

Ripley Central School

# Blue Eagle Express

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## Welcome Back!

## 2021-2022 School Year Updates

Ripley Central School was one of the few schools in the NY State that had in-person learning 5 days a week for the entirety of the 2020-2021 school year during a global pandemic. During this process we learned what worked and what didn't. We learned that getting kids outside into the fresh air was an opportunity for fun and adventure. We will continue this practice as we've found it to be beneficial for our students learning. We also found that shared spaces were safe with enhanced cleaning in-between student use.

The goal for the upcoming school year is to return to as normal a school day as possible while still adhering to NYS safety guidance. We will look to keep the practices that were found to be beneficial and re-implement activities that were missed. Recess has been added back into student schedules and our kids will be moving around the building more than they did last year.

We will also continue to sanitize areas and materials in-between student use and look for prudent ways to interact with community. A big thank you goes out to all of our staff and families that worked diligently to follow safety protocols. This was a huge accomplishment and is something to celebrate as our students were the ones that benefitted most!

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# Superintendent's Message



Hello Ripley,

When I write my newsletter articles, I try to reflect on the timeframe between now and the previous article. My goal is to share our accomplishments and discuss future events, while sharing a little bit about myself. As I started reflecting on the last few months since our Spring newsletter, I realized that we successfully navigated one of the most monumental educational shifts ever experienced in the United States. We were tasked with providing a quality education to our students while simultaneously avoiding a deadly virus and keeping our students, staff, and their families safe. I can unequivocally say, they did NOT have a chapter in any of my administrative textbooks that covered how to do this successfully. However, if they did, I have no doubt that what would have been in there would have been exactly the plan we created and implemented.

Now I'm not saying we were geniuses or that everything ran perfectly, but based on discussions with other superintendents, we crushed it!!! I've written many times that this would not have been possible without the support of our families and I will believe that until the end of time, but it was the fact that every piece of the puzzle fit together perfectly that allowed us to succeed as a community. As I watched our 11 sixth grade students graduate and prepare to become part of the CLCS Class of 2027, I was so proud of the time we were able to spend with them in the classroom providing in-person instruction, all I could do was smile. That smile was present again a few days later as I watched our Ripley students graduate as members of the CLCS Class of 2021. What an accomplishment for all of our students!

Unfortunately, as I write this, there is still some uncertainty for the beginning of school in September in regards to masks, student distancing, and transportation guidelines, as well as other issues, and we will rely on the guidance documents from the NYS Education Department to help us with those procedures. We are planning for a pre-pandemic classroom experience in 2021 and hopefully that will be the case. If not, we will adjust as we have done for the last 17 months and make it work for our students. Stay tuned to [Ripleycsd.org](http://Ripleycsd.org) for the most up to date information.

Lastly, I want to share that we will be presenting a \$3.9 million building project to the voters on September 22, 2021. This project will help us make repairs to our roof, replace ventilation units, reconstruct restrooms to comply with ADA requirements, improve plumbing in the primary classrooms, upgrade building security, relocate district offices, repair the tennis courts, and upgrade parking areas. This work will be completed with no tax increase using aid from New York State and funds set aside in the Capital Reserve. More information will be sent out in the coming weeks, as well as public hearings to answer any questions you may have.

Thanks again for your support. It's an honor and a privilege to be a part of such a great community and "It's a Great Day to be an Eagle!"

Sincerely,

William Caldwell, Superintendent  
Ripley Central School

# Principal's Message

Greetings RCS families,

The summer is my favorite time of the year because of the excitement I feel as we prepare for the upcoming school year. When I was younger there were two days when I had trouble sleeping: Christmas Eve and the night before the first day of school. Now that I'm older that sleepless night is reserved for only one day. I hope each of you are able to spend some extra time with family and friends enjoying the longer and warmer days.

We have some exciting curricular changes that will be rolled out this fall. The Next Generation Learning Standards will be fully implemented in both Science and Social Studies in grades K-6. The exciting thing about working in education is that no one is ever done learning. I continue to be surprised with the amount of activity that takes place in the building during the "breaks". Teachers have visited the school weekly throughout the summer to prepare for the fall.

Family and community engagement is critical for lasting improvement in schools. I believe that when families and community members form powerful partnerships with schools, students benefit. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, family and community engagement has never been more important – or more challenging. I look forward to working with our PTO to develop additional opportunities for our students. The PTO will be meeting the first Monday of each month. We will be working on some exciting new projects. Please feel free to join us!

A big thank you goes out to the Ripley Rod and Gun Club for their continued partnership. One of the best things to come out of last year was the renewed focus on getting kids outside. The Rod and Gun club gave the school access to their facilities for multiple student adventures (hikes, painting sessions, fishing events, archery...). I look forward to seeking out new partnerships with local community experts.

RCS is a special place and one of Western New York's best kept secrets. We are so excited to welcome back all of our students and families. We will continue to strive to create classrooms where teachers can fulfill their highest aspirations, and students achieve more than they thought possible, with the goal of becoming active contributors to building a better world. We believe when students enter adult life, they will be celebrated not for their performance on basic skills tests, but rather for the quality of their work and their character. The 2021-2022 school year is going to be an awesome one!

*Learn today. Lead tomorrow!*



# RCS Welcomes New Teachers



We are excited to welcome three new faces to the RCS family this Fall. I would like to extend a warm Ripley welcome to Ms. Meghan Bodenmiller, Ms. Olivia Lynn, and Ms. Caitlon Smith. I know our students will benefit from their talents, enthusiasm, and expertise!



Ms. Meghan Bodenmiller will be teaching fourth grade. She attended Cornerstone University to study elementary education and worked at Coit Creative Arts Academy in Grand Rapids, Michigan for her student teaching placement. She moved back home to Westfield, NY last year and worked as a substitute teacher. Her favorite thing about teaching is getting to know her students and learning new things with them. Outside of school, she enjoys camping and reading. She is excited to meet her students as well as a group of crayfish that are moving in for the first few weeks of school.



Ms. Olivia Lynn will be providing special education and response to intervention (RTI) services to our intermediate (5-6) students. This will be her first teaching placement as she graduated from SUNY Fredonia this past Spring. Ms. Lynn's hometown is Frewsburg, NY. Her favorite part about teaching is celebrating students as they grow in their academics and life skills. She enjoys spending time with her family outdoors (camping, fishing, animals...). She is excited to build relationships with students/staff and looks forward to becoming a part of the RCS Family.



Ms. Caitlon Smith will be teaching first grade. She began teaching in 2017 and most recently worked at Stanley Elementary School in Stanley, Virginia. Ms. Smith's hometown is Derby, NY. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from SUNY Fredonia. Her favorite aspect of teaching is helping students academically, socially, and emotionally. She enjoys baking and looks forward to building relationships with her first grade students.

Congratulations and many good wishes for your first year at RCS. We're always looking to build a strong, passionate and communicative team. We believe that you'll fit right in with us and look forward to supporting you along the way.



# Sixth Grade Graduation 2021

The Ripley Elementary Class of 2021 graduation ceremony was held on June 18. Parents were surveyed back in May regarding what type of ceremony they would prefer. The choices included a graduation parade or traditional ceremony. The majority of parents voted for the traditional ceremony.

The graduation ceremony was the first in-person event with students held at RCS in over a year. All Covid-19 safety protocols were followed in accordance with guidance provided by our local health department.

Eleven graduates were recognized for their academic and character achievements. They are heading to Chautauqua Lake Central School in the fall and will make a wonderful addition to their student body.

These students have been given a strong foundation to build upon. Best of luck with your future endeavors and don't be strangers. We are all pulling for you!

*Congratulations!*



## Congratulations to our Sixth Grade



# Eagle University Update



Eagle U is a six-week long summer program for RCS students in grades K-6. The program strives to create a **fun** and **supportive** environment that **maintains the learning gains** from the previous school year.

The “summer slide” is a term that is used to describe the learning loss that happens each summer. On average, students lose two months of reading growth each fall when they return to school. The goal of Eagle U is to prevent this loss with the added bonus of fun activities and exercise!



Students:

- Built cars and boats
- Completed Lego challenges
- Dug for dinosaurs
- Made multiple crafts and art projects
- Competed in balloon challenges
- Had weekly swimming lessons
- and weekly golf lessons
- Received daily reading and math support

Eagle U is a choice-based program driven by high interest topics. Teachers guided students on selecting books at their independent reading level to keep them reading over the summer. Students that continued their nightly reading habit also receive prizes for their perseverance and grit.



Eagle U participants are ready to start the new school year strong. A big thank you goes out to the teachers and staff that brought this program back to life. Students that attended had a great time experimenting, collaborating, and learning!

# Better World Day Update

Little Free Library is a non-profit organization that promotes neighborhood book exchanges, usually in the form of a public bookcase. The first Little Free Library was built in 2009 by Todd Bol in Hudson, Wisconsin. Bol mounted a wooden container, designed to look like a one-room schoolhouse, on a post on his lawn and filled it with books as a tribute to his late mother, a book lover and school teacher.

Bol's original goal was the creation of 2,510 Little Libraries. This would surpass the number of libraries founded by Andrew Carnegie, in a program where library buildings were constructed and endowed in cities across the United States. Bol's goal was met in 2012. As of August 2019 the number of Little Free Libraries has increased to more than 90,000 such book houses in 91 countries around the world.

On May 7, we celebrated Better World Day at RCS. Students at every grade level planned community service projects. Fifth grade students designed a Little Library that they will keep stocked with books for our community. The Little Library has a shelf with books for children as well as a shelf for adults. Like other public book exchanges, a passerby can take a book to read or leave one for someone else to enjoy.

The RCS Little Library is located on Main Street next to Meeder's. A big thank you goes out to our maintenance team for helping our students' idea become a reality. Make sure to check it out the next time you are in town. We have a group of kids that are excited to keep it filled!



## Help Wanted

Ripley Central School is in need of substitute teachers. Being a substitute teacher is a wonderful job for parents, college students, and retired professionals. We provide training for all of our substitutes prior to their first day. The training involves shadowing teachers and support working with students.

Please contact the principal's office if you would like more information.



