



ENGER FAMILY, MS. KENNELL, & DR. STANIFER DISCUSS ACCELERATION AT BOARD MEETING

Blue Ridge CUSD 18 Superintendent's Monthly Update



OCTOBER 2019

BR Acceleration Program

This is the second year that Blue Ridge Schools has implemented an acceleration program for students throughout the school district who demonstrate high ability and may benefit from an accelerated placement.

Acceleration can take many forms: early entrance to kindergarten, early entrance to 1st grade, single subject acceleration, or full grade acceleration. A child can be referred for acceleration by a parent, teacher, student, physician, or other licensed educational professional.

At the Oct. 16 meeting of the Board of Education, Lilly Enger

and her parents, Mike and Diane presented their story of Lilly's acceleration in mathematics and how the process is working for them. Lilly's teacher, Ms. Kennell, and District Curriculum Coordinator, Dr. Stanifer, shared their perspective.

A team of educators conducted an assessment and presented options to the family. The Engers talked through the scenarios and decided that Lilly would be accelerated in a single subject.

The program is working well. Around the District 13 students are participating in Acceleration in its various forms.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 10/18 End of 1st Quarter
- 23 BACC Career Expo-8th grade
- 24 Parent Teacher Conferences, 3:30-6:45 p.m.
- 25 K-8 Report cards go home
- 29 Parent Teacher Conferences, 3:30-6:45 p.m.; Marching Band Recognition Night
- 31 Halloween Parade, 9 a.m.; Parties, 2:00 p.m.; FFA Trunk or Treat
- 11/1-2 BRHS Dinner Theater
- 11/11 Veterans Day Activities
- 11/18-22 Education Week
- 11/15 Key Club Blood Drive

Bloomington Area Career Center:

The BACC 2018-19 Annual Report is now posted at <https://5il.co/adpm>. BACC is a valuable program for BRHS Students. Take a look at all they have to offer!

Oct. 16 School Board Meeting

Board President Dale Schneman provided two statements at the start of the October 16 meeting of the Blue Ridge Board of Education, as follows:

Negotiations Statement: It is with due respect to all who are being affected by this drawn out process with our current ongoing negotiations with the Union. We realize this process has brought stress to the very Community and Students that we strive to serve each and every day. This has not been our intent. On behalf of the District and School Board...we will do all that is within our power and ability to bring these negotiations to a close. We are ready to settle at this next mediation...We trust the Union is ready as well to settle at the next mediation on Monday 10/21.

Blue Ridge is above the standard of which it has recently been portrayed via various forms of media.

We are a Strong District...because we do care

We are a Healthy District...because of due diligence

We are a United District...because we are Family

We will not allow Negotiations to destroy our Standards...

Let us all be careful in our choices of words and actions...these cannot be replaced but we can resolve to rise above and allow this time to be a stepping stone onto greater things for this District. We value the work and effort of all the District employees and will continue to strive to make this District the place where people want to come and be a part of

Unity amongst Diversity...Unity is achieved when differences are overcome and that is why the Board continues to be committed to negotiating a fair contract with the Union.

Interfund Transfer Statement: The full text of this statement is posted at <https://5il.co/aumv>

Presentation – Acceleration/Gifted Programs: Mike, Diane, and Lilly Enger, along with teacher Erin Kennell and Curriculum Coordinator Hillary Stanifer, presented on the District's Acceleration Policy. See the article on the front page for details. The Acceleration Presentation is also posted at <https://5il.co/atrz>

Public Comments: Several individuals spoke to the board in support of the teachers and the importance of coming to a contract agreement with the Union. A petition was presented to the board with over 400 signatures from individuals in the area and around the country.

Partial List of Actions Taken:

- Board authorized the transfer of \$110,000 from the Education Fund to Capital Projects Fund to pay remaining costs for the BRHS Energy Efficiency Project and sidewalks along John Street.
- Approved Dale Schneman as Delegate to the Illinois Association of School Board's Delegate Assembly in November.
- Approved 2019-20 District Risk Management Plan <https://5il.co/auw8>, Emergency Operations Plan, Officers for the Blue Ridge Educational Foundation, and Band Trip to Indianapolis
- Hired Tim Brown as a Bus Driver

Other Information:

- The 1st quarter financial update for fiscal year 2019-20 was provided to the Board. It can be found at <https://5il.co/auvp>

- The 1st quarter review of progress toward goals on the Blue Ridge Strategic Plan was provided to the Board. It can be found at <https://5il.co/auw0>
- Engineers have identified failing or end of life VAV units, exhaust fans, occupancy sensors at the high school. These do not require immediate attention but will be considered for replacement in summer 2020. The work is eligible for Health Life Safety Funding with preliminary estimates for the work at \$120,000. The District anticipates having adequate fund balance in the HLS Fund to cover the cost without issuing additional bonds. Bidding for the project is anticipated in the spring of 2020.

Memorial Plaza and Track Committee Update

Members of the fundraising committee for the Memorial Plaza and Track Complex met on October 17. Project information is available at <https://5il.co/acp4>. Our fundraising goal is \$1.1 million to cover the installation of a track and related work, along with installation of the Memorial Plaza. Committee members have begun to make personal contacts to ask for donations. Donations should be sent to Blue Ridge Schools, 411 North John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842. Checks should be made out to "Blue Ridge Schools Track Complex."



Ask A Board Member

Maureen Gilbert and Franci Miller at the "Ask A Board Member" table at the Schneider Open House in September. Watch for Board members at school events throughout the school year - and stop by to ask questions and offer your input!

Technology

Technology Coordinator, Andrea Weedman, attended the first K-12 Computer Science Summit in the state at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the U of I. She is pictured with her fellow Business Teacher Education graduates from Illinois State University. Legislators, professors, industry professionals and K-12 teachers all talked candidly about the need for computer science education throughout the state and challenges district's face to make this discipline possible. BRIJHS is currently offering Computer Science to 8th grade students as an exploratory class and Web Design is taught at the BRHS level.



News from Schneider School

Parent Teacher Conferences - Our student led conferences will be held 10/24 and 10/29. Contact the Schneider office or classroom teacher to set up a conference time.

Arrival/Dismissal Update – The Arrival/Dismissal Committee met 9/26 to review our new arrival/dismissal procedures at Schneider. This group is comprised of Schneider staff members, administrators, and a parent representative. Overall, the group feels this transition has been a successful one. Parents are utilizing the Schneider drop-off and pick-up lane (new circle drive), especially for morning drop-off. Our after school pick up lane is becoming more efficient each day. **We would like to remind parents to pull all the way forward when using the drop-off and pick-up lane, allowing more cars to enter the lane, reducing traffic congestion.**

Knight Buddies – The Knight Buddies program is up and running for year three. Regarding the program, this is a mentoring program between BRHS and Schneider Elementary. Students meet with their buddies once a week participating in different activities to create connections and empower students to become independent, self-sufficient and confident students. We currently have twenty-one matches this school year. Our new school counselor, Mrs. Coy, did a tremendous job recruiting high school mentors, making matches and communicating with staff.

Schneider Rock Garden - Schneider Art/Music teacher, Mrs. Weiler, and her students created an amazing painted rock garden that has brought to life the garden on the north side of Schneider School! Stop by and check it out!

Attendance: We had 83 students during the month of September with perfect attendance.

Behavior: 96% of Schneider students had zero tickets during the month of September.



News from BRIJHS

- The gym floor replacement is moving along and making good progress.
- Jr. High students are selling Fannie Mae candy to benefit Student Council. This supports many student-based projects during the year.
- Thank you to the High School staff for working with us to move games to their facilities.
- Thank you to Mrs. Stout for coordinating the flu shot clinic.

Attendance: We are placing an emphasis on the importance of good school attendance. Treats for attendance will be provided by the kitchen staff again this school year.

Behavior: There were 42 discipline referrals this month. PBIS and Restorative Practices are implemented throughout the building.

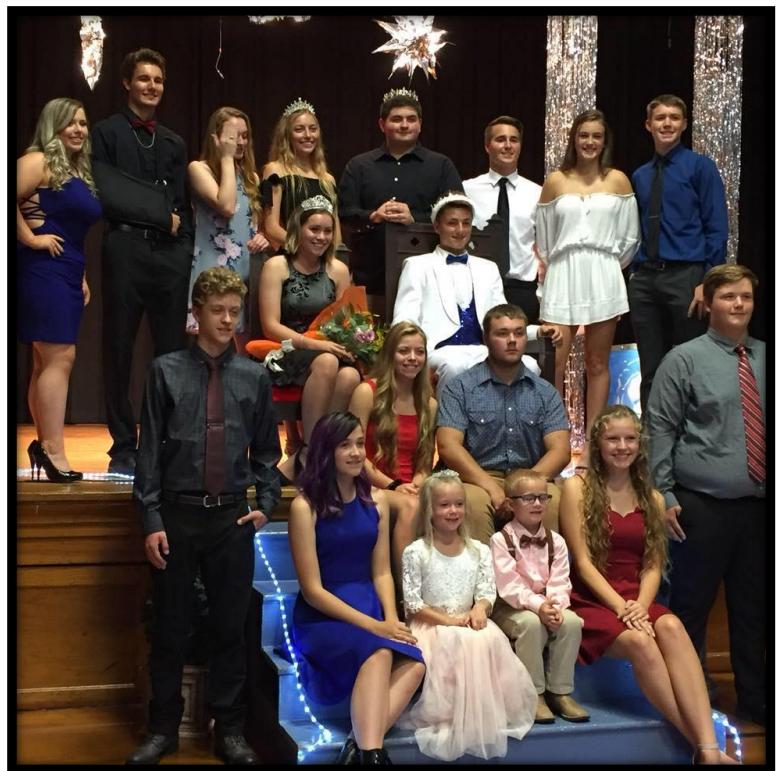
Extracurriculars:

- The softball and baseball seasons have ended.
- Girls' Basketball games have begun.
- Coach Hanson has been holding open gyms for the boys' basketball team.



News from BRHS

- Chris Loop, who teaches Spanish, and is the Student Council Advisor at Blue Ridge High School, did an Outstanding Job organizing this year's Homecoming Activities. Congratulations to Brenden Flannell and Georgia Manuel for being crowned Homecoming King and Queen.
- Thank you to Ms. Eubank for organizing a very successful Taco Bar Fundraiser before the Homecoming Football Game.
- Key Club held a Pumpkin Decorating Contest for the Eliminate Project.
- Congratulations to Josephine Aldrich for being Named "Student of the Month" for the Months of August and September.
- The Life Skills and the Young Adult Classes under the direction of Sarah Ringel cooked a Chili Lunch for the Teachers and Staff of Blue Ridge High School on Wednesday, October 9th.
- Parent Teacher Conferences will be from 3:30 to 7:00 on Thursday, October 24th and Tuesday, October 29th.
- The Members of the FFA are cooking Butterfly Pork Chops for area Farmers on Saturday, October 12th, and planning on attending the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis October 30th through November 1st.
- Congratulations to Josephine Aldrich for being Named "Student of the Month" for the Months of August and September.
- Congratulations to Mary West and Joyce Wells for being Inducted into Blue Ridge's Wall of Fame. They were inducted during Half-Time of the Homecoming Football Game; and were Grand Marshals of the Homecoming Parade.



- Ken Seneca's Carpentry and Cabinet Making Class is building another garage for a family in Farmer City this Semester. 
- The Life Skills and the Young Adult Classes under the direction of Sarah Ringel cooked a Chili Lunch for the Teachers and Staff of Blue Ridge High School on Wednesday, October 9th.
- Parent Teacher Conferences will be from 3:30 to 7:00 on Thursday, October 24th and Tuesday, October 29th.
- The Members of the FFA are cooking Butterfly Pork Chops for area Farmers on Saturday, October 12th, and planning on attending the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis October 30th through November 1^s
- Teachers have formed 5 Leadership Teams to work on the following initiatives:
 - Data Committee: Examining Data from "Benchmark Tests" to determine which Students need extra help in Math and English. They are also working with the RTI Committee to design "Intervention" Activities for struggling students.
 - Celebrations Committee: Has Implemented the Student of the Month Program. This program recognizes students who do "Outstanding Things" during the Week and then Name one Student of the Month from that list. All Nominees are selected by Teachers and receive prizes from the "Snack Shack".
 - Collaboration Committee: Is asking Teachers to observe each other and give feedback on teaching methods. The goal is to have everyone observe another Teacher this semester; and possibly observe a teacher who teaches the same subject in another school next semester.
 - Student Leadership Committee: Is organizing Student Leaders to help with Adaptive PE Class, Volunteer with the Life Skills Program during their Study Halls, and Peer Mentors to help tutor students during study halls.
 - Professional Development Committee: Exploring possible Professional Development Opportunities, including Professional Conferences, that are meaningful for our teachers.
- The RTI Committee continues to meet twice a month to explore "Interventions" needed to help our students succeed.
- Congratulations to Golfer Aaron Jayne for tying the School Record with a 3 under par round of golf on a 9 hole course. Aaron also qualified for the IHSA Sectional Meet.
- Congratulations to the Athletes of the Month for September: Football—Zach Stephens, Golf—Macie Baird and Dylan Kelly, Soccer—Mitchell Houser, Volleyball—Jenna Mozingo, and Cheer—Sarah Whitehouse.
- The Volleyball Team will be Hosting the IHSA Regional Tournament on October 28 through 31.
- Marching Band Recognition Night will be on Tuesday, October 29 in the Old Gym.
- The Dinner Theatre will be performing "The Somewhat True Tales of Robin Hood" in the Schneider Cafeteria November 1st through 3rd.
- **Attendance:** There are 223 Students currently enrolled at Blue Ridge High School. The Average Daily Attendance from September 12 through October 9, 2019 was 208. Which is 93.2%. We continue to work with the Regional Office of Education and the Truancy Officer to improve Student attendance. Attendance will be recorded on all staff members' evaluations this year.
- **Behavior:** From September 12, 2019 through October 9, 2019 the High School has had the following 5 Out of School Suspension; 6 for the 2019-2020 School Year. 31 Disciplinary Infractions, by 18 Students; 42 for the 2019-2020 School Year. 205 Students with No Disciplinary Infractions. That is 91.9% of the Student Body.



Blue Ridge Driver's Ed students are learning first-hand about semi-truck safety today. Students get to sit in the truck and see what a driver sees in his mirrors and windows, so they can have a better understanding of driving among tractor trailers. Many thanks to Scott Whitehouse and Pearl Trucking for putting on this awesome presentation. (We are also very thankful for Kopp Farms for use of their trucks in past years, but they had a last-minute farm need that day)

