five memorized songs and think they can memorize they can do all this stuff in their regular classroom a lot of times putting it with music and movements is going to lock it in to their brain and they don't forget it so I always try to encourage our teachers here and our teachers do a fabulous job at Beauregard elementary of incorporating music and movement because it just locks it into the brain so I start early like I said putting hand motions with it helps tremendously and then we start adding little parts and doing a stage set and going off to the performances parents love it I do the Rachael Ray 30 minutes or less you said that cooking chef right I like to get the parents out here and then I send them home because I'm a parent too young and I shouldn't talk about some of those other shows I attend that lasts forever but anyway we like to see our kids sing and then head on home and celebrate their success but yeah so we start day one

Kyle: one of the things you mentioned that I wanted to talk about was the other teachers using music in the classroom so when I started working here you were one of the only elementary music teachers that was that that was what you did um can you talk to me about the effects of music on kids and and and how it affects other areas of the education process

Erin Redden: certainly yes when I taught here there had been a music teacher already in place so I was filling a spot so Beauregard has always had from what I know ever at least the elementary a music teacher and he was very beloved in this community filling his shoes was difficult but it you know speaking of rusty Courson right and his does he just completed his dissertation and he's now the doctor courson that's right and he was studying the effects of having music early on and how that affected a child all the way through school and he was asking me all these questions because he was saying that they were you know we do a lot of singing and dancing we do some instrument playing and stuff we do some free dancing and singing but they're also coming out having all their music notes learned they know that elements and styles of music they know how to describe a piece of music particularly program music like Peter and the wolf the Carnival of Animals all this classical music that you hear on commercials mm-hmm stuff that really are were made to tell a story or based off of a story and so they learn to appreciate it and that transfers into the classroom that creates see that allowing of the children to think through those processes without me putting a preconceived notion in their mind already right I'm like you tell me what in the Hall of them done done done done in the hall of the Mountain King by Peer Gynt what is that and they like well it sounds scary it sounds like something's you know getting approaching and when it comes to well it's a little boy and he's in a mountain and there's trolls and it's based off of a you know story from a long time ago and their minds just open up and we talked a lot about that in education today getting them prepared to think right for the real world you know a lot of project-based learning music art all of that plays into it and when we talk about the steam room in a minute we could talk about it but math music is math yeah you know adding quarter notes and subdividing from a whole note all the way down to you know the sixteenth notes at the elementary level or you know it's all math and it's easy kindergarten students are up there and they have no idea when they're tapping out measures of music that they're adding beats and that they're subtracting and when you showed them that these light bulbs start to click in their different classrooms I have the math standards posted on my classroom on my wall really because I feel as a music teacher I have to know what they're doing in their classrooms so I can facilitate learning on all levels you know I've been amsti trained which is math technology two years of amsti science and math training I've volunteered to do that I've been ARI reading initiative trained I've been trained in several different areas not related to music right but so that I can bring those things to the music table if needed and because I've been here

for 20 years and love education so much I love to mentor new teachers right and so I go in and if they need help with classroom management you know where they need help I love to dig deeper right on the first grade team they consider me part of their grade level because I'm on their hallway and oftentimes they'll need social science activities to go with a reading unit that they're doing or a math unit and so I'm like let me pull some music some art some creativity some children's literature to go with those programs with you I love to do that thinking and that digging and that looking for just the right project that will help better understand those children's sure activities so as you can see I'm passionate about music but more so I'm passionate about the education of the entire child right

Kyle: yeah absolutely math was one that came to mind also language because they're getting the experience in some cases words and phrases that they don't get to experience in their k, 1, and 2 classrooms

Erin Redden: we do a lot of tracking and what's important about doing those musicals with first grade in kindergarten in the spring rather than the fall is they're building a lot of the necessary strategies and their classrooms so that when I do start musicals with them they're able to start you know I print out the words and we practice reading from right to left right I want them to track those words anytime you can allow a child to track especially at that younger age at church if you've got a hymnal or a Bible or a prayer book tracking those words even if a child can't read while you're sitting next to them is so important they're learning phrasing they're learning how to read with expression because in music you're having to put that those feelings whether it's a sad song happy song vocabulary huge yeah vocabulary huge I did a musical I can't remember if it was last year was second grade 20 years of 3/4 plus 2 choir shows at 7 musicals a year for 20 years yeah so we did a unit on ocean animals and so I was able to pull vocabulary give it to their teachers because they were studying those animals in their class for science really so I could give learning materials back and forth to them and then they were able to connect the dots when they would do that in other subjects so yeah I do give a lot of people don't realize of course if any day what one person's job is and you can walk in and take a snapshot and not see the thought and care that goes into right planning a lesson or looking at the overall arc of the program right

Kyle: so talk to me about the steam room what what is what steam mean

Erin Redden: um I think more people are familiar with the term stem that's what I've in today's education which is science technology engineering and math I don't like the stem word because I think to make a well-rounded individual you need to include the Arts and that so stem becomes steam and I am an avid grant writer that is one of the things I love to do is write grants not only just for my music classroom but for different grade levels if I've seen that they need a resource I've written a couple grants that I'm hoping come through on coding oh yeah because I think we should see a lot more in the early education classes not so much just forth and then through middle school but they can start coding in kindergarten and first grade it's I've written a grant for coding for our steam room but including with those technology Engineering we've incorporated an art station and we have a music station now music can be if we're studying sound and vibrations there could be different musical instruments put out and they can learn about vibration and they can feel vibrations that can hear vibrations that can connect the dots into science with that or it could just be depending on the theme of the time for example we did planets last year at the end of the school year space and which in first grade science they are supposed to talk about the Sun it doesn't go into too much more much more depth at the first grade so science

standards than that but of course when we do the Sun in the moon looks pulling some other stuff water while they're interested and so I did Gustav Holst's the planets it's several movements classical movements each focused on a particular planet and I played Jupiter that seems to be the most popular and so on the board we have written Gustav Holtz we have his biography information where he was born when he was born some of the other music that he's done and then the list of the opus and then I put Jupiter on the board and then we have a big picture of Jupiter and so they're listening to that while they're going to the engineering station and building a craft that they could put on the surface of the Moon to do some examinations that musics playing in the background and they're at the art station and they're given these beautiful pictures done by artists and different planets and they're given black paper and fluorescent paint and they're just sitting down building you know painting create and creating and there's so little time for that you know in this day and age it's go go go go go into classrooms so when they come to for music when they had the opportunity to go to a steam room when they have the opportunity to visit the library go to PE those special activities were still educating forming those minds but we're putting our own spin on those things

Kyle: what it sounds like it's it's it's more fun so that's why they're more engaged there's more stuff to do that they are interested

Erin Redden: exactly and so many students struggle some kids aren't good at math right some kids aren't good at those academic classes but when you hear the kids go through programs and into band and stuff that's where they've really blossomed they didn't have a place before and so maybe we're eliminating the dropout rate you know in high school because we're allowing more opportunities for students to succeed one thing that I feel very strongly about is special education and music and when I first came to the school I went and served all of these special ed students at one time to keep them all engaged at their varying diagnoses and their varying ages alone I was having to stand on my head do cartwheels arms the room I walked out crawling from exhausted blood but I said let's mainstream them into their regular classroom so they're in with their peers right and they can see their peers playing on the xylophones and we can give them some mallets and oftentimes an aide is assigned so some of our more severe specialized students but you are hard-pressed to come into my classroom and be able to identify kids with special needs versus regular classroom students right because they learn from their surrounding

Kyle: inclusion right being a part of that group that there are

Erin Redden: it is it is and so that's one thing I was very proud to have succeeded many years ago yeah and having those kids included and having them feel part of the group and then watching their skills who knew yeah you know I didn't know they could sit down and play the xylophone as a first couple years teacher the way that my regular students did right oftentimes they can do better you know I've had some of my students that have autism that could I could clap a rhythm and could write out the exact notation and it just shocked me yeah you know it's it's amazing and if you give the child the opportunity that's yes they can do right Kyle: in your either day they teaching or in involvement with the steam room are there any types of technology that you use there Erin Redden: well I was struck early on with the positivity that could be done with social media hmm I think I was one of the first we I think Beauregard elementary was one of the first schools that allowed social media to happen right so many people early on were scared sure that we would do something that we would post something inappropriate or that somebody would say negative things or and make us look but because we're in

such a strong community and our parents are supportive and wonderful and we have great guidelines Lee County guidelines that we follow and so I was big on putting student work student samples putting them out into the community and into the state right I would tag early on a lot of the state of Alabama education I would tag them in a lot of posts so that they were aware but back in the day I had to call the tech department and say I need access to social media on my computer right my principal's given me permission and now I've been able to kind of pass that off to our administrators I like to go in I did a Facebook live when it came out miss Weatherly's class was doing a pumpkin experiment and they were dissecting it and they were estimating numbers of seeds in their classrooms right and I thought what parent doesn't want to see that sure yeah so you know let's do it live so we announced we were gonna do it live we posted it we do all of our musicals I used to videotape and today right so I have still have VHS cassettes of my performances then we did DVDs and we would make them for the parents now with social media we're able to go in and do musicals and do chunks of it and highlights and post it for grandparents who are across the United States yeah to be able to watch so I do a lot of that with technology here involve parent involvement of course and you know with our smart board technology there's so many resources where you can put a lesson up and the kids are whether they're in small groups or whether we're doing it as a whole group or I'm teaching the breakdown of a whole note they can go up onto the board and dissect it right in front of their faces by moving their hands right and stuff across the board so that's exciting and of course music we have so many different programs that we can build garage bands that we can build compositions off of and we have lots of resources too many resources to be able to utilize

Kyle: sure why not yeah well and it's all about finding resources that actually aid in what you're trying to foster that we we interviewed the Teacher of the Year Emily Jennings and she mentioned something about the thousand dollar pencil like you know if all you're doing is buying technology for technology's sake you're doing it wrong like it has to have a purpose

Erin Redden: exactly and I think that took us a while oh it's an understanding it took us a while to understand you know I have a part-time job and I'm replacing now my ceiling projectors and stuff to the Smart TVs right the HDMI so I can plug the computers in and do presentations there that's right you know and so it's it's forever changing yeah it's exciting very well be overwhelming yes and what's helpful is when you have teachers in certain grade levels that you can go to I've always said Amy Sanders the first-grade teacher here I've worked with her for many years developing CIP and school goals for Beauregard Elementary she's my left brain and I'm the right brain right and so I'll go to her oftentimes for technology help miss Patterson good friend of mine that teaches second grade likes to learn special things and so I'll go to her and then of course Andrew click has been a wonderful resource a wonderful resource so glad Lee County has him and that he's so interested and so excited to learn with you

Kyle: he is absolutely we we interviewed very recently too tons of resources on there because we were asking about technology tools that other teachers could use Wes as they just they got a list so and if you get to look at them

Erin Redden: and I just have to put a shout out to our tech people that come out and aid our schools of course that was I don't think that was the first time I met you Kyle you know I think it was outside of the school and very much arts-related on her a mutual friend yeah but how did tech in our school what a great resource to be able to email you guys and yeah in a minute and the help desk please come ghost on and fix this and you have no idea it saves you so much time

Keith: yeah so we're talking about you know it's important to get the kids in with the music and stuff is there anything to that whole playing music to the pregnant women playing music to their stomach basically is there anything to that

Erin Redden: I seem to think so

Keith: I keep picturing like people putting like noise canceling headphones on their stomachs

Erin Redden: yes yes I seem to think so of course I don't remember the womb experience and Maddie even though I did that with Maddie and Hugh they for sure aren't going around telling who and friends I heard that right but one thing I did do you because I played classical music in their bedrooms every time they went to sleep so naptime noise canceling is why I did it but I thought you know let's just let classical music is life wouldn't we do it and back in the day when our kindergarteners took naps in our pre-k still do so when they take naps we they play classical music here at school and it's wonderful when I go in I'm like oh that's Debussy to do no idea I just think that's so inside on this one you know that's a famous piece of music but it's classical music and I think that any exposure to that kind of music is a good thing because they're trying to decide you know you get in the elevators and you hear the music and my favorite story I have to say is when one of my former students didn't Corbett just graduate course graduated now from high school but how his mom came to me and said he was walking around the house the other saying spring times the best time of year called the snow and ice disappear birds falling on my ear this music is by Vivaldi so it's a famous piece of music spring that I gave words or that I don't want to not credit the person who I took it from but the curriculum that I took the words from that allowed them to memorize that famous piece of music that you hear in the elevator that you hear all the time in commercials and that's a famous piece of music by Vivaldi Antonio Vivaldi and so that means a lot so I think any exposure throughout is super good but I seem to think yes it does but I thought the question you were gonna ask before you said I went to the in the womb part was do you think learning classical music and learning to read notes makes you a smarter person or better in school or able to test

Keith: well that was my next question for the record

Erin Redden: a little segue but yes I do I really do and when you go to college and you say I'm gonna be a music major they put that degree up there with doctors and lawyers it's one of the hardest degrees you can obtain because you know you're taking you know how most people take 10 hours 15 hours of detective core class we're taking 21 hours a semester of music because we're involved in these one-hour classes that really take up five hours of our time these different performing ensembles diction classes theory classes music history classes and it's all related and it and when you're learning to play an instrument and I didn't learn how to play an instrument as a child I was a singer and I love was social don't think something of weird go figure and I like to talk a lot and so that was one of the areas I've got pushed into was singing and if I had played an instrument as a child I was I would have been a superhero because it makes your brain work in another totally different way it does it opens up areas that you would normally never use and I tell people and I'm gonna do a shout-out to Spicer's music in Auburn love Tom and Tim and the guys at Spicer's music because they are doing they're not a music store right there's so much more than a music's really they're fighting they're going to Washington DC every year and fighting for music education and schools they're fighting to educate the whole child they come out to my school and bring lots of different instruments from all over the world and they show kids how to play a dulcimer and how to play they loved the harmonica and stuff but these instruments that are played at a professional level right and they're just like wild and I sent them over to Wacoochee I

followed my friend Tammy senn the principal there and get these Spicer guys out to your school because they're just amazing they want these kids that's more important to them rise for these kids to learn of course they want to sustain their best but giving a kid a ukulele for Christmas and if you're not able to get to Spicer's music to take lessons have the child to sit and play it strum it listen to what kind of music they're making and then we have so many resources on our disposal we can go to youtube and learn how to play a song in minutes and so these kids are learning how to tune and what's right and wrong and using that area of their brain they never did before that's why I say start a string instrument early start piano early oh yeah get those notes in that the Suzuki style teaching children at age four I have a child that I work with through church that is four years old that plays the violin gorgeously she's for real yes she's four and her parents are very musical but they did the Suzuki message a part of the Suzuki method is learning to play by ear because as a small child but then of course I'm a big proponent of trying to learn you know those notes as you've got to so you can read music right that some people just are born and can hear it and play it yeah I'm not I'm very musical but I'm not that kind of I have to read the music yeah

Kyle: yeah I played a saxophone throughout school and then later in my high school career I picked up the bass guitar and I could do it but mostly only by ear and one of my probably musically my biggest regret I'm going to give it to the podcast as I've never learned to play piano I would love to learn to play piano because I see people playing I and it just it looks it looks like so much fun it creates such a cool effect

Erin Redden: it does to be able to sit down at a party and pull something off at Christmastime yeah it's such a universal instrument and always does bring so much to I started at 14 years old and I had already I was going I was rushing mm-hmm my interest level I was you know starting to I was 14 your interest living all over the place you know middle school hello yeah it's not it's just a crazy time already yeah so I didn't keep it up but when I went to college I was able to pass through some of the beginning stuff because I knew and then when it came to graduation knew I didn't know as much as I should have don't have to really really practice RIT or a nice gills up yeah but I am able to sing by ear a lot and so while I don't always have a piano in my classroom right now it's a steam room for students to be able to experiment on but usually if I give myself a starting pitch mm-hmm then I can stay on pitch and I teach a lot by rote so I'll sing something and the children will sing back to right and I was trained classically so I sang opera and sing classical music so my big girl voice is what I like to call it but most of these children have no matter ever heard yeah because I'm singing an appropriate Yammer and range for the children to sing and and one of my favorite things is when I get interns that come in and when we get a degree in music education we're certified K through 12 in most cases orchestra band vocal oh really so nowadays and Alabama I've noticed their degree has it's a music education degree with voice or band or whatever but we have to student teach at the elementary and at the high school or middle school area because we K through 12

Kyle: and that is different than other educators and it is there's a there's a cut-off line it's like k-6 yes and then 7-12 is that

Erin Redden: that's unusual and again why getting a music degree is so difficult right but the kids don't realize that I have a totally different singing voice and it shocks them and teachers but when the students from Auburn come and I'll get for example a male band student who is in the elementary classroom and then the elementary classroom you need to be able to sing on pitch and in the area so

men have to use their phones that a voice there's not their bass talking you know low voices and so they have to find it up here in their head and I love watching it and I love teaching it and modeling and probably my biggest love other than the education of the whole child is the mentoring process I love to teach other teachers how to be teachers yeah and I love to teach regular classroom teachers strategies that I've learned because it doesn't matter what subject area you teach or what grade you teach you're gonna get the materials you need or what new education strategy rolls down the pike because that's the one constant thing in education has changed if your goal is to teach that child to read that classroom teacher is going to use what's available to them and pull extra resources based on their needs yeah and that's hard for a brand new teacher sure in this day and age a brand new teacher is both exciting and overwhelmed and you have to give them those tools to succeed and tell them times that they need to rest like a sleeping baby asleep or you know when you have a baby sleep when the baby sleeps on top in education you know just you're tempted to go and study and do at home and never go to bed I never I never sleep it seems like because I'm always thinking duties but that's my passion so I guess that's why I do it

Kyle: yeah well it sounds like if the teachers are working together like this that sounds like one of the best things I've heard about it because it sounds like gallery team yeah and you are teaming with those teachers and you know together you know you really sort of you're attacking that whole child mentality there

Erin Redden: we do we've had a great group of administrators it's that collaborative collaboration and that meshing of ideas and that's why reinvent the wheel right and these teachers here I love it I love it here I read their grants I help them with their external things I love working with parents I'm having a strong and we do have a strong community a parent who's there it's just um there's no other school like it and we all work together we're all part of the team we are cafeteria ladies yeah I'll never forget my husband saying as a music teacher going into a new school him saying the first friends you make are your secretaries uh-huh your custodian yep and the lunchroom ladies and they've always had my back and I've always had theirs yeah

Keith: yeah there is there's something special here at Beauregard elementary I mean because I grew up in Smiths station I went K through 12 at Smith station and so fine and I grew up going oh Beauregard or okay whatever Beauregard but now that working for the working for the county and the first time I came out here I was just like oh this is this fun place to be and so it's been you know it was eye-opening for me and I've I've enjoyed anytime I have it any excuse I have to come over here is always a good one

Kyle: yes yeah when I first started working here I've got the Beauregard service area and you know and I've been to every service a we have in every location we have I've seen a lot but you know there's just a high density of really highly qualified people who care a lot about what's the one on one education out here

Erin Redden: we do and to extend that we have a high level of hospitality oh yeah we want everybody to feel welcome yep we want all of our children to have high self-esteem we work as a team on behavioral issues you know if we have an identified student who just needs shorter chunks you know that is going to act out send them to me yeah let them come in do I don't let them just come in and sit down and do nothing right believe me I engage that student either and the lesson that I'm doing either they're helping me but I always have math activities and reading activities on football holidays music or they can work on fluency and vocabulary just by coming others in my room and the same can be said about these

other teachers yeah I don't know if I mentioned y'all talked a lot about Smith station my husband grew up going to Smiths station schools I live in Phenix City yeah and when I first started teaching at Beauregard we lived in Iadonia but I Drive over 30 minutes every day to and from work and let me tell you wouldn't change it yeah and that's what it's all about

Kyle: yeah absolutely one of the things we discussed with when we did we talked with dr. Mac at one point and and we I don't know how the question was phrased but you know what what's one thing you wish that we could do and he said the one thing I wish we could do is get music and arts into every school in Lee County

Erin Redden: and I applaud Lee County for recognizing that oh yeah and for trying their hardest to do that I do know that that is high on their wish list I was very pleased to welcome the music teacher at the Wacoochee and Loachapoka yeah and just because I've been teaching for 20 years thousands of students he is a fine musician yeah wonderful to call on and he'll call on me a lot and he's it like I said Wacoochee and Loachapoka and we just have to keep praying

Keith: sadly that's always one of the first things to get the axe is whatever as soon as the budget gets hinky they oh we work no more music

Kyle: I think it has to do with if we're being honest I think it has to do with state testing yeah because you can't cut out things that you test on and that's where that stuff comes and so I think one of the goals of us sitting down having this conversation is to hopefully further the conversation of these do these things that we are teaching an element of music matter in in the way that in the testing room is when truly

Erin Redden: it does in the mental health issues that we see happening that are so prevalent in the news today and empathy in dealing with things that are happening across the country and world you know they the cliché music is the universal language right you know we all recognize music and if a child is depressed or unhappy or not succeeding but they enjoy coming to music that's a highlight in their week they know they're not gonna have to sit behind the desk even though at Beauregard we do a darn good job of keeping them engaged in different strategies but if that means the difference between a child making a poor life decision hallelujah you know what I'm saying I'm thinking and I may be idealistic to think that or no I don't think so I think it does make that difference in the child's life and it takes one kid at a time that's right one kid at a time and it is teaching you know they do have to we do have to perform on those standardized tests listen I understand the importance of us all being on the same page but there's really just got to be more discussion and how we can achieve those goals

Kyle: that's right that's right it's more to life that's right there's more to life but I also think it's important not to discount we use it as being a way to approach those goals we talked about math we talked about language we talked about other things like that and absolutely the whole child it's not something that a standardized tested on but it's so important I know when I was coming through you know my involvement in the band was probably the most important thing that I did in high school we had a 10 year reunion of recently some years ago that was the high school where you knew that I didn't really care to go to but when we had our 10 year band reunion you better believe I showed up exactly because those are people those are people that I enjoy being around those are people that I've spent a lot of time with that had a big

Erin Redden: and let me tell you and helped me get all their names Butler the name and director Sean Geiger mr. helmsl no love using Roger plays with mr. Helms and kid blue and Columbus they gig all the time wonderful band shout-out to kid blue but those three teachers I'd worked closely with Faye Haag through the years not as much with the new choral director but my child was able to experience and win awards in band choral music so thrilled as a mother but not only those teachers that are there now but Faye Haag is retired rusty Corson has retired Ricki teal the person who really built that program from the ground up you're still gonna see all those people including Roger redden supporting Smiths Station Band and they didn't have elementary music rusty has been has been quoted many times saying what if we had right where would we have been look at where we are now but what if we had right absolutely and it would have been no I mean just masterful

Kyle: some of some you've told us already a whole bunch of awesome things that you've gotten to do can you give us something that is something also that's happened last year that you've got to be a part of us being a part of the music teacher or something here

Erin Redden: I think something pretty magical happened that I was able to be part of and I take a lot of pride in being one of a handful of people and this did this initiative started many about five years maybe more than that several years ago but continues to this day that I'm extremely proud of is the safety plan for Lee County school systems it was the amazing officer revels a school resource officer it was the amazing doctor Wright it was Richards from Smith station high school and also his equally talented wife Richards from Wacoochee Elementary School those were both administrators myself Casey chamblee who teaches in Valley Schools and I'm sure he's moved on to chamber schools I'm sorry and I'm sure there's been a few other key people that I'm missing but we sat in a room many times and hashed out and worked out what we thought would be a plan to keep the students and our schools as safe as possible whether it be a fire whether it be severe weather whether it be an active shooter whether it's a stranger in developing a system in conjunction with Lee County EMS 911 also inviting Auburn City fire and police and Opelika and County and Phenix City to the table because ultimately those also serve our schools depending where they sit in the county right but everybody developing a plan that is ever-changing every year to make this place a safe environment in which to learn and it is a way that everybody is on the same page a few years ago we were we received a safe school award and I was very pleased with that and we still continue and this particular school does a fine job of always doing better and always communicating with our teachers giving our teachers permission to act in the interest of their students that was huge

Kyle: I remember a couple years ago singing out first they're doing active shooter training was done out here and you know that's obviously always a very terrible topic but boy it was neat to see ownership taken of that and you know things went and yogi they got to use the halls and stuff like that and so really I think it was a neat thing to see that you guys were you know good those teachers are interested in that but it's their job

Erin Redden: and the other component to that is the education part we have to educate the teachers we have to educate our systems and our communities and we have to educate our children and so many people we're saying I don't want my child learning how to behave in an active shooter situation and I said but we don't have a problem telling the kids to stop drop and roll if they're in a fire or to get down on the floor and crawl out it's okay if we go about it in an age-appropriate manner but we also have to give these kids credit they're hearing it on the news they're hearing their parents discuss it they need to

be part of that kind of conversation you know and so that is probably when I look back on my career that's one of the things that I have on my list as accomplishments that I'm proud of

Kyle: as you should that's great well um that's it we certainly appreciate your time coming to talk with us and we hope we didn't stray too far off what we were going to talk about but we appreciate

Erin Redden: it's all about the whole child yeah music is just one part and I'm blessed to be able to do what's great

Keith: well stay awesome

Erin Redden: thank you

Ukulele Music