



BRHS MENTAL HEALTH CLUB PAINTED A BEAUTIFUL MURAL AT BRHS

Blue Ridge CUSD 18 Superintendent's Monthly Update



JULY 2019

Fine Arts at Blue Ridge

Blue Ridge Schools has a long standing commitment to providing a rich fine arts program for students in grades K-12. Music and Art are provided to all elementary school students. Band is available beginning in grade 5 through high school. Art is taught in all grade levels. The Jr. High and High School drama programs offer students many opportunities throughout the year, including plays, dinner theater, and smaller skits/productions for special events.

Band/Chorus Director Chris Mitchell, and Art Teachers Sara Wrestler and Sara Wieber

presented on their programs to the BR Board of Education at its July meeting. Each program provides numerous performance, competition, field trip, and volunteer opportunities.

For a detailed look at the many great things our students have done in our fine arts department this past year, go to <https://5il.co/909p>, <https://5il.co/909r>, and <https://5il.co/90a3>.

Blue Ridge is blessed to have excellent and caring teachers for all of our fine arts programs!

UPCOMING EVENTS

7/30-8/8 Online Registration Open
8/8 PreK-12 Walk-in Registration, at BRHS, 10am -3pm, 4-7:30 pm
8/14 Board Meeting, 7 pm
8/16 K-6 Class Lists Posted, noon
8/19 BRIJHS Open House
8/20 Schneider Open House and BRHS Freshman Fling
8/21 1st day of student attendance
9/4 Picture Day
9/14 BREF Mother/Son Game Night, 7-9 pm
9/23 School Improvement Day, NO SCHOOL
10/4 Homecoming
10/11 Teacher Institute Day - NO SCHOOL

WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR THE ANNUAL
BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY UPDATE.
COMING IN EARLY AUGUST!



Removal of old boilers from BRHS, as part of the energy efficiency project.

Summer Operations and Maintenance Projects

Summer is a very busy time for the Facilities Team at Blue Ridge. The district uses the summer months to give each of the schools a deep cleaning, freshly wax and polish floors, clean carpets, paint, and complete repairs as needed. In addition to the normal responsibilities, they have demolished the track shed behind BRIJHS, conducted a remodel of the district offices using in-house labor, and coordinated efforts for the BRHS Energy Efficiency Project. The BR Maintenance and Custodial Team are a tremendous asset to our district and communities.

New Schneider School Circle Drive and the John Street Project

In the Spring of 2019, the City of Farmer City passed a proposal for the John Street Renovation Project. As a result of this roadway improvement, Schneider Elementary will receive a circle drive to assist in safely dropping off and picking up students in our community. All parking on John Street will be back-in parking. This will be a change for many visitors but research has shown this type of parking is safer than traditional parking. Children getting out a vehicle can go directly onto the sidewalk without walking around the car door toward the street. With this project comes changes to our arrival and dismissal procedures, and we ask you for your patience as we transition to this safer process. We will be sending out detailed information to the public and to families of students closer to the start of school. Stay tuned!



Partial List of Actions/ Information-July 17 School Board Meeting

The following individuals were hired:

- Kaela Shaw, Schneider Paraprofessional
- Dan Fager, BRIJHS PE Teacher
- Sam Williamson, BRHS Asst. Boys Basketball
- Greg Alvis, BRIJHS Asst. Girls Basketball
- Dane Houser, BRIJHS Asst. Boys Basketball
- Jacinta Smith, Schneider Cook
- Polly Reynolds, BRHS Volunteer Asst. Cheer
- Clay Stephens, BRIJHS Volunteer Asst. Boys Basketball



Band Director, Chris Mitchell, and Band Members Dylan Kelley, Josephine Aldrich, and Katie Cole, present to the Board the BR Band's accomplishments this past year.

Actions Taken:

- Transferred \$740,000 from Working Cash to Capital Projects to cover costs for BRHS Energy Efficiency Project
- Established two special meeting dates to prepare for and conduct interviews for the superintendent position: Aug. 5 and Aug. 7, both at 7 p.m.
- Discussed feedback from the BR Connect Meeting held in the spring. Board members plan to be present at several district activities throughout the school year, and set up a table to "Ask A Board Member". This will be an opportunity for people to interact informally with Board members and offer ideas, suggestions, or ask questions.

Other Information Presented:

- The District Office plans to continue the recent practice of 4-day work weeks in June and July 2019. We will be open from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday in June and July.
- A great summary of the District's Accomplishments for 2018-19 can be found at <https://5il.co/84u3>. Take a look to see all the great things happening at Blue Ridge!
- The high school was asked to consider adding a shooting club to the menu of extracurricular activities. After giving the matter much thought, we do not recommend moving forward with the proposal. We currently offer a wide array of options for our students, and do not want to pull some students away from existing programs, reducing the number of participants in the current offerings. We remain open to considering this option in future years.
- The quarterly financial report, which also provides information for the end of the fiscal year, can be found at <https://5il.co/90bq>. Pages 4 and 5 of the report are provided so that you can compare the budgeted figures with the actuals for the year. Page 4 of the report gives the unaudited details for revenue, expenditures, and fund balance for fiscal year 2018-2019. Page 5 provides the budget figures from last September that were projected for the year. Overall, the district ended the fiscal year with approximately \$192,000 more in fund balance (across all funds) than was expected when the budget was developed.
- The District continues to make progress on the goals developed for the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan can be found at <https://5il.co/90cf>, with the progress made for individual goal areas are listed in the far right hand column of the grid. Notable accomplishments this past year include the implementation of an acceleration program for students who excel in 1 or more academic areas, preparations for the AdvancED accreditation visit in January 2020, and development of after school programming and evening activities to promote family involvement.

BRHS Memorial Plaza - Track Project

Memorial Plaza: A committee of community members from all 3 towns met in Fall 2018 to develop a plan for a Memorial Plaza at the entrance to the BRHS Football Field. The Plaza is intended to honor the history of all of the schools that went into making up the current school district, and to highlight and enhance the Kenneth Rittenhouse Memorial Arch so that it's significance is remembered.

The BRHS Ag/Horticulture class developed initial proposals, which were reviewed and developed by the committee. Justin Lamb and Johanna James-Heinz put the plans in final form. *Detailed drawings are on the back.* A full installation has been estimated at \$62,000, but we hope to greatly reduce costs by using volunteer labor for much of the work.

Committee members included Mary Kay Hammer, Joyce Wells, Bart Lytel, Bob Zimmerman, Donna Wolf-Roberts, Lois Adams, Jane Smith, Evan Miles, and Susan Wilson. Bill and Shirley Rittenhouse were unable to serve on the committee, but were included in the discussion and have approved of the plans.

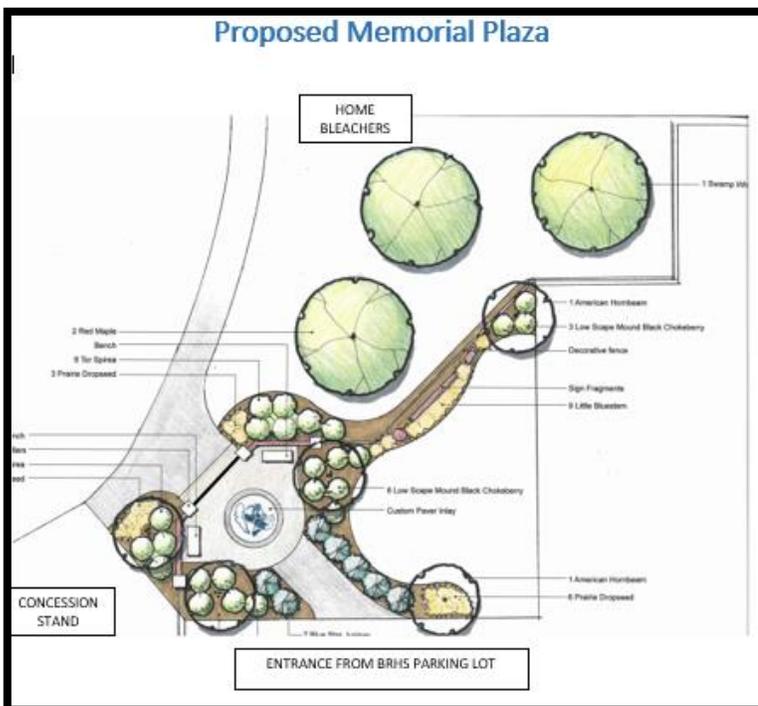
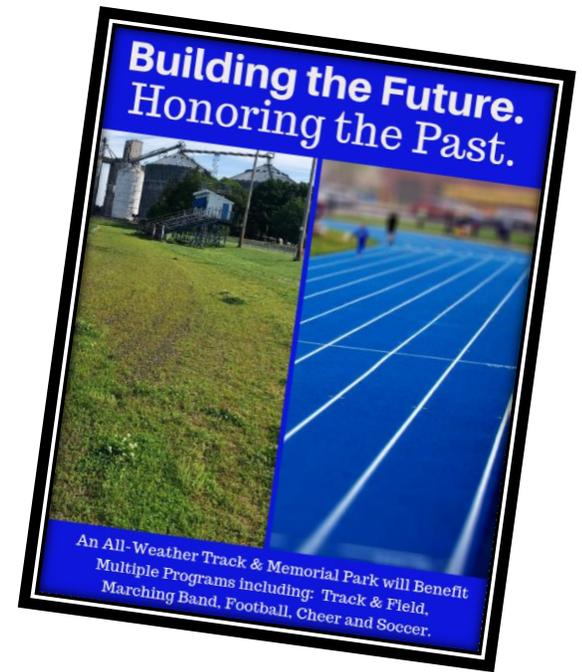
Restrooms: Mr. Seneca's class will build restrooms on the west side of the concession stand by the football field. The District plans to cover the cost of the restrooms – estimated at \$55,000 - and tackle that part of the project in fall 2020 if it is financially feasible. This will create more convenient facilities for events.

Track: For years, school and community groups have expressed interest in an all-weather track. The project would benefit multiple activities - including boys and girls track & field, marching band, football, cheer, and soccer – and

allow us to host track meets and band competitions. Community members could utilize the track for exercise. The new track would include 8-lanes, updated lighting, shot and discus area, pole vault, and fencing at an estimated cost of \$1,065,000. A committee has been formed to raise funds for the project. Committee Members include Maureen Gilbert, Debby Reynolds, Pat Drake, John Lawrence, Katie Nichols, Evan Miles, Chris Mitchell, Greg Bulta, and Susan Wilson.

Project Coordination and Fundraising:

Completion of the 3 aspects of the project – track, restrooms, and Memorial Plaza - will be coordinated to avoid backtracking on any of the work. We plan to build the restrooms in Fall 2020 using district funds. The track would be installed next, once funds are raised. Finally, the Memorial Plaza will be installed when funds are secured.



If you would like to support this effort with time, talent, or money, please call 309-928-9141.