



BR LUNCH LADIES HAVE SERVED AN AVERAGE OF 1300 MEALS PER WEEK DURING REMOTE LEARNING. WE THANK THESE FAITHFUL LADIES FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK!

Blue Ridge CUSD 18 Superintendent's Monthly Update



MAY 2019

Remote Learning Updates

We continue to be amazed at the work being done around the district by our faculty, staff, and administrators. It is tremendously disorienting to be functioning in isolation, but to still try to maintain a sense of coordination and togetherness. **Our team has risen to the challenge and exceeds all of my expectations.**

Our counselors have put together a **virtual field day** for the last week of school – with the goal of a fun way to keep everyone connected and engaged. Hillary Stanifer and Paige Trimble have developed a **summer learning choice board** that will provide light and fun learning opportunities for our students. In the fall, students will return the completed boards to their 2019-20 teachers at the start of the school year – providing a nice way to close out the school year and transition to the next.

Finally, we were greatly pleased to see that ISBE, IDPH, and the Governor's office revised their graduation guidance to allow for **Drive-in Graduation**. Mr. Lawrence and the high school staff worked with Mr. Kramer and the tech team to put together a wonderful program for our students and allow families and community members to be a part. Following the ceremony, we will have a parade through all 3 towns, escorted by SRO Mack King and members of the police and fire departments for our 3 communities. BRHS Student Council purchased banners for each student, and the high school purchased yard signs. I appreciate all of the efforts to make this graduation an extra special one for the class of 2020. Graduation plans are posted at <https://5il.co/fh12>.

BRHS Honors Night was conducted virtually. The event was broadcast and sent out via videos:

- <https://youtu.be/-Ig4QFkG7QE>
- <https://youtu.be/5wE0OEwAEgk>

FIELD DAY!

Field day must go on! BRIJH will be participating in an at home Field Day event on Tuesday, May 19th! Field Day is an important tradition. We feel that in these challenging times field day is a unique way to stay connected and support one another in a fun and meaningful way. Post videos and pictures of you and your families participating! Post them on the district's Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/blueridge18>. Pick a couple of events or do them all! It's up to you. Field Day Packet: <https://openphysed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NFD2020-ALL-FullParticipationPacket.pdf>

Food Deliveries – all children (18 and under) are eligible for free meals: Food is delivered to each of our 3 towns from 8-10 daily. Home deliveries can be arranged if needed. Each package contains breakfast and lunch for the day. Anyone can receive food. It is free to any child 18 or younger, regardless of income or residence status. Adults may also receive food for \$4/day. Any adult who cannot afford the \$4 should contact the school and we will work to cover the cost.

We will be delivering extra food to families through our food delivery system on May 19. Families will receive a bonus pack of food. Any remaining bonus packs will be available on a first come, first serve basis at the schools when students retrieve items and return school materials on May 20-22.

VIRTUAL OLYMPICS! Welcome to the virtual UKnighted Olympics! We've created a menu of fun challenges to do with your family! Check it out at [#br_u_knighted](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Xhp3OXqNmkw-Xn31-TLKY4YSzf3k5Et36yafaF3_dkE/edit?usp=sharing)

Please note;

- Last day for PreK – 11th grade student attendance will be May 19, 2020.
- “Remote Learning Planning Days” have been moved to May 20-22 and will be used for teachers to close up their classrooms, do final grading, and prepare for summer break.
- The Retrieval Plan for PreK thru Gr. 11 is posted at <https://5il.co/fnyk>. These documents will provide information on how to pick up personal items and return school materials. Please call your child's school if you have questions or concerns. We are here to help!

DATES TO REMEMBER

5/17, BRHS Graduation, 2 p.m., BRHS Circle Drive

5/19 Last Day Student Attendance – Remote Learning

5/20-22 PreK – gr. 11 Retrieval of personal items/Return of Materials

5/22 Last Day for BR Faculty and Staff

6/17 Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m.

7/15 Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m.

7/25 Prom – Tentative Date

7/31 Online Registration Opens for returning students

8/6 Walk-in Registration (for PreK, Kdg., and students new to the district)

8/12 Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m.

8/19 First Day of Student Attendance

Pre-K Screenings: Pre-K screenings have been rescheduled for July 28-31. The developmental screening is for children who are 3 or 4 years old at the time of the screening. Please contact the Schneider Office to make a screening appointment at 309-928-2611.

REMEMBER - Update your contact information in Qmlativ: Before we break for summer, parents please make sure you have correct email and phone information in Qmlativ. If you cannot login to Qmlativ, call your child's school and speak with a secretary who can verify your email and phone info.

Parent and Student Feedback Surveys: These last few months have been a whirlwind of change in how we conduct school. We would like your feedback on remote learning and some of the related services. Thank you for your time!

- Parents/Caregivers - please fill out the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C3DZBMD>.
- Students, please fill out the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CFFXWNR>. Parents/Caregivers are welcome to assist younger students with their survey.

Mental Health Resources: The Illinois Principals Association compiled a list of Mental Health Resources. These resources, along with the Call4Calm contact information, can be found at <https://5il.co/f643>



Partial list of Actions from the May 13 School Board Meeting

- Hired Kelly Cramer as Title I Parapro for Schneider School, Chad Acree for Asst. Girls Basketball Coach at BRIJHS, Carrie Painter as Summer School Special Education Teacher, and Amber Barker as 4th Grade Teacher.
- The fine arts department presented some of the amazing work they have done this year! Check it out at <https://5il.co/fxry>
- SRO Mack King explained the role of the School Resource Officer and the many supports and services provided over the year. Officer King took over for SRO Davis shortly after the school year started and he has worked to build relationships with students and assist with safety related events throughout the year.
- Approved 2020-21 Board meeting dates – posted at <https://5il.co/g4qz>
- Approved 2020-21 Chromebook Usage Agreement – posted at <https://5il.co/g4qy>
- Approved School-wide ESSA plans for Schneider School and BRIJHS, posted at <https://5il.co/g4r0> and <https://5il.co/g4r1>, respectively.
- Approved updates to Employee Handbook, posted at <https://5il.co/g5k3>
- The Board and Administrative Team honored retiring Superintendent Susan Wilson on her last official board meeting. Mrs. Wilson's last day as Supt. will be June 5. Dr.

Hillary Stanifer will take over as Superintendent on June 8. Following is a letter that Dale Schneman read to the group and a picture of the plaque given to Mrs. Wilson.

Board Meeting Statement

13-May-20

I would like to say on behalf of the Blue Ridge School Board...

Thank you, Susan Wilson for the last 20 years of Service you have given to the Blue Ridge School District! Susan successfully served her first 10 years as the Principal at Schneider Elementary. Because of her great leadership in that capacity the School Board at that time hired her to serve as our District Superintendent for which she has served the last 10 years of her tenure.

The Goals and accomplishments achieved as a District under Susan's Leadership are too numerous to list. With leadership comes...consequences...criticism...ridicule...frustrations...conflicts...and though these moments are part of the course Susan used these as a means to grow even stronger in her resolve to see the best possible outcome for Blue Ridge.

The ability to work with an array of personalities not only of those that have served on the School Board over the years...but transitions with Administration and District Personnel...was a testament of her commitment for the greater good – providing the best education for our Students.

Susan's gift to this District over the years has been her ability to watch over and plan for the financial stability and health of the District. We are a strong and healthy District because of wise directives given to School Boards over the years.

The sign of losing someone great is when the legacy of that person's work last far beyond the years of their last day of walking the halls of this institution...

Because of your hard and compassionate toils Susan...your successor will be able to build even greater achievements on the cornerstones that you have laid before them...

With the current COVID19 'social distancing' regulations it has made it very difficult for many of you to share your appreciation towards Susan for all she has done. Her leadership helped our District impact the lives of many of our children and maybe even yourself. Be sure to drop her a card in the mail expressing your appreciation for her service.

You will truly be missed...

Respectfully submitted...

Your current Band of Seven Board Members...



Dale Schneman

Board President

#br_u_knighted



From the Superintendent's Desk

Honoring Alice Jones for 10 years coordinating the SCRC Backpack Food Program: In the Summer of 2010 Alice Jones called me with a desire to create a supplemental feeding program for students at risk of hunger who lived in the Blue Ridge School District. We worked with the Salt Creek Resource Center to develop a program under their umbrella organization, and the Backpack Food Program (BFP) was born. The BFP is a voluntary program provided by the SCRC to our students. Families sign up for the program and can discontinue participation at any time. Participants receive supplemental food each week, intended to provide food over the weekend. Alice, with the steadfast support of her husband Stan, have coordinated the program, including a large group of volunteers who meet monthly to pack the bags of food. She is “retiring” from her post at the end of this school year. The SCRC honored Alice with a plaque for 10 years of faithful service. Many of the volunteers and school personnel who assisted with the BFP also sent Alice and Stan notes of appreciation. We at Blue Ridge want to also gratefully acknowledge all Alice and Stan have done for our students. Thank you both! We wish you all the best!

Kiwanis Honors Pam Davis, Key Club Sponsor: BRHS Teacher, Pam Davis, has served as the sponsor of Key Club throughout this past year. Key Club is a youth organization under the auspices of Kiwanis Club of Farmer City, with the goal of providing service to our local community. Key Club conducts blood drives and has numerous local service projects to benefit our communities. Pam and her husband will be moving out of state this summer, but we are truly grateful for her dedication to this important service club.

City of FC Plants Trees at BRHS: The City of Farmer City is doing some work along John Street. They had some trees to relocate from another part of the project and have offered to plant them in the green space along the HS parking lot. We think the project will give that area some much needed color. Thank you, City of Farmer City!

Portability granted for the BRHS QL/Stats

Transitional Math course! The Applied Math course at BRHS has recently received portability status. This means that any senior who enrolls in Applied Math, having already received three math credits, will, upon completing the course with a C or higher, be eligible to enter credit-bearing math courses at any community college in Illinois without taking a placement test. Congratulations to Marcus Minter for his work on this project and for teaching this new course, and to Dr. Stanifer for shepherding the school through the extensive process!



Financial Management for School District:

The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic shutdown has created many unknowns for governments and schools. A number of issues could create problems for us, such as fewer state dollars, reduced or late collections of property taxes, or declining enrollment. As a district we are taking steps to be prepared for possible issues: checking cash flows for the short and long term, talking to the county about property tax collection schedules, monitoring state funding and late payments, placing all of the HVAC in our buildings on low-occupancy mode, holding off on hiring some positions, and paring down summer construction type projects. So far things look okay for Blue Ridge, but we want to be cautious.

Following are issues to be aware of going forward:

- Any issues will not affect only FY20. It is likely we will see impact in FY21 and possibly beyond that time.
- Preparations for the 2020-21 school year will include plans for a variety of potential scenarios, including (1) school as usual, (2) continued remote learning, (2) some sort of hybrid plan. It is also possible that school may open as usual, but due to a resurgence in COVID-19, need to return to remote learning for a time. All of these contingencies are under consideration.
- Special education service delivery is especially affected by issues surrounding Remote Learning. We will continue to work carefully with TCSEA to ensure our students are receiving what is needed.
- In fall of 2020, all schools will receive the same ESSA designation as they received last year.
- It is not clear when we will receive the State Maintenance Grant funds that are partially paying for the VAV replacement at BRHS. That said, we have been told that we will receive the funds eventually.
- There is no clear information on funding for the PreK grant, but cuts to funding may be possible in the future. For now, we plan to continue with PreK programming per normal.
- CARES grant funding for school districts will be able to be used for extra expenses incurred beginning on March 13, 2020. We were given a preliminary allocation of \$115,000 which can be used for expenses related to internet jetpacks, other technology purchases, Chromebooks, and other COVID-19 related costs.

ISBE IDEA Annual Review: Each year ISBE reviews our special education services and determines if we meet requirements in specified categories. We received a perfect 4.0 on our review for the 2018-2019 school year. Congratulations and thank you to our special educators and support team from TriCounty Special Education Cooperative. Job Well Done! To see the report, go to <https://5il.co/flwv>

Energy Rebate: We received an energy rebate of \$28,021 for the BRHS Energy Efficiency Project. These funds have been deposited into the Capital Projects fund and will be available for future projects.

A Few Last Words...

Dear Blue Ridge Community:

It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve Blue Ridge these past 20 years. David and I gladly made this our home and raised our family here. Both of our daughters are proud Blue Ridge graduates and found that the district prepared them well for their future. God has faithfully carried me through the ups and downs of the job over the years, and that has remained true for this exceptionally challenging last year of my career.

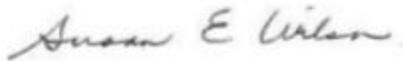
I have been blessed to work with many excellent, committed, and visionary school boards, and we have accomplished much together. I am most proud of the extensive facilities work we've done over the years; the Alternative Education Program at BRHS – which has reached kids that otherwise would not have graduated; extensive career and technical education offerings for our students, including reinstating access to programming at BACC and development of the CEO program; our exceptional instructional technology program; and the recent achievement of official accreditation through Cognia/AdvancED.

All of this has been a total team effort, starting with strong board support. The administrators for this district are tremendously hard-working and some of the finest people I know. They have continued to move their buildings forward in the face of overwhelming work-loads, high expectations, and heavy demands placed upon them. Our faculty and staff have gone above and beyond to create an environment where students and families are valued and supported. Blue Ridge has exceptionally strong family, community, and business support – which makes all the difference. It is clear that we care about our schools and children - and want the very best for them.

I leave the district in the most capable hands of Dr. Stanifer. We are blessed to have someone of her caliber to lead our schools. She has knowledge, ideas, and energy to take us on to greater heights. I can't wait to see what the future holds under her direction!

I wish all of you the very best - and stand ready to help and support your future endeavors. Thank you for the tremendous opportunity!

All my best,



Mrs. Susan E. Wilson

"Great things doeth He which we cannot comprehend." Job 37:5b

Schneider School News

Pre-K Screenings - Pre-K screenings have been rescheduled for July 28-31. The developmental screening is for children who are 3 or 4 years old at the time of the screening. Please contact the Schneider Office to make a screening appointment at 309-928-2611.

Virtual Spring Concert - Our 2nd and 3rd grade virtual spring music concert, The Seussical, was released this week. Thank you to all the students and parents that were able to share their lines with Mrs. Weiler. And, a huge thank you to Mrs. Weiler! This video is just one display of her creativity and passion for education. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t-hbfc8s7k&feature=youtu.be>

PBIS Data Committee - Our PBIS Data Committee, which meets monthly, held a video conference May 1. The team has worked throughout the year discussing potential improvements to our PBIS system at Schneider. We'll meet May 8 to share these ideas with the Schneider Faculty. Some of the improvements include Student of the Month, reintroducing a behavior grid for minor/major behaviors, weekly incentives, etc. We've prioritized these changes in an attempt to not overwhelm staff when they return in the fall and continue to improve consistency across the building.

Virtual IEP Day - May 6th was our last IEP day of the year. These days include multiple meetings including initial IEPs, Annual Reviews, Three Year Re-evaluations, Kindergarten Transition, etc. Thank you to all our special education staff (Michelle Wills, Julie Sproat, Kim Bode, April Griffen, Tracy Barding) for the great work they do developing and managing individualized education plans for our students and families.

BRIJHS News

- Staff has been working on updating the PBIS Matrix for students.
- Food/Supply pick-ups are going well. Along with the breakfast/lunches available, we have hygiene kits, school supplies, earbuds, hand sanitizer, and Kleenex available for families to pick up.
- Boosters provided staff with gift cards to Amazon for Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week.
- Special thanks to Sara Wrestler for coordinating student artwork being sent to Carle to honor doctors and nurses.

BRHS News

- Please see the “Senior Spotlight” on Facebook, produced by Lois Dowling and Nancy Hoffman
- Congratulations to the Class of 2020!
 - Graduation will begin in the Circle Drive on Sunday, May 17th followed by a Parade. If it rains, speeches and diplomas will be given at a “Social Distance” in the North Gym Foyer—but all else will be the same.
 - 2020 Valedictorian is Josephine Aldrich, and Salutatorian is Meah Carter!
- Congratulations to Katie Cole for being selected as an FFA WYXY All Star.
- Thank you to ALL who are helping with the “Remote Learning Process” during this difficult time.
- Thank you to Andrea Weedman and Dave Kramer for helping our staff to learn “Google Hangouts” and other applications to help with the Learning activities of our students.

Remote Learning:

- Each Teacher has a list of students that they have contacted at least once a week. The purpose of this contact is to answer questions, check progress, and offer necessary support to students.
- Teachers have been meeting via “Google Hangout” for Faculty and Department Meetings. These are almost as good as in person meetings.

The selection process for the up-coming Summer Bridge Program is taking place.

Leslie Whitehouse continues to build the Student Schedule for the up-coming School Year.

Attendance: There are 207 Students currently enrolled at Blue Ridge High School. This time Last Year there were 226 Students. The Average Daily Attendance from April 8, 2020 through May 6, 2020 was 207, which is 100.0%. This time Last Year the Average Daily Attendance was 201, which was 88.9%.

Behavior: From April 8, 2020 to May 7, 2020 the High School has had NO Out of School Suspensions; 25 for the 2019-2020 School Year. This time Last Year we had NO Out of School Suspensions. NO Disciplinary Infractions; 269 for the 2019-2020 School Year. This time Last Year there were 41 Disciplinary Infractions. 207 Students with No Disciplinary Infractions. That is 100% of the Student Body.

Extra-Curriculars:

Before the “Stay at Home Order” all of our Spring Sports were practicing and preparing for their competitions. The IHSA has Suspended the Spring Seasons and Cancelled the State Series for Spring Sports. A decision has not been made concerning Summer Camps and Contact Days.

Educational Technology

Video conferencing and Google Classroom are the new norm these days. Some popular platforms teachers are using include Google Hangouts, Google Classroom, Zearn, MobyMax, Mystery Science, IXL, Flipgrid, Screencastify, and Zoom (PreK-1). Google Jamboard was rolled out to the district last month to offer teachers a virtual whiteboard to help engage students.

Bark Notifications have increased during this time. They are often false positives, but we are very pleased with this system for monitoring student activity on their school accounts. These notifications are reviewed daily and parents are notified when an issue arises.

Throughout this unprecedented situation, teachers and aides have really embraced the technology it takes to maintain a sense of classroom communities while we are apart. They are creatively conducting classes and extra-curricular groups!

Curriculum

English/Language Arts (ELA)

- Fountas & Pinnell reading materials have arrived and unpacking has started
- K- 12 ELA meeting on 4/27/20
 - Teachers have committed to creating an ELA Task Force
 - Work will begin summer 2020 and continue approximately once monthly during the upcoming school year

MATH - The BRHS Applied Math course has received portability - With a grade of C or higher, any student already having their three math graduation credits prior to this course will be accepted into credit-bearing math at ANY community college in IL without taking a placement test.

SCIENCE- Amber Barker has created a 6th-8th grade scope and sequence for science utilizing a combination of three different curricula

News from O & M

The Operations and Maintenance Department has been helping out where needed: cleaning kitchens, cafeterias, door handles, railings anything that is touched on a regular basis. Here is a summary of current projects:

- Removing wax and restoring the terrazzo in the Jr High.



- Refinishing wood trim in the hallway of BRIJHS (Jr. High side)
- Painting the restrooms in the high school and halls at BRIJHS.
- Waxing Gym Floors throughout the district.

In other news:

- Daikin unit 3 in Mansfield had two compressors go bad. One compressor had just been replaced a month earlier by TMI.
- With building HVAC systems set to low-occupancy modes, we have seen savings on power bills. The electric bill for the Farmer City campus was \$4,500, far less than the average of \$22,000/month.



News from Transportation

In the notes for the March Board Report, we had noted that it would not be long before we would be taking trips for the end of this school year. That changed quickly and we are ending the year with a new and different set of routines.

The drivers are taking food and homework packets to students. We are delivering and picking up artwork. Sewing projects went to HS students. Some chrome books and

plug in cords have been in our deliveries. Contents of some HS lockers went to some HS students.

The busses are all “detailed” and thoroughly cleaned for the start of next year. Brad is doing oil changes and repairs on the larger vehicles. He is doing maintenance oil changes and repairs on the smaller vehicles now. The #20 white transit van was sold. The new vans we are purchasing this year should be here by July.

The offices, garage/shop, Quonset, bathroom and break room have gone through or are in the process of a “spring cleaning”.

Bodine Environmental Services took some soil borings around our fuel pumps this last month to test for contamination. Their report indicates that no excavation is needed. This information has been sent to the EPA for their review. If the EPA agrees, then we will not need to engage in further remediation activities.

Rockford Map Publishers has made new district maps for the Unit Office and the Transportation Department. The maps will be here soon.

Two busses are at the end of their leases and will be going back soon. The International wheelchair bus is going back within the next few weeks. International will replace it with a new wheelchair bus.

The Bluebird bus will be going back after July 1st. Bluebird will replace this bus with a 77-passenger bus.

We always look forward to seeing the new busses come in. And that all the vehicles are ready for a new school year!

