

BRHS VOLLEYBALL – 7TH IN A ROW REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP!

Blue Ridge CUSD 18 Superintendent's Monthly Update



NOVEMBER 2019

Dr. Hillary Stanifer named Superintendent for Blue Ridge Schools

At the November 20th School Board meeting, the Blue Ridge Board of Education named Dr. Hillary Stanifer as Superintendent of the district, effective July 1, 2020. Dr. Stanifer will replace Superintendent Susan Wilson, who will be retiring in June 2020



after serving in that capacity since 2010.

Dr. Stanifer is in her 3rd year as Curriculum Coordinator for Blue Ridge, where responsibilities include directing professional development activities for faculty and staff, coordinating curriculum planning and implementation, providing direct instructional support to teachers, coordinating teacher mentoring and induction programs, overseeing the AdvancED accreditation process, writing grants, and developing after-school programming for students.

She previously served ten years as assistant principal and principal of Liberty Middle School in Edwardsville, IL and taught mathematics at both the high school and middle school levels. Just prior to coming to Blue

Ridge, Dr. Stanifer was Assistant Principal at Garden Hills in Champaign for one year.

Dr. Stanifer earned a Bachelor's Degree in Math Education and Business from Indiana Wesleyan, Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Eastern Michigan University, and Specialist and Doctoral Degrees in Educational Administration from Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville. She is currently completing licensure as a Certified School Business Official.

Dr. Stanifer and her husband, Scott, are the parents of three young adult daughters, and proud grandparents to baby Olive. Scott is worship pastor at New Horizon United Methodist Church. They currently reside in Mahomet and will be relocating to the Blue Ridge District.

New Contract Ratified between BRFT and BR School Board

At a special meeting held October 30, the Blue Ridge Board of Education voted unanimously to approve a 3-year contract with the Blue Ridge Federation of Teachers, effective retroactively to July 1, 2019. The new contract is posted at the district website at <https://5il.co/b2vo>

The agreement includes annual salary increases of 2.75% plus any step increases on the salary schedule, an increase in the salary for beginning teachers to \$37,026/year in the first year, and higher in the 2 successive years.

The district will contribute \$2500 per year to Health Savings Accounts for employees who receive district health insurance. Sick leave will increase from 14 days per year to 14-21 days per year depending on years of service.

Other items addressed in the new contract included extended use of personal days, terms for use of short-term substitutes, and elimination of fair-share requirements. BRFT ratified the agreement October 27.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November

21 Farmer City Senior Citizen Thanksgiving Dinner, BRHS Moore Gym
25 Mansfield Senior Citizen Thanksgiving Dinner, BRIJHS
27-29 NO School – Happy Thanksgiving!

December

3 Gr. 4-6 Music Program, BRIJHS, 7 p.m.
5 Growing Together, Schneider Cafeteria, 5:30 p.m.
10 Kdg./Gr. 1 Music Program, BRHS Moore Gym, 7 p.m.
17 Winter Band Concert, BRHS, 7 p.m.
18 Board Meeting, BRHS Library 7 p.m.
19 P.I.E., Schneider Cafeteria, 6 p.m.
20 End of 2nd Quarter; 2:20 p.m. Early Dismissal
Dec. 23-Jan. 3 Winter Holidays – NO SCHOOL

January

3 Curriculum Day – NO SCHOOL
6 School resumes!
15 Board Meeting, BRHS Library, 7 p.m.



Parents: We need your help!

Please take a minute to fill out the 5-Essentials survey for your child's school. This info is used to guide each school's goals for the next year!

GO TO <http://survey.5-essentials.org/illinois/survey/parent/>

Blue Ridge Educational Foundation – Grants Awarded!

The Blue Ridge Educational Foundation met in November to review the grant requests from classroom teachers. BREF awarded over \$7000 in grants for the following projects. *Thank you for your contributions to BREF. They make a direct impact on the educational programs for our students! If you would like to contribute to BREF or be a part of our governing board, please reach out to us on Facebook!*

- Traveling Theater – for 1st Grade
- Challenger Mission – for 2nd Grade
- Assistance Bands – for “Pull-Up” Club at BRIJHS
- Flexible Seating for ELA Classes at BRIJHS
- Go Fit Pro – for PE at BRIJHS
- Piano Progress – for BRIJHS Music Classes
- Trauma Informed Supply Cart for use at BRIJHS and Schneider School

Nov. 20 School Board Meeting

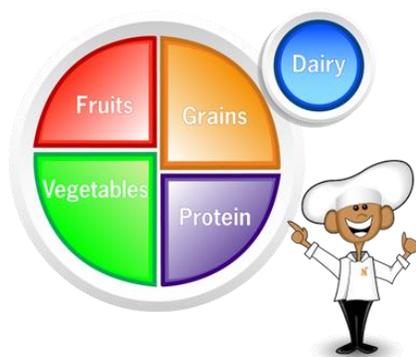
In Honor of School Board Appreciation Day, we thank the members of the Blue Ridge Board of Education for their diligent work and dedication to serve our school district. Board members serve in a volunteer capacity to ensure our students have an excellent education and strong opportunities. We are grateful for the work of President Dale Schneman, VP Franci Miller, Secretary Kenna Dunlap Johnson, and Members Carlos Burton, Maureen Gilbert, Dion Lathrom, and Chelsie Leffelman!

Employed the Following Individuals:

- Dr. Hillary Stanifer, Superintendent, beginning July 1, 2020 – see the article on the front page for more details!
- Cullen Scurlock, Chemistry Teacher at BRHS for 2020-21
- David Kramer, Boys Track Coach, BRHS

Partial List of Actions Taken:

- Discussed the 2019 tax levy (payable in 2020) – BR lowered our tax levy by about 9 cents this past year and expects to be able to maintain that tax rate for 2020. The tax levy presentation is posted at <https://5il.co/bg2d>. The levy will be formally adopted at the Dec. 18 board meeting.
- Approved the annual audit for fiscal year 2018-2019. Report is posted at <https://5il.co/bhcg>
- Reviewed the Annual Assessment Report for Blue Ridge, posted at <https://5il.co/bg2l>.
- You are encouraged to take a look at the School Report Cards for each of our three schools. School reports cards for each of the schools are available at <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>.
- Reviewed the School Improvement Plans for each school These plans are posted at <https://5il.co/bg2q> (BRHS), <https://5il.co/bg2s> (BRIJHS), <https://5il.co/bg2r> (Schneider). Take a look to see what each school will be working on throughout 2019-20.



Health and Wellness Tips

MyPlate teaches us to fill 1/2 our plate with fruits and vegetables, 1/4 with whole grains, and 1/4 with protein. There are no good or bad foods, but some should be eaten more than others. The best way to make sure you get a healthy, balanced diet is to eat a wide variety of foods each day.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

School buses are the safest way to get children to and from school, but injuries can occur if kids are not careful when getting on and off the school bus.

Top Tips for Bus Safety

1. **Remember – never pass a stopped school bus!**
2. Walk with your young kids to the bus stop and wait with them until it arrives. Make sure drivers can see the kids at your bus stop.
3. Teach kids to stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.
4. Teach kids to wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before getting off and not to walk behind the bus.
5. If your child needs to cross the street after exiting the bus, he or she should take five giant steps in front of the bus, make eye contact with the bus driver and cross when the driver indicates it's safe. Teach kids to look left, right and left again before crossing the street.
6. Instruct younger kids to use handrails when boarding or exiting the bus. Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door. If your child drops something, they should tell the bus driver and make sure the bus driver is able to see them before they pick it up.
7. Drivers should follow the speed limit and **slow down** in school zones and near bus stops. Remember to stay alert and look for kids who may be trying to get to or from the school bus.
8. Slow down and stop if you're driving near a school bus that is flashing yellow or red lights. This means the bus is either preparing to stop (yellow) or already stopped (red), and children are getting on or off.



Working together we can make a difference!



Get Moving!

60 minutes of physical activity every day is recommended for good health for children and teens. Blue Ridge offers daily physical education for all students in kindergarten through high school, and recess in elementary school. If it's rainy or snowy, play a dance video game or Wii Fit! That's a great way to encourage active play at home.

Curriculum Work Around the District

- BRIJHS math teachers attended a conference at Hampshire High School. Teachers shared what they learned with their colleagues during their November collaboration meetings.
- Mosa Mack Science curricular materials are being piloted at the junior high level.
- Preparation is underway for the upcoming AdvancED Review
 - Weekly meetings with principals to update our System Standards Diagnostic
 - Determining applicable evidence and collecting artifacts
- Work continues with each of the School Leadership Teams (SLT)
 - Looking over building level data
 - Developing school improvement plans – posted at the website
 - Researching ELA products for purchase with grant funding (Schneider)
 - Planning for training on ELA products (Schneider)

Technology

Digital Portfolios

Imagine your Kindergarten teacher creating a digital portfolio of your work to share with your parents? Wouldn't that be so much nicer than a Rubbermaid tub that sits in storage and rarely gets touched?

This picture shows Mrs. Ward taking a picture of a Kindergarten student to upload into their online portfolio and share with her parents.



Parents really enjoy this interaction with their children and their class work. Seesaw and Bloomz are the more popular platforms teachers are using. Parents can comment or like posts. This is a beneficial way to integrate technology in the classroom and communicate with parents!



Video Conferencing

We're excited about the new technology setup in the District Office Conference Room. Pictured here are students on a virtual college visit to Illinois State University. This setup will allow video conferencing and is a definite asset to our district.

Coming Soon!

Rolling out Bark to parents, a parental control monitoring option

News from Schneider School

Senior Citizen Thanksgiving Dinner -Please join us for the Senior Citizens Thanksgiving Dinner, November 21, 2019. This event will be in the BRHS Moore Gym. The cost of the dinner is \$2.75 per person. Serving begins at 11 a.m. for those who are not eating with their grandchild. Grandparents are welcome to eat with their grandchildren. Kindergarten and 1st grade will eat at 11:00-11:35 a.m. 2nd and 3rd grades will eat at 11:40 a.m.-12:10 p.m.

K-1 Concert - Our K-1 music program will take place December 10 at 7:00 p.m. It will be located in the BRHS Moore Gym. This year's concert will be the *Polar Express*.



Pumpkin Drop

1st graders participated in our annual Pumpkin Drop. As part of a STEM unit, students designed and built an enclosure that would protect a pumpkin when dropped from the top of the building. Students participated in one of three teams: design, building/packaging, and presentation.



PBIS Gotcha Party - At the end of October, K-3 students participated in the pumpkin Olympics to celebrate good choices and behavior. Students participated in activities like pumpkin toss, pumpkin relay, pumpkin chucking, and pumpkin bowling. Students enjoyed the celebration while developing gross motor skills.



Writing Curriculum and Professional Development - Our building is a few months into the implementation of our new writing curriculum. The classroom teachers have been working hard planning, preparing, and delivering writing instruction. This includes job embedded professional development from our ELA coach. Thank you to our teachers for their commitment to this process and continually improving practice!



Halloween Parade - We had another successful Halloween Parade. Due to snow and cold weather, we celebrated this event in the BRHS Moore Gym. We had an excellent turnout from the community and the event went very well. Thank you to Mr. Mitchell and our high school drumline students for their performance.





Veterans Day
We honored our veterans at our Veterans Day Assembly last week. This event featured patriotic songs performed by students, recognition of veterans and an Honor Flight presentation by Farmer City's own, Lance Spieker.



Attendance: We had 65 students during the month of October with perfect attendance.

Behavior: 92% of Schneider students had zero tickets during the month of October.

News from BRIJHS

- BRIJHS held parent teacher conferences along with the other schools. We had a great parent turn out.
- 8th Grade students attended the annual BACC Career Field Trip.
- BRIJHS held the annual dental clinic for students. This is through our partnership with the Dewitt/Piatt County Health Department.
- 25 Jr. High students made the high honor roll for 1st Quarter. Students must have a GPG of 3.75 or higher. Way to go!
- Student Council produced a wonderful Veterans Day Assembly and Breakfast. Almost 35 Veterans attended and were recognized for their service to our country.



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 60 discipline referrals this month. PBIS and Restorative Practices are implemented throughout the building.



News from BRHS

Chris Loop and the Members of Student Council put on a very nice Veterans Day Assembly featuring 4 women who are Veterans, FFA Officers, Band and Chorus.

- Parent Advisory Council continues to meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, at 6 pm in the Commons. This is one hour before Booster Club.
- Congratulations to Jatton Shaffer for being named Student of the Month for October.
- Thank you to Sarah Yeagle and the BRHS Thespian Troup for a great performance at the annual Dinner Theatre Show of "The Somewhat True Tales of Robin Hood" in the Schneider Cafeteria
- Thank you to Chris Loop and BRHS Student Council for hosting the Halloween Party and Cookout.
- Congratulations to the Blue Ridge Runners who raised over \$550 for the Arthritis Foundation by participating in the Jingle Bell Run in Bloomington. Members of the Team were: Sarah and Ben Ringel, Jonathon and Sylvia Allen, John and James Lawrence, Sara Wieber, Lois Dowling, Dave Kramer, and Elizabeth Raines.
- Thank you to Scott Whitehouse for teaching a unit on Semi Truck Safety for the students in Mr. Duke's Driver's Education Class.
- Students in Eric Decker's World Cultures Class gave presentations on Special Celebrations or Festivals from around the World. Four of these students were 8th graders who have been moved to this class due to the District's new acceleration policy



BRHS Key Club decorates pumpkins with patients at FC Rehab and Healthcare Center

- Marcus Minter, the High School's Math I Teacher is helping two 8th Grade Students with Math I. He is also teaching the New Applied Math Course; which will give students the opportunity to take Grade Level Math Courses at Parkland College, if they receive a Grade of C or better in this course.
- Ken Seneca's Carpentry and Cabinet Making Class is finishing a Garage in Farmer City.
- Richele Miller in her Advanced Biology Class taught medical terminology and dissection skills while having students do a "Gummy Bear" Operation Lab that she created.
- Aimee Thacker's Computer Projects Class has been selling Ads for this year's Yearbook; and has just finished the Fall Section of this year's book.