



Dr. Hillary Stanifer  
Superintendent, Blue Ridge CUSD#18  
411 N. John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842  
Phone: 309 928-9141  
Email: [hstanifer@blueridge18.org](mailto:hstanifer@blueridge18.org)

---

April 9, 2021

Dear BR Families,

As you may have recently learned, school districts will be receiving federal ESSER grant funding in multiple installments. The original CARES Act money, also known as ESSER I, provided Blue Ridge with a grant of \$115,212. To date, Blue Ridge has received \$93,914 of those available dollars to pay for the following: Edmentum curriculum (remote learning), chromebook replacement, jetpacks, docking stations and servers to allow multiple high school labs to operate remotely, thermometers, PPE, sanitizer and free standing sanitizer stations, hydrostatic sprayers, polycarbonate safety shields, salaries and benefits for the reopening committee to meet during the summer of 2020, and professional development in remote learning. The anticipated funds allotted for Blue Ridge through ESSER II and ESSER III respectively are \$406,167 and \$911,752. These funds will be directed to methods and materials that will positively impact learning loss due to the impact of COVID-19, as well as to improve air quality at BRIJHS. Superintendents across the state continue to meet together to discuss the most impactful uses of ESSER II and III funds and I will continue to be part of those discussions. Current guidance states that ESSER II funds must be used or allocated by September of 2023 and ESSER III funds by September 2024.

Recently, we refinanced the 2012 and the 2014 bond issues due to the drastically lowered interest rates that have been available. While refinancing the 2014 bond issue, we simultaneously issued working cash bonds to capture the available savings. At that time, we stated that the working cash bonds would help fund the HVAC work at BRIJHS and the construction of an office building for the transportation department. Since that time, with the information released regarding the ESSER funding, it has become possible for the district to use part of the ESSER funding for the HVAC work in Mansfield. Since this represents a change from original plans, I wanted to share that information with you.

The writing of the ESSER II grant is in beginning stages; the ESSER III grant will not open until July 2021. While the district will need to track the spending separately between these two allotments, we plan to include the following items in our grant proposals: HVAC work in Mansfield to improve air quality, K-9 summer school in 2021, 2022, and 2023 with transportation provided, summer 2021 digital learning programs for K-8, additional math instructional and intervention materials, additional Fountas & Pinnell reading materials, PPE and

Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Principal   Mrs. Lois Dowling, BRHS Interim Director of Student Services  
Mrs. Katie Nichols, BRIJHS Principal   Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal





Dr. Hillary Stanifer  
Superintendent, Blue Ridge CUSD#18  
411 N. John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842  
Phone: 309 928-9141  
Email: [hstanifer@blueridge18.org](mailto:hstanifer@blueridge18.org)

---

cleaning supplies, and the possible development of an after school tutoring program for 2021-2022. We are also considering additional personnel supports that have yet to be finalized.

At this time, I would like to provide a few more details about our 2021 Summer School programming. The summer school program will run Monday, June 7, 2021 through Friday, June 18, 2021. Students will attend the session in the building and the grade level that they just completed. For example, a student who just completed 3rd grade will attend summer school at Schneider Elementary in the third grade group. Students will attend school Monday through Friday from 8:30-11:30 a.m. Transportation will be provided and those details will be made available closer to the starting date.

The goal of the 2021 session of K-8th grade summer school is to help students fortify their understanding of the critical ELA and math concepts for the grade level that was just completed in order to prepare them for a successful start to the 2021-2022 school year. Teachers and administrators will be examining data and reaching out to families to personally invite students who would benefit the most from this two-week program.

The high school programming will look a little different than the K-8 programming as high school courses are based upon a credit system. Some students with first semester failing grades will be contacted by their teachers with a personalized plan for recovering that lost credit. This could involve staying after school multiple days per week for multiple weeks prior to the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year. Other students may not be able to receive credit without repeating the full semester; students in this category will be scheduled accordingly in the 2021-2022 school year.

For Math 1, Mr. Minter will be working with a select group of students during the weeks of June 7 and June 14, according to the schedule outlined above, with the goal of credit recovery for students who were just below the level of passing during the school year. Personal contacts will be made to these families and transportation will be provided if needed.

In addition to the summer school programming, all K-8 students will be provided with a summer license for MyOn and Freckle. This digital resource is created by Renaissance Learning, promoted by the State Board of Education, and will be funded through our ESSER grant. Teachers will help your students get logged into and familiarized with the platform prior to the end of the school year. We strongly encourage you to plan to utilize this learning resource with your students throughout the summer in order to keep their skills fresh.

Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Principal   Mrs. Lois Dowling, BRHS Interim Director of Student Services  
Mrs. Katie Nichols, BRIJHS Principal   Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal





Dr. Hillary Stanifer  
Superintendent, Blue Ridge CUSD#18  
411 N. John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842  
Phone: 309 928-9141  
Email: [hstanifer@blueridge18.org](mailto:hstanifer@blueridge18.org)

---

Three other summer programs are also in the works. Select elementary students will be invited to attend the Summer Reading Program in late July. All Kindergarten students will be invited to attend Kindergarten Jumpstart, which is scheduled right before the beginning of the school year. Both of these programs were new during the summer of 2020 and were extremely successful. Additionally, we will offer a modified Bridge program for select students entering high school. This program will begin over the summer and will continue meeting throughout the school year. This new format was developed to provide greater consistency throughout the entire freshman year.

We have reached the final weeks of this unprecedented school year and you can see that there are many projects and plans that are underway to extend our school year and support our students in their learning. I want to personally thank the teachers and administrators for making these plans possible. Their extra efforts to plan summer school while teaching fourth quarter curriculum does not go unnoticed. Teachers and administrators, you are appreciated!

Respectfully,

Dr. Hillary Stanifer

#br\_u\_knighted

Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Principal   Mrs. Lois Dowling, BRHS Interim Director of Student Services  
Mrs. Katie Nichols, BRIJHS Principal   Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal

