

SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY UPDATE



Blue Ridge CUSD#18

February 18, 2022

[#br_u_knighted](#)

I would like to invite you to Blue Ridge Connect on April 20 from 5:30-6:30 at the Bellflower Community Center. We will have a heavy snack provided, musical entertainment from our BRIJHS students, and some time for conversation with board members and district administration. Would you consider joining us? Please watch for an invite to come through our communication channels very soon.

February brought our only significant snow to date this season. I hope that you were able to enjoy the beauty of the drifts while many things around us stood still for a few days. I was challenged by the district transportation staff to build a snowman. I did make an attempt, but was unsuccessful. Maybe I'll have another chance yet this season? Or maybe not. Since we have used one Emergency Day due to inclement weather, our new last day of student attendance is Thursday, May 26. Please mark your calendars accordingly. Our Board of Education has also approved the 2022-2023 school calendar. You can find it at this link: <https://5il.co/162bh>

The Blue Ridge app that many of you use on a regular basis to receive district communications will be getting a facelift! Most notably, the menu button will have a new location in the bottom left corner, rather than the upper left corner. The app design will provide more functionality with news available as you open the home screen. We hope you find it helpful! As a reminder, if you have not downloaded the free app, please do so by searching Blue Ridge #18, IL in your app store and allowing push notifications from the district and from your respective buildings.

As we are all aware, we are living in some very unsettling times. What I am thankful for is a community and district staff that continue to value educating our students as a top priority. Thank you for understanding that the challenges school districts across the state are facing right now are not school issues, yet we are being asked and expected to respond to each new challenge both immediately and without error. That is a nearly impossible task. So again, thank you for your cooperation and thank you in advance for your response if and when we need to make additional changes to our current plans.

What can you do to support district staff members? A thank you email to start their day, an encouraging handwritten note, an extra smile and wave at drop off or pick up, or an uplifting social media post. Any of those gestures would be greatly appreciated. Everyone wins when we encourage each other!



PARTIAL ACTION FROM THE FEBRUARY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

- Douglas Kramer was hired to fill the new position of District Technology Assistant. Douglas has worked for the Technology Department over the summer and we welcome him back in this new role! Having a technology assistant will allow our District Network Specialist to complete technology projects that have been on the waiting list and tackle additional technology projects in house, saving the district from outsourcing a variety of projects.
- Rich Voyles was hired as BRHS Assistant Softball Coach. Welcome, Rich!



UPCOMING EVENTS

March 16- BOE Meeting, 7 p.m. BRHS Library

March 18- 2:20 Dismissal

March 21-25- Spring Break- No Student Attendance

April 20 Blue Ridge Connect, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Bellflower Community Center, BOE Meeting, 7 p.m. BRHS Library



IN OTHER NEWS



SCHNEIDER ELEMENTARY



Pre-K Screenings, March 31 and April 1 - The developmental screening is for children who are 3 or 4 years old at the time of the screening. Children who turn 5 on or before September 1, 2022 are not eligible for the screening. Please allow up to 2 hours for the screening. We ask you not to bring other children with you since you will be asked to join us during your child's appointment. Parents will be asked to complete an information packet and return it to the school a week before the appointment. Please call Schneider Elementary at (309)928-2611 to schedule an appointment or ask any questions. Thank you!

Kindergarten Registration - Registration will be held on Tuesday, March 8 in the Schneider School Cafeteria. This year we will have two sessions: 5:15 pm and 6:15 pm. Parents only, no children please. Students who turn 5 on or before September 1, 2022 are eligible for Kindergarten. *Parents will need to bring an official birth certificate and two proofs of residence if your child did not attend the Blue Ridge PreK/ECSE program* Please call the Schneider Office 309-928-2611 to ask any questions or reserve a time slot. Thank you!

Exemplary Knights Students - We are excited to announce several Exemplary Knights this month. These students were selected for a variety of purposes from kindness, hard work, helping classmates, positive attitude and more. We celebrate these students in multiple ways. Students receive a “Student of the Month” bracelet, their picture is put on the TV in the school lobby, the principal recognizes their accomplishment and shares why the student was selected in front of the student’s class, the reason for being nominated is also shared in a schoolwide morning message, and the principal also contacts the parent to share why they were selected. This month’s Exemplary Knights are:

Brynnen Soliday (K) - Brynnen comes to school with a smile on her face and a cheery “Good Morning!”. She’s always ready to learn. Brynnen follows classroom rules and routines and is a great example to others. She is kind and helpful to her classmates and teachers. She works well with others and is a great encourager.

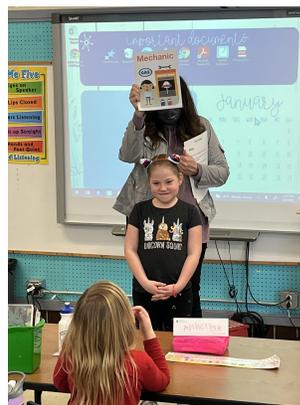
Brantley Clark (1st) - Brantley is a great friend and helper to his peers. He works really hard in the classroom and has become quite the reader. He has made great growth this year and has been a good role model for his friends.

Ella McIntyre (2nd) - Ella is an extremely hard worker who always does her very best no matter what she is asked to do or how long it takes her to do it.. She is a kind and generous friend to everyone. If someone is having a rough day or upset, she is the first person to offer help. She is a great role model for her peers!

Roslyn Freden (3rd) - Roslyn has been working very hard in the classroom. She comes to school everyday ready to work. She uses her time wisely and is getting things done quickly and accurately. Roslyn is always willing to help in and outside of the classroom. She has excellent attendance whether in-person or remote. Roslyn tries everyday to be the best she can be!

Exemplary Knights Staff Member - Our Exemplary Staff Member for February is Michelle Wills. Michelle is a special education teacher at Schneider Elementary. She is being recognized for her dedication to her students and colleagues. Michelle creates individualized learning for a variety of different students with varying needs. She goes above and beyond to be an advocate for her students and communicates well with all stakeholders.

Junior Achievement Lessons - Junior Achievement for grades K-3 is a program consisting of six, 25 minute financial literacy lessons. These lessons cover the grade appropriate Illinois standards for financial literacy and economics. Thank you to Connie Unruh, CPA for providing this learning opportunity.





- Staff Exemplary Knight: Erica Duvall was chosen by Heather Wilcoxon. Erica supports all of the staff, Mrs. Nichols, custodians, students and also the parents. She does an amazing job and we are so thankful for her! Thanks for keeping all of us going.
- 4th Grade Exemplary Knight: Felycia Butler-Felycia has a great work ethic with her school work and she doesn't give up. Felycia participates in class even if she isn't confident in her answer and is very sweet to all-peers and adults. Felycia is part of the BRIJHS Garden Club and demonstrates her work ethic and her kindness to peers during this activity as well.
- 5th Grade Exemplary Knight: Kolton Prater-Kolton is kind to all of his peers, he is helpful in the classroom, always willing to help other classmates, and gets his homework done even when absent. Kolton is always positive and he is an amazing reader.
- 6th Grade Exemplary Knight: Emma Johnson-Emma does a great job of keeping up when learning remotely, gets along really well with peers, and asks a lot of questions. Emma is always very polite and has a positive attitude.
- 7th Grade Exemplary Knights:
 - Karlie Summers: Karlie is nominated for showing amazing growth this year academically and behaviorally. Karlie has had all passing grades this year so far. On the last benchmark date she took her time on her Math and Reading test and increased her score almost 30 points in Reading and increased her math score also. She is motivated to be in volleyball this year and has gained new friends this year. Karlie has grown up a lot and is taking on Junior High with a positive attitude.
 - Brenna Light: Brenna consistently does good work. She is polite in class and strives to do her best. Brenna is positive with her peers and with adults. Brenna does her best as a scholar and as a friend every day.
- 8th Grade Exemplary Knights:
 - Ivy Whitehouse: Ivy takes a leadership role in her classes. In Chorus, Ivy assists with playing recorded music/accompaniment on the stereo, distributing music, and assisting with students tuning in remotely on Google Meets. Ivy helps set up, clean up, and keeps the class organized. In art class, she adds to the classroom discussion to keep that flowing when discussing famous artwork. She has a good work ethic, putting a lot of thought into each project. She is helpful, courteous, friendly, respectful, and kind to her teachers and fellow students. She shows empathy toward others.
 - Carmen Ellis: Carmen was nominated for being consistently responsible for her learning. Carmen strives to do her best work, regardless of whether we are in person learning or remote. She's not afraid to ask clarifying questions or participate in class discussions. Carmen also displays student leadership skills, offering student voice, as the President of the Junior High Student Council. She plans for activities "behind the scenes" and involves everyone in the group. Carmen has a bright future ahead of her! Congratulations, Carmen, on this well-deserved recognition.

Extracurriculars:

- Scholastic Bowl matches began this month. We have a record number of students participating this year. They had a double win over Ridgeview on 2/8.
- Our Volleyball teams have had some very competitive matches this season. A very good match was the 7th grade game against LeRoy. They lost in the 3rd set, but our girls played hard until the end.



BRHS

College signing day took place for Senior Ashlyn Voyles who will be playing softball for Eureka College in the fall! Congratulations, Ashlyn!

FFA Strawberries are being sold right now for delivery about February 22nd!

It's Yearbook ordering time! Place an order for your 2021-2022 yearbook now. The orders are due February 28th at a cost of \$50. Please give your check to Ms. Thacker.

The Student Council is planning a Sadie Hawkins dance on Saturday, 3/12 in the high school gym.

Parkland College will be here on Wednesday Feb. 16th at 11:30 (5th hour). Any Junior or Senior, please see Ms. Hieronymus or Ms. Clayton for passes to those college visits!

Spring sports Parent meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 16th at 6pm in the HS commons.

Recognitions

Staff and Student Exemplary Knights -

Our staff winner for Exemplary Knight for the month of February is ***Coleen Paullin***. Mrs. Paullin was nominated by our last winner, Mike Smith. Mr. Smith says, "Mrs. Paullin is the perfect person to be recognized as an Exemplary Knight. She goes above and beyond for her students.. Mrs. Paullin puts in extraordinary time and effort into helping to move these students in the right direction." The administration and staff at BRHS couldn't agree more with those statements!

We have two students that we are recognizing this month - ***Ava Jamison*** (Sr.) and ***Camille Buchanan*** (Jr.). These students were selected by a committee of high school faculty and staff. They were chosen for their achievements and also for going above and beyond the expectations for our high school students.

Here are some things that teachers say about these awesome students:

Ava Jamison -

- Ava goes above and beyond in yearbook, even offering to get pics for people who can't get them. She is a hard worker, asks questions when she doesn't know how to do something, and offers to help others.

- Ava is a hard worker who is dedicated to her academics. She lifts up her peers by helping her friends when they are struggling with schoolwork.
- Ava asks good questions and wants to succeed in everything she does. Even when something is challenging, she isn't afraid to try to work through it or ask questions when she is having trouble.

Camille Buchanan -

- Camille is very hard working. She focuses on the fundamentals of the projects, yet is sure to put her own ideas into her work. She always has a positive attitude about what she is doing and works to bring her ideas into fruition.
- Camille is a hard worker and participates very well during class discussions. She is a joy to have in class!
- Camille is a hard worker with a big heart. Her love of learning, animals, and art propels her towards a high level of curiosity and compassion. She is absolutely a student for her peers to look up to.
- Camille is always on task and works hard to not only get her work done but to understand how it works, which is so vital when it comes to math. She isn't afraid to ask questions and always does her best even when she is having a rough day. She knows the value of learning and she takes advantage of each opportunity to learn.

An observation regarding our boys basketball team

Mary Diener, Assistant Principal at BRHS

Winning is not all about the final score of the game. Winning appears in many forms-and the Blue Ridge High School Boys Basketball Team are winners in the area of sportsmanship. So many times during their season, these players demonstrated great acts of sportsmanship. At a game in Clinton, Blue Ridge was losing the game by quite a margin. The Clinton coach put in a player that has physical limitations. This young man rarely gets to play in a game. Blue Ridge players made sure that the Clinton player was successful in making several baskets along with cheering him on. During that same game, when a Clinton player got hurt on the floor, it was a Blue Ridge player that helped the Clinton player up off the floor and assisted him to the bench. In all actuality, during the entire season, it was not rare to see Blue Ridge players assisting opposing team players up from the floor due to a fall during the game; or persevering even though the score was not in their favor. For these efforts, Blue Ridge School Boys Basketball Team are winners!

Athlete of the Month (December)

Boys Basketball - Ben Wallace stepped up big in December in many different ways including his play on the court and his leadership on & off the floor. Ben led many stats throughout the month, and has pushed teammates in practice to work on areas of improvement and work harder in practice to get better.

Scholastic Bowl-Alexis Wike-Alexis has really stepped up and leads our JV team in tossups by a wide margin. Alexis has also improved tremendously by working on her own to better herself. Alexis has stepped in and got some varsity experience as well. Categories of stretch are geography and literature but Alexis has knowledge in other categories as well.

Girls Basketball - Lily Enger. Lily brings a great work ethic every day to practice and games. She is willing to take on new challenges and has competed well at the varsity level.

Cheer- Ava Jamison has served as cheer captain the past 2 seasons and does an outstanding job. Her overall maturity and responsibility as a person and cheerleader is beyond what her coach could have ever imagined.

Athlete of the Month (January)

Boys Basketball - Corbin Colbert. Corbin has shown leadership on the floor, and has really adapted well to the speed of a Varsity game over the past month.

Cheerleading - Phoebe Reynolds. Phoebe has shown great advancement in her overall dedication to cheer this season, but it has definitely shown over the last couple of months. She takes advice well from her teammates and coach and puts those words of advice into action. She is also a great flier and there hasn't been a stunt she can't hit.

Scholastic Bowl-Sr. Aiden Soliday. Aiden is a four year quiz bowler who is soft spoken but dependable on the varsity scholastic bowl, excelling in astronomy and the sciences, but also knows some trash and pop culture categories. Aiden is 4th on the varsity team in scoring and has eclipsed the 100 varsity toss-up mark in his career this past Saturday.

Girls Basketball -Tatem Madden- Heart hustle and desire. Team leader in rebounds and points.

TECHNOLOGY



We are completing the 8th year of the District Technology Plan. Listed here are the highlights. Wow, what great work!

Technology Plan Year 8

- Created a 1:1 environment for Schneider grades K-1, previously only grades 2+ were 1:1
- Farmer City WIFI refresh via E-Rate
- Freshman, Seniors, & 6th grade students received new Chromebooks at the start of the year that are assigned to them through the next several years. 150 end of life chromebooks replaced.
- GoGuardian Software usage continues to increase by teachers. This was purchased to better monitor / control student devices during class. Where is this month's hidden trivia question? Right here! This month there's no question, just a challenge. Please send an encouraging message to a Blue Ridge staff member. I'd love for you to copy me on that email. My email begins with hstanifer and ends with @blueridge18.org.
- GoGuardian DNS filtering purchased to increase student filtering off-site outside of the buildings. Purchase was made in Dec. We will be setting this up soon.
- Verizon Jetpacks are in use – we currently have 35/40 devices checked out to students.
- Student Online Privacy Protection act effective July 1, changed the requirements for teachers using online websites / apps for students in their classrooms
- Transportation module now utilized in Qmlativ student management system
- Additional security cameras were added at the High School to cover dead zones and to provide better outside coverage of the buildings
- Outdoor wireless on the FC Campus was completed in March of 2021

- Live Streaming of events, games, graduation, and board meetings. The High School Gym and football field have been updated to also include the Pixellot Cameras which allows streaming to the NFHS network
- Network Infrastructure - two new switches were added at the High School and Schneider.
- Network Security and Management - DHCP, VLAN and DNS changes were made to better segment network at the FC campus
- Backups - Backup drives were replaced.
- Digital Signage installed in the High School, Schneider and Junior High
- Viewboards were installed in 3 classrooms at Schneider with 3 additional to install
- Wyebot systems deployed for monitoring Wifi issues

Moving through our year...

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