

Ripley Central School

Blue Eagle Express

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Welcome back!

Fall is here and we've made it to October! The students have done an excellent job of wearing their masks, washing their hands, and keeping social distance. A big thank you goes out to our cleaning staff. Their nightly hard work has kept our students safe and the school open. Thank you!

PTO Updates

The PTO held its first meeting on Monday, October 5 at this meeting it was decided that every RCS student would receive a RCS t-shirt as a gift from the PTO. Blue Shirt Friday should be extra competitive this year.

The PTO will be putting together goodie bags for all RCS students to help with classroom Halloween celebrations. The group focused on creating opportunities for students and teachers while following safety guidelines.

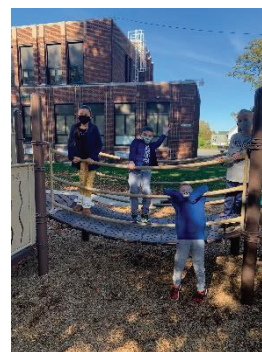
The next PTO meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 2 in the Meeder's banquet hall at 6:30pm. We look forward to seeing you there!



Inside

Page 2	Superintendent's Message
Page 3	Principal's Message
Page 4	Technology Updates
Page 5	PK Updates
Page 6	K - 1 Updates
Page 7	2 - 3 Updates
Page 8	4 - 5 Updates
Page 9	6 & Remote Updates
Page 10	Music & Second Step
Page 11	PE & Art
Page 12	Art <i>continued</i>

Superintendent's Message



Earlier today I walked past a window which overlooks our playground and I stopped for a few minutes to watch our children laughing and playing outside. Watching them play caused me to smile and also reminded me how quiet and empty school was at the end of last year due to the COVID-19 shutdown. When we shut down on March 16th, I truly thought it would be for a month (two weeks of instruction, plus an additional two weeks for Spring Break) and then after some heavy-duty cleaning, we would return and finish the school year. Obviously, I was incredibly wrong, and instead of four weeks it was 25 weeks, just shy of six months before we were able to see our students and their smiling faces back in our school. There were times I wasn't sure we would be able to open in September and while we had many tasks to complete in order to open, here we are. Over the last four weeks we have been reacquainting ourselves with our students (and vice versa), helping everyone settle back in to their routines, and most importantly listening to the sounds of children learning.

This school year has brought about many changes (masks, social distancing, lunch in the classroom, small class sizes, gallons of hand sanitizer, remote instruction, etc.), which weren't on anyone's minds last year at this time. I've heard many people refer to all of these changes as the "new normal", but I like to refer to them as the "NOW normal", since that allows me to hold out hope that many of the changes we have experienced return to the way they were a year ago. If not, we'll continue to make the best of it and help our students be successful.

As I've said many times, the weeks of remote learning were an incredible challenge for our students, their families, and our staff and while it wasn't perfect, we did our best and the success we experienced would not have been possible without everyone's help. Thank you to everyone for bridging the gap and supporting our students and staff during those tenuous times. Thank you for preparing our students to return with a smile on their lips and joy in their hearts, ready to tackle the "Now Normal", and ready to be successful. We have missed our students, look forward to a great year, and as always, **"It's A Great Day To Be An Eagle!"**

Principal's Message

The Boy Scout motto is *Always Be Prepared*, this was the mantra that we followed getting ready for the school year. A big thank you to the teachers, parents, and community members that helped create our reopening plan. We took some extra time at the beginning of September to prepare the staff and students for the new reality of school. This additional time allowed safety procedures to be taught and led to a smooth reopening. We will continue to run various scenarios and prepare staff to be ready to respond if things change. Looking at various school district's plans, I believe that we are doing an excellent job for our in-person and remote students.



There are two new faces on campus this fall. I would like to extend a warm Ripley welcome to Mrs. Brooklynn Smiley and Mrs. Julianna Sciolino. Mrs. Smiley will be joining our Special Education team, working with students K-2. Mrs. Sciolino will be replacing Michelle Helmer on the Admin Team. We are lucky to have both of them. I know our students will benefit from both of their talents!

My name is Brooklynn Smiley, and I'm proud to be a Ripley Eagle! This is my first year teaching and I couldn't be more excited! I am from Waterloo, NY, received a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science from the University at Buffalo, and my Master's Degree in Inclusive Childhood Education from Nazareth College. I spent the last three years as a substitute teacher at Waterloo Central School District. I have a true passion for working with our youth! I strive to create an inclusive environment that allows all students to succeed. When I'm not in the classroom you can find me on a hiking trail with my husband and two dogs, cheering on the Steelers, or watching a basketball game! I look forward to joining this community and working together towards your child's growth and development.



Julianna comes to us via Erie 2 BOCES with an expertise in technology systems, curriculum design and data integration. Her passion is helping students strengthen their own learning through empowering experiences and communication skills. She is blessed with a son and daughter that keep her in touch with the updated technology tools of their generation. When not in Ripley, she spends her time assisting Gowanda two days per week.



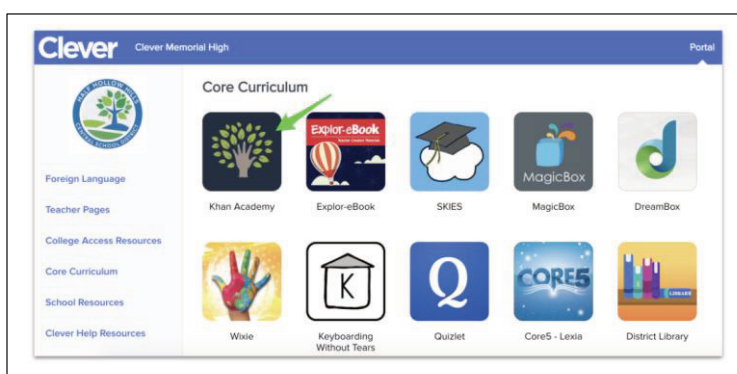
If you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to call or email. We are here to serve you. I think Bob Dylan said it best with his words, "*Times, they are a changing.*" A big thank you to parents, family and friends for your continued support. It's going to be a great year!

Technology Updates

Clever - Single Sign On

This year Ripley Tech Services (RTS) revamped the data integration process to enable our staff and students a faster and less complex process for logging into most applications. This process is known Single Sign On (SSO).

We will be connecting as many logins to our Google account as possible, thereby eliminating the multiple passwords and logins for staff and students. This results in more instructional time for our classrooms - and less time for RTS to reset accounts.



Device Updates

- All students received Chromebooks K-6. PK students will be using iPads.
- All teachers received new Dell Laptops to support remote learning and professional development portability.
- Touch Screen Boards were moved to mobile carts to enhance instructional space.

Infrastructure & Systems

Upon entry into the building, we have a new temperature scanning system as well as a COVID questionnaire to ensure the health and safety of our learning community. Benefits of this system are:

- Compliance with Department of Health/CDC parameters
- Contact tracing
- Staff, students, and families will be assured that all entrants have been temperature scanned and no one is entering the building with known COVID related symptoms.

Broadband Upgrade

Network broadband equipment was upgraded enabling updated and more secure data transfer for all of our instructional and supported BOCES systems.

Smart School Bond Act (SSBA) – Upgraded Security Systems

The recent SSBA project was approved this summer. We'll begin to upgrade our infrastructure, including camera and integrated safety systems, to further safeguard our spaces.

Classroom Updates

Pre-kindergarten 3-year-old Classroom

Mrs. Graham's PK3 Caterpillars have experienced fire drills, found our cubbies, learned to hang up our Book Buddy Bags each day, begun raising our hands when we need attention, and mastered a bunch of songs and chants-- and all while wearing masks and using healthy habits!

We still learn songs and poems and listen to stories, although our carpet spots are now six feet apart. We still play outside, but we do so in the courtyard and usually with masks on (unless we're blowing bubbles, of course!).

One great addition to our PK program is that we are now a "hybrid." That means we spend part of our day learning in the classroom and part of it extending our learning online through Seesaw. Mrs. Graham creates fun activities that introduce us to extra stories and songs, and couple them with math skills, drawing, or other learning. We work on our tablets at home, and often we get to share them on the big screen in class with our friends. We are so proud of all that we've accomplished each day!

So if you find yourself asking, "What could preschoolers possibly do in a COVID-19 world?" just ask one of Mrs. Graham's students. They have lots to tell you!



Pre-kindergarten 4-year-old Classroom

PK 4 is off to a great start! It feels so good to be back in school and see everyone's smiling faces. We have been working on routines and getting used to our schedule. Students have begun working on their names and have enjoyed the last moments of summer. We are just starting to explore fall items such as corn, apples and pumpkins. Students have been picking apart corn cobs and observing corn stalks. They are always excited to play with these different items and learn more about them. We are looking forward to a great year and how much our Pk4 rock-stars are going to grow.



Kindergarten Update

The Kindergarten scholars have been working very hard to get back into their school routine! Students have been excited to see their old friends and make new ones. They kicked off the year learning about toys and play during ELA. During this unit they considered proper behaviors for sharing toys, learned to sort, and describe toys by attributes. Their learning will culminate by conducting an interview of one of their peers about a preferred classroom toy. During Math students learned to work with numbers up to 10. Scholars have been reviewing their counting and putting a special focus on how to form the numbers. They have begun learning letter names and sounds, while also putting sounds together to read words. Scholars have demonstrated their grit during class and we can't wait to see their growth this year!



Grade 1 Update

First grade has been learning all about tools and how they make our lives easier. Students have also been learning about the RCS Habits of Character. We have focused mainly on initiative, collaboration, and perseverance.

During Skills, scholars have started reviewing letter names, sounds, and formation. This past week first graders started “chaining” words. During these activities, students are asked to change one sound in a word to make a new word. For example, we may write the word “cat” and change it to “hat” then “ham” and so on. This is a great activity to practice at home (make it fun by using sidewalk chalk, shaving cream, or making a salt tray).

In math we have practiced the count on strategy. This helps students add two numbers together by holding the larger number in our brains and then counting on to find the total. Students are doing a great job adding. I can't wait to watch them grow.



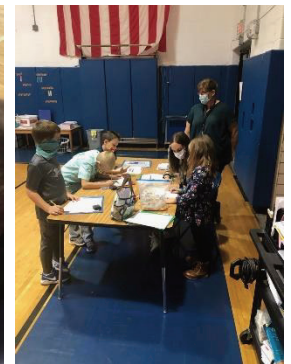
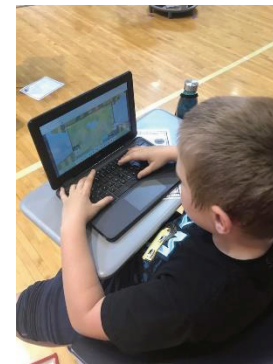
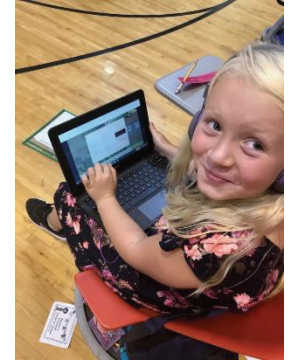
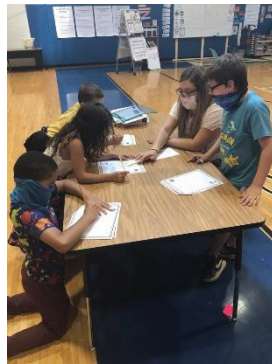


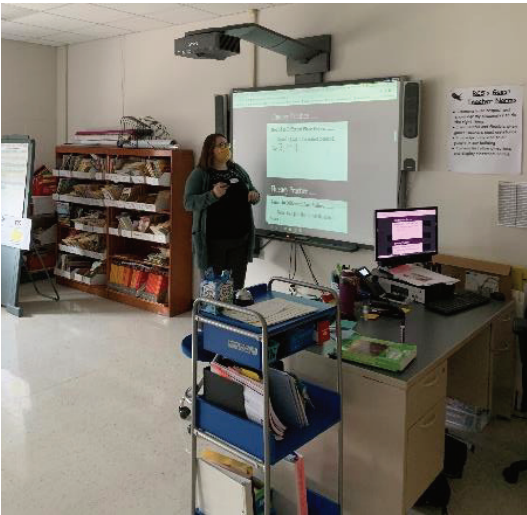
Grade 2 Update

Second grade is off to a great start in all aspects. Scholars have been hard at work reviewing topics in both reading and math and are excelling in this process. We have been reviewing open-and closed syllables and the correlations to long-and short vowel sounds. We also have been reviewing sneaky “e” and how he changes short vowel sounds and makes them long. In math, we are reviewing strategies for both addition and subtraction such as, “Take a Ten Out”. We have all adjusted to our new space in the gym with much ease, but I think it is safe to say our favorite time of the day is when we head outdoors for our daily mile!

Grade 3 Update

The third grade scholars have shown a tremendous amount of grit and responsibility throughout these first few weeks of school. They have been learning the ins and outs of the day while diving into new topics in both ELA and Math. During ELA, they have read both literature and informational texts to learn about the power of literacy and how people around the world overcome learning challenges. In the last week these scholars have considered how geography and where one lives in the world affect how one accesses books while studying countries like Kenya and the arctic region in Canada. In math, students are learning the properties of both multiplication and division while learning these tricky facts. They start every day in a whole group lesson, then move into small groups centers (as pictured). We are so thankful to be back and learning together again!



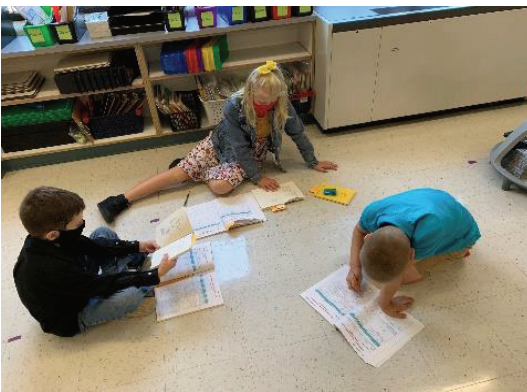


Grade 4 Update

Students have been learning all about poetry in ELA and are reading an awesome book titled, *Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech. By the end of the module they will have learned about several poets and will create their own poem and essay about what inspires them as writers. Addison Chess said, “I love to write summaries because I love to write.”

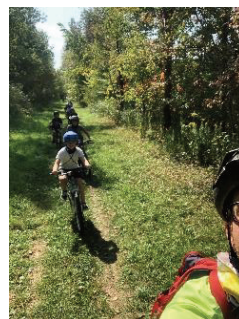
Students are working on place value in Math. The fourth graders were especially excited to use the Seesaw program to share their mathematical thinking. Brennan said his favorite part of math is the sprints. “I like being timed,” he said.

Finally, we would like to welcome student teacher, Miss Morgan Ring. Miss Ring is finishing up at Houghton College this year. She is Mrs. Blair’s student teacher, however, she is joining Miss Gollnitz’s math class so she has experience working with students in-person as well as remotely. Welcome Miss Ring! We are excited to have you here at RCS!



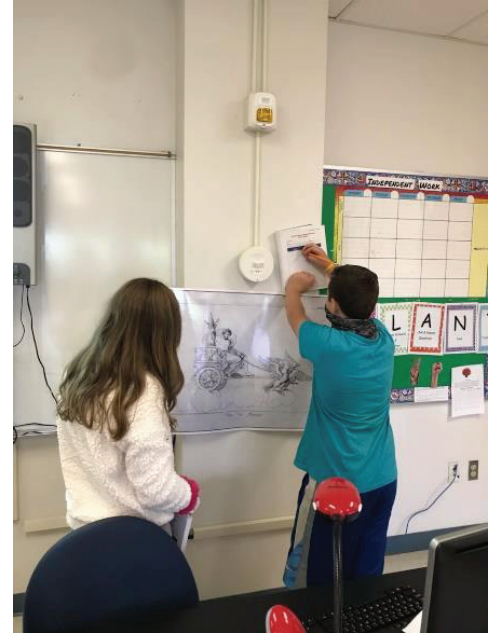
Grade 5 Update

On Friday, September 25, our 5th grade students embarked on their first class Adventure. They completed a seven mile trail ride on Chautauqua County Rails to Trails from Mayville Lakeside Park to Prospect Station Road. They learned about primary forms of travel at the turn of the century in Western New York. They even visited the site of the Christmas Eve train crash in 1872. At the memorial, they listened to a song denoting the events that caused the crash the resulting destruction. Apart from the somber moment around the memorial, the students used incredible grit to complete this journey in 80 degree temperatures. It was truly a challenging adventure.



Grade 6 Update

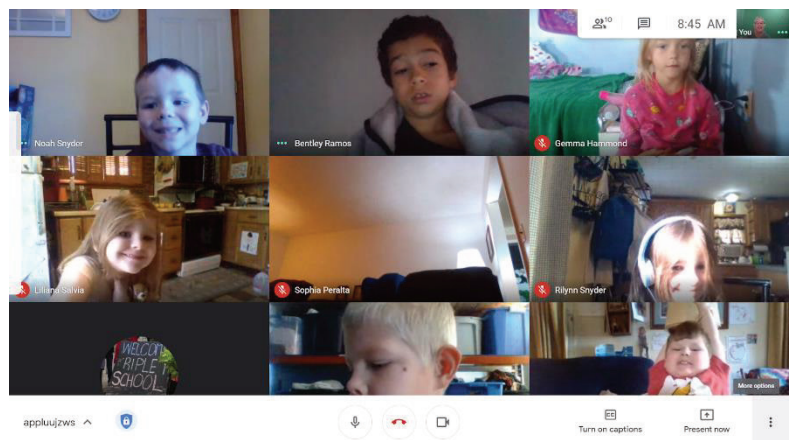
The 6th grade is showing their grit and demonstrating responsibility while learning about Greek mythology in our new EL ELA module. Students have researched why Greek mythology is still relevant. Scholars read an article about classic themes and story arcs that are still used to tell stories today. Sixth graders have also begun reading *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. Everyone is loving our new book while learning what it means to be ethical people. Even though things are different this year, students are adjusting well to wearing a mask and maintaining social distance while still collaborating with classmates.



Remote Instruction Update

Students in grades Kindergarten through 6th grade are learning from home with great success! Every day starts with a morning CREW and ends with a daily check-in. Teachers are available at the close of everyday to collect student work, answer questions, and get ready for the next day's adventure. Teachers are using Seesaw and Google Classroom to deliver instruction. Students are using many apps and learning tools to make and demonstrate their mastery of new skills. We have introduced students in grades 3 - 6 to Kami, a Google extension that allows documents to be altered in real time! All students have access to a Chromebook and a single sign on through Clever, which has been so helpful!

Starting off virtually was new for many of us, but the students have reported, "This is working great!" We are excited to continue remote instruction and refine our practice to make sure remote instruction is equitable.





Music Update

The start of music this year has been amazing. Our kindergarten through second grade students have been working incredibly hard, showing tremendous grit through all of the changes to the way we can practice and learn music. Kindergarten students have acquired a knowledge of identifying high and low sounds as well as practicing singing them! The first and second grade students have gained an understanding of new words to describe music, like presto for fast and largo for slow. They have also started a new jazz unit and have been practicing scatting (jazz freestyle sing speak). Our students' joy and determination makes me so excited for this year in music class.



Character Counts!

All students in kindergarten through grade 6 are participating in the Second Step Program this school year. The Second Step Program is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase student's school success and decrease problem behaviors by promoting social-emotional competence and self-regulation.

The program promotes development of student's self-regulation skills by practice through games and instruction. It educates students with proactive strategies that help prevent strong emotions from escalating into negative behaviors. It teaches skills for identifying emotions in themselves and others, and then requires students to practice problem solving.

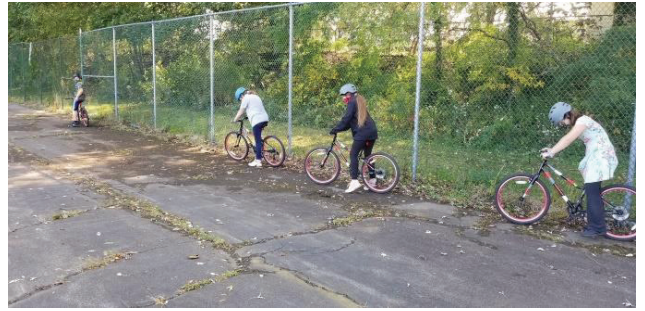
Equipping students with Second Step skills creates a safer, more respectful learning environment that promotes school success for all.

Physical Education Update

This year the Physical Education Classes have started a new unit on Bicycle Safety. Some rules they will learn about while practicing their skills are:

- Get the right fit to your bike
- Wear a helmet
- Signal your turns!
- Which clothes are safe while biking
- Rules of the road for bike riding

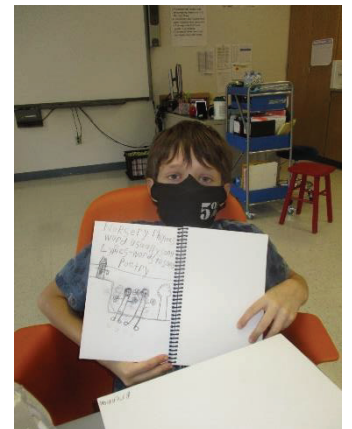
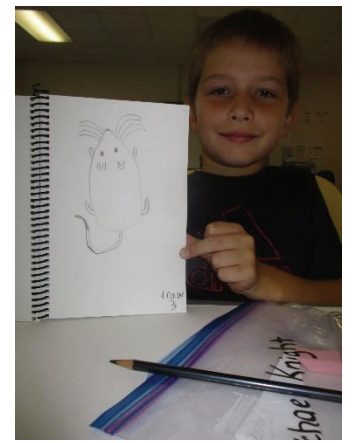
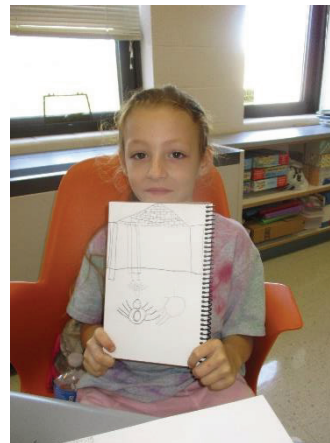
Stay safe out there and use your safety tips!



Poetry and ART!!

“What inspired poets/writers to write?”
“What inspires artists to create/make ART?”
Often, poets are inspired by art, and artists are inspired by poetry. Both are inspired by life experiences.

The learning target for 4th grade art class is “I can create a visual artwork that conveys an idea.” Students in 4th grade are reading and learning about poetry in their ELA class. In art class the students are creating beautiful illustrations of famous nursery rhymes. Students drew drafts of their ideas in their sketchbook and then decided what images they needed in the drawing to best show what their nursery rhyme was about. Students used crayons, colored pencils, or markers to add color to the drawings. The final product will be matted on colored construction paper. Students are enjoying learning about the power of art to convey ideas.



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Grade 3 Art Update

In art class with Mrs. Parker the students created two bookmarks to use when they are reading. They are also creating an art poster to motivate and inspire others to “Read Every Day.” The students are using their sketchbooks to develop ideas and practice drawing the images they want for the art poster. Third graders practiced “drawing” letters with the use of a ruler to make the words part of the artistic design for their art posters. The art posters will include a “catchy slogan” such as “I Love Reading” or “Read 15 minutes – Everyday.” The scholars will also include drawings of images that they think relate to reading, such as a drawing of a book or a person reading. Students will complete the art posters by adding color using “dry media” (crayons, colored pencils and/or markers). When completed, art posters will be on display in their classroom.

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