



SUPT. SUSAN WILSON PRESENTS BOARD PRES. DALE SCHNEMAN WITH THE COGNIA (ADVANCED) ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE AT THE APRIL 15 BOARD MEETING

Blue Ridge CUSD 18 Superintendent's Monthly Update



APRIL 2019

BR Receives Cognia/AdvancED Accreditation!

We are happy to report that we have officially been awarded accreditation by Cognia (formerly known as AdvancED and North Central Accreditation). This is a tribute to the excellent work of our board, administration, faculty, staff, and community over many years. The accreditation report was reviewed at the April 15 board meeting. The full report will be shared with faculty, and then sent out to the community in the next few weeks. Congratulations to all!

Upcoming Events

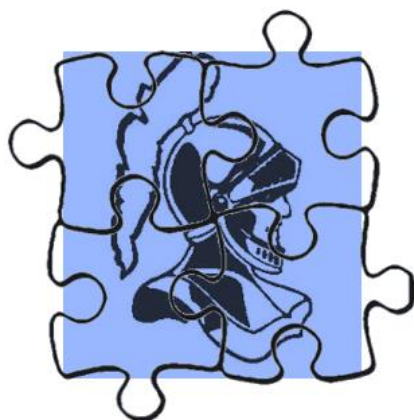
As of this writing we are still hopeful that we can return to school yet this year, but also want to prepare alternate plans for many upcoming end-of-year events so families can know how they will be handled if Remote Learning continues through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Details are posted at <https://5il.co/f35k>

Don't Forget:

- 4/24 Remote Learning Planning Day
- 4/27 School Improvement Day – NO SCHOOL
- 5/8 and 5/22 Remote Learning Planning Days (if the governor extends school closures)
- 5/29 Last Day Student Attendance – confirmed
- 6/1 Teacher Institute – confirmed

Remote Learning Updates

- **Remote Learning Plan:** The district administrative team, faculty and staff have worked over the past couple of weeks to develop a remote learning plan. It is a work in process, but we believe we have a good basic document: <https://5il.co/eir1>.
- **Plan for Return to School:** Our counselors and principals are working together to develop plans for return to school if that should happen yet this school year. We expect that the first days back for students and staff will need to include some special care and attention.
- **Plan B for Upcoming Events:** While we still hope to hold the many milestone events that typically occur at the end of the school year, our administrators and their staff members developed alternative plans should we still be social distancing. The “Plan B” for these events can be found at <https://5il.co/f35k>
- **Planning for students under consideration for retention, acceleration:** Principals will **work** with teachers and parents to work through the individualized considerations for any students who were being considered for retention or acceleration.



Partial list of Actions from the April 15 School Board Meeting

- Presentation by District Librarian Sylvia Allen, highlighting the work of our school libraries: <https://5il.co/f2vl>
- Hired Chad Acree to teach physical education at BRIJHS.
- Approved updated job descriptions, Consolidated District Application, District Remote Learning Plan: <https://5il.co/eir>, Teacher Evaluation Plan Changes: <https://5il.co/f5bj>,
- Approved co-op with DeLand-Weldon for HS Boys and Girls Golf, Co-Ed Soccer, Girls HS Basketball and Football, and Intermediate and JH Baseball and Softball.
- Approved purchase of GPS Tracking for District Vehicles
- Approved Janell Lerche to continue as District Treasurer
- Approved resolution to re-fund (re-issue) the 2012 Building Bonds at some point within the next six months, whenever interest rate conditions are most favorable for the district. By refunding these bonds, the district hopes to secure a lower interest rate and save the district money on payments. The deadline to pay off the bonds will stay the same as it was originally.
- Approved hiring the architect to draw up plans for the Proposed high school track project. This service will be paid by the district from County School Facility Sales Tax Revenue.
- Approved Bid from Reliable Heating for BRHS HVAC work in the amount of \$94,510. \$50,000 of this project will be paid from the state school maintenance grant.
- Rejected the bid of \$233,000 to replace the air handlers at BRIJHS. The board felt that this project was not essential and could be put off for next year when we might be a more stable

economic climate as a state. Plans are to rebid the project next spring and consider proceeding in summer of 2021.

From the Superintendent's Desk

You might think that with no students and no staff in the buildings I have huge amounts of free time. Well – that has certainly not been the case. Normally this is a hectic time of year with closing out one school year and preparing for the next. Additionally, we are adding in all the tasks related to Remote Learning and continued preparation for the transition to a new superintendent.

I am truly proud of the way all district personnel have stepped up to serve our students, their families, and the community. Implementing Remote Learning so quickly is nothing short of a miracle. Our staff are dealing with the same stressors as everyone else – family, finances, and the pressures of the pandemic. They have risen above and are doing many, many wonderful things to support their students and encourage each other. This has been a unifying and positive experience for us as a district and communities.

We have noticed many instances of community groups who have directly helped our Blue Ridge families:

- Angel Tree provided school supplies at the pick-up locations last week. Families who were running low on school supplies could "shop" for what they needed.
- Trinity Christian Fellowship prepared 6 food boxes with gift cards to give to BR Families. The counselors and Mr. Peyton helped identify families and I delivered the boxes.
- FC Kiwanis Club purchased gas and gift cards to be distributed to selected BR families.
- The SCRC Food Pantry had extra bread after the March 28 food basket distribution. They gave BR the bread and it was included in the food distribution the following Monday.

Quarterly Financial Report – 3rd Quarter:

The Quarterly Financial Report for the 3rd quarter is posted at <https://5il.co/f5ak>. Revenue and Expenditures are at appropriate levels given that we are now about 75% of the way through the school year. State funding is lagging, especially in transportation.

I have reviewed our current financial position and do not think we will need an amended budget at this time. I will review the information again before the May board meeting to make sure.

Strategic Planning Report – Quarterly Progress Report:

The quarterly review of our progress toward the goals in the BR Strategic Plan can be found at <https://5il.co/f5ap>. Most notably, this past quarter we completed the Cognia/AdvancED Accreditation visit and have officially received accreditation.

EPA Item – Transportation Center:

The EPA received a report regarding fuel spills around the fuel pump at the Transportation Center. Typically, the fuel spills have resulted from fuel nozzle failing to shut off. Drivers are required to stay with the bus while fueling, but have sometimes gotten distracted by other tasks,

resulting in an overflow. They noted that none of the fuel spills were considered “reportable” but have asked that we excavate the soil and dispose of it in an authorized disposal site. We are in the process of obtaining quotes for the work and will follow up appropriately. Drivers have been reminded of the necessity of monitoring the fuel dispensing process closely in order to prevent these occurrences in the future.

Schneider School News

Partners in Education (P.I.E.) – Shout out to P.I.E. for meeting during the school closure. We hosted an online meeting, 4/7, which brought our biggest turnout this year. The team discussed Knight Walk and Teacher Appreciation Week which is coming in May.

Special Education and Related Services Collaboration Meeting - Our special education faculty and Tri-County Special Education Co-op held our first monthly collaboration meeting via Google Hangout, 4/8. This is a monthly opportunity for all staff to communicate regarding services for students, provide feedback regarding services, discuss questions regarding timelines, and discuss how to maintain high quality instruction/services for our students.

Remote Learning - Our staff has stepped up to the challenge of remote learning. Teachers are using a variety of teaching tools and resources to connect with students and move learning forward. From daily classroom meetings to standards driven learning activities, their passion and professionalism is clearly visible.



Kids Heart Challenge: Schneider Elementary raised over \$15,000 for the American Heart Association. This is the largest amount of donations we have received to date. Students who raised over \$150 were able to silly string their teacher which was enjoyed by all. Thank you to Mr. Hanson for his commitment and efforts in making this event a huge success!!

Behavior: There were 12 students with referrals during the month of March with a total of 12 referrals across the building. 94% of our students were ticket free during the month of March. This is above our 80% target and schoolwide expectation. In March of 2019, 95% of our students were ticket free.

BRIJHS News

Kids Heart Challenge: Congratulations and kudos to Sam Barton and the students in 4-6th grade for raising \$4,112.19 for the American Heart Association through the Kids Heart Challenge. Way to go!

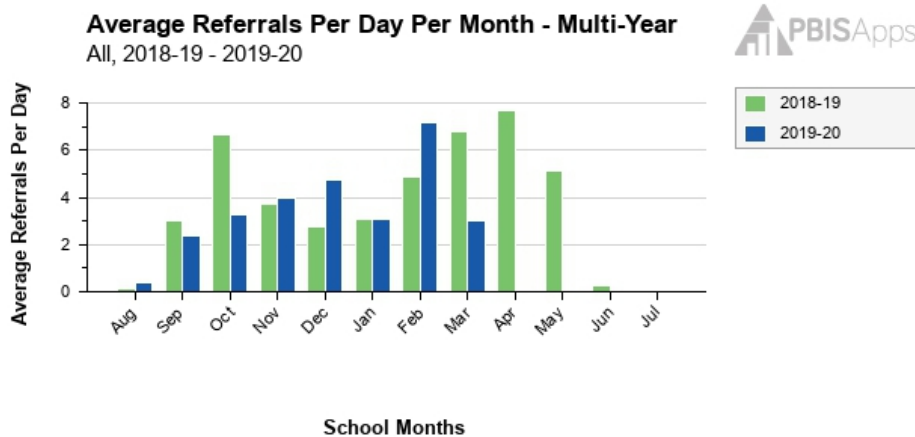
BRIJHS HVAC - HVAC Repairs have been completed at BRIJHS. Additional repair/replacement of items may be needed, but the major work has been done.

Social Emotional Learning: We are continuing the SEL work based on the feedback from Cognia. We have contracted with Abby Lyons from ROE #17 to guide us through this work. Ms. Lyons has built a series of 4 online modules for staff to complete independently and then she runs an online session with the staff for discussion.

Extracurriculars: IESA has cancelled all sports and activities for the remainder of the year. This impacts Scholastic Bowl and Track for our students.

Attendance: Our attendance in March of 2020 was 93.75%.

Behavior: There were 10 discipline referrals this month. PBIS and Restorative Practices are implemented throughout the building.



BRHS News

- **“Senior Spotlight” on Facebook:** 2 Seniors a Day are recognized on Facebook! This is a way to recognize these Students who are missing out on many activities their Senior Year. (Lois Dowling and Nancy Hoffman helped produce this project)
- Thank you to ALL who are helping with the “Remote Learning Process” during this difficult time. Andrea Weedman and Dave Kramer have taught our staff use of Google Hangouts and other applications to help with Remote Learning.

Congratulations “Best of Class” Winners for the Art Displays from the Fine Arts Expo!

Art I

Riley Freden

Art II	Sarah Whitehouse
Art III	Haven Boyd
Art Appreciation	Kalyn Warner
Studio Art	Elise Swanstrom
Senior Displays	Tiffany Davis

Congratulations to the Newly Elected FFA Officers:

President	Jaton Shaffer
Vice President	Gracie Myers-Nichols
Secretary	Abby Bolen
Reporter	Gracie Shaffer
Treasurer	Henry Mitchell
Sentinel	Corissa Godbee
Historian	Anthony Thompson

Curriculum:

- High School Teachers are sending Learning Activities to students on a daily basis, communicating with students via different media, and focusing on key concepts for courses. Each Teacher has a list of students that they have been contacting at least once a week. The purpose of this contact is to answer questions, check progress, and offer necessary support to students.

Attendance: Enrollment is currently 207, and Average Daily Attendance from March 11 - April 7, 2020 was 204, or 98.5%. This time last year enrollment was 226, and Average Daily Attendance was 206, or 91.1%. We continue to work with the Regional Office of Education and the Truancy Officer to improve Student attendance. DeWitt County has formed a Truancy Review Board that will be meeting in the near future.

Behavior: From March 12, 2020 through April 7, 2020 the High School has had the following: NO Out of School Suspensions; 25 for the 2019-2020 School Year. This time last year we had 1 Out of School Suspension. 4 Disciplinary Infractions, by 3 Students; 269 for the 2019-2020 School Year. This time last year there were 48 Disciplinary Infractions. 203 Students with No Disciplinary Infractions.

Extra-Curriculars: Before the “Stay at Home Order” all spring sports/activities were practicing and preparing for their competitions. The IHSA hopes to resume participation and eventually the State Series after the Order is lifted. At this time there has been NO Decision regarding the remainder of the season.

Educational Technology

Teachers throughout the district have immersed themselves in ways to bring content to students using educational technology. On our recent Teacher Institute Day, we selected and discussed five online tools to focus on as we deliver content remotely. Teachers are communicating with parents and students using different avenues while maintaining consistency in each building through a shared document that is posted daily for assignments in each class.

I am simply in awe of the amount of time teachers are taking to deliver lessons and ensure the well-being of our students throughout the district. The technology we have and the faculty's willingness to face adversity is nothing short of exceptional. I'm very proud of my Blue Ridge family.

Technology Accomplishments in Past Month:

- Remote Learning and more Remote Learning
- Survey for parents on needs
- 40 Jetpacks distributed and currently in use for student WIFI
- Distributed Chromebook for grades 2-5
- 84 Help Desk Tickets Closed - this is almost three times our average
- Submitted bid for E-Rate Category 2 cabling for JH cameras and Gym cameras
- Coordinated technology efforts on Teacher Institute day with all 3 buildings
- Chromebook repairs
- Assisted teachers in transitioning non compatible software (ex. Office 365 and Inventor) to function using chrome books
- Opened Helpdesk to students and parents
- Conducting Office Hours from 8-10 in FC
- Prepared a virtual server for Office applications and tested. System has been discontinued due to lack of needed hardware
- Phone extension updates completed
- Prepared several laptops for individual High School students to support specific classes
- Setup Door fob for secure access to the District Office.
- Setup and tested remote access for District support staff
- State Reporting deadline for April 17

Upcoming

- Remote Learning Inquiries / Managing district resources for continued remote use
- Installation of two additional door fob locations: main gym entrance at HS and rear intermediate gym door at Mansfield
- Repair of fob in Mansfield closet
- Planning Data Privacy Committee meeting
- End of Year Student Information Systems Webinar
- District Inventory Continues
- Google OU Cleanup Continues
- Main Tech Closet Clean up FC

Curriculum

Even with added work due to Remote Learning, work continues on curriculum initiatives for this year and planning for 2020-2021. Following is a summary of recent accomplishments:

- Planning launch of District ELA Task Force on April 27, 2020
- Purchased with Title monies
 - Interactive Read Aloud kits (4th-5th, 6th to be purchased summer 2020)
 - Reading Mini Lesson Books (4th-6th)
 - Guided Reading Libraries (2 for intermediate grades)
 - Leveled Literacy Intervention Kits (2 for Schneider, 2 for BRIJHS)
 - Benchmark Assessment Systems (6 for Schneider, 4 for BRIJHS)
 - Continuums (4 for Schneider and each BAS has one included)
 - Word Study Kit (4th, 5th & 6th to be purchased by fall 2020 as available)
 - Storage systems for new materials (from building budgets)
- Gr. 4-6 math teachers will attend curriculum work sessions at the ROE this summer
- ROE math coach secured for June 5 to work with 4th-6th math teachers.
- Communication with Parkland College re: Applied Math
- Science - Mosa Mack teacher and student licensing purchased for Gr. 6-8



Fun videos from our staff to you!

Schneider: <https://5il.co/ewqu>

BRHS: <https://www.facebook.com/blueridge18/videos/1089170781458590/>

Stay tuned for video from BRIJHS!
