

# *Bluffton Exempted Village Schools*

## *2018-2019 Winter District Newsletter*

### ~ News from the Superintendent ~

The first semester of the school year went extremely well, and the second semester is running smoothly also. Hopefully, the worst part of the winter has passed us and we can anticipate spring weather around the corner that will allow for more outside recess in the elementary. It is hard to believe that our middle school and high school students will soon be scheduling their courses for fall 2019.

You may have seen in various news outlets the high honor that our elementary school received this past fall for its high academic achievement. The elementary school was given the National Blue Ribbon Award for 2018, which is, arguably, the highest honor a school building in the United States can ever achieve. With over 3500 schools in the state of Ohio, Bluffton Elementary was one of 16 schools in the state to be given this distinction. Nationally, only 349 schools were chosen from the 130,000 schools in the country. The National Blue Ribbon Award is a 5-year award, and a district is not eligible to apply again for the distinction until 2023. The high test scores over many years helped the elementary school to gain this honor. The elementary school was ranked in the top 1% of all elementary schools in the state. It is a great honor for our school district to have a National Blue Ribbon School and this is due to a fantastic staff, wonderful students, engaged parents, and an extremely supportive community. The combination of all these different entities allows for such an achievement to take place. In addition, our middle school and high school students continue to perform very well on the state assessments and place in the top 10% of all schools in the state.

Professional development for our staff each month continues to focus on the book, *The Growth Mindset Coach*, by Annie Brock and Heather Hundley. Our focus is to encourage students to grow their mind in all areas of education and to have the confidence, along with the grit, to believe they can learn at a high level.

As spring approaches, our students and staff continue to work very hard to prepare for the assessment season and to prepare our students for life-long learning. We want students to enjoy learning in an interactive environment that promotes both a positive mindset and growth.

Thank you for being supportive of our school district and supportive of the various extra and co-curricular activities as well. It's always great to see our community at dramas, musicals, concerts, and sporting events. It amazes me each year to see all the talented and well-rounded students in Bluffton Schools. I have said many times, we have such great parents, students, staff, and community members that it is an honor to be a part of this school system.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns about the district. Either stop in or call me at 419-358-5901.

Greg Denecker, Superintendent

#### **Senior Citizens Breakfast Schedule 2018-2019**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>February 13</b> | <b>Solo and Ensemble</b>                           |
| <b>March 6</b>     | <b>Concert Band (1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of Month)</b> |
| <b>April 10</b>    | <b>Musical Cast</b>                                |
| <b>May 8</b>       | <b>Jazz Band</b>                                   |

**Each month, breakfast begins at 8:30 A.M. in the middle school cafeteria.**

#### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

It's time to think about kindergarten for the 2019-2020 school year. Kindergarten screening is scheduled for April 8 & 9, 2019. Any child who is five years old by August 1, 2019, is eligible to enroll. In order to develop a kindergarten mailing list, please contact the elementary office at 419-358-7951. We will need the following information: child's name, birth date, parents' names, address, and phone number. You may send the information via email to [marquartt@blufftonschools.org](mailto:marquartt@blufftonschools.org). All children are required to have their immunizations before starting school. The Allen County Health Department provides immunizations, but appointments must be made at their website, which is [allencountypublichealth.org](http://allencountypublichealth.org). More information will be mailed home to future kindergarten students on our mailing list and in future student newsletters.

### Bluffton Elementary Review Tim Closson, Elementary Principal

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos recognized Bluffton Elementary School as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2018. The performance category is "Exemplary High Performing School." We are considered among the state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments. In November, Mr. Denecker, Mrs. Raeburn, and I represented the school at the National Blue Ribbon ceremony in Washington D.C. This is a great honor, and we congratulate all our team members: students, parents, community members, teachers, and staff.

The first half of the 2018-2019 school year has been filled with fun and educational events. Many enriching activities have taken place inside and outside our classrooms.

Kindergarten students had a productive start to school. They enjoyed their annual field trip to Suter's pumpkin patch and participated in the Apple Program, which introduced students to a variety of materials that children with disabilities use to learn and play. Students learned about the five senses during a SESA program (Science Enhancement for Science Advancement - a partnership between Allen County Schools and their industry partners.) The Bluffton Fire Department gave presentations to our K-1st graders for Fire Prevention Week. Keeping with the tradition of at least 25 years, students enjoyed a ride on the old fire truck. Kindergarteners also went to the OSU Lima campus to enjoy a musical titled Knufflebunny.

The first graders have been busy. The children learned about life in the past and took a field trip to the Swiss Historical Homestead. They studied different ways people around the world celebrate Christmas; a few special visitors shared their personal experiences. They have been studying plants and animals and are currently working on their own animal reports. Mostly, though, they have been working on becoming better readers and writers.

Second graders are having fun. They visited the Lion and Lamb Peace Center where they learned about getting along with others. They attended the Young People's Concert at the Lima Civic Center, visited the McElroy Science Center in Lima to learn about worms from Beth Theisen of the Johnny Appleseed Park District, and mass-produced over 1,800 crafts in four days in Santa's Workshop. They earned money and even had to pay taxes. The money earned was then used in the Santa Store to buy crafts for gifts.

Third grade students are eager to learn. They visited the Allen County Museum to study local history. They also enjoyed a visit to Maple Crest where they sang their Christmas concert songs to the residents and listened to "gifts" the residents had to offer to them. Classrooms participated in a SESA presentation titled "States of Matter." Students and teachers worked hard to prepare for the English/language arts state testing that was held in October. All students are required to pass the reading portion of the test, which is part of Ohio's **Third Grade Guarantee**.

The fourth graders enjoyed numerous educational activities. The students visited Maple Crest as part of their Lion and Lamb Peace Center series on "What It's Like to be Me." Louise Matthews shared a wonderful book with the students and residents about making memories. Next, she held up items such as bells, a cookie cutter, a wind-up teddy bear, and a teapot and asked the students and residents if they had any memories about each. Afterwards, the students had a chance to play their recorders and sing Christmas carols with the residents.

Fifth graders started off the school year with a trip to Bluffton University where they attended a Band Petting Zoo. Here they were able to experience different band instruments to help generate interest towards future music endeavors. During October and the celebration of Red Ribbon Week, students had an opportunity to dress up as heroes, sign the pledge board to support a drug-free life, and win prizes. The theme for the week was "Be All You Can Be Drug Free." They have just begun the 10-week D.A.R.E. program. Using the D.A.R.E. Decision-Making Model of saying "NO" to drugs and violence, Deputy Ted Falke holds a weekly class to educate the students about making healthy choices.

Parent Teacher Conferences were held in November, and 95% of our students were represented by at least one parent, which is an outstanding show of support.

We are grateful for the veterans who gave presentations to our students in honor of Veterans' Day.

The elementary library and the P.T.O. sponsored a book fair to help raise funds to purchase additional library and classroom books.

COSI-On-Wheels, funded by Allen County's SESA program, presented **It's Simply Chemistry** to our students in grades three through five.

Students displayed their musical talents during this past Christmas season with an instrumental concert (grades 4 & 5, strings, and band) and the elementary Christmas concert. Both were well attended and supported by family and friends. We are very proud of our students.

For the annual Christmas service project, the elementary staff and students collected \$2,840.84 for the Pennies-for-Patients coin drive to help the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Thank you for your generous donations and support for this special cause.

We are grateful for the many volunteers in the elementary school. On any given day, we have parents and community members helping our staff by tutoring or assisting in various activities or projects. We appreciate the tutors involved with the Pirate-2-Pirate reading program. Fifteen volunteers serve 20 children for this program.

We also receive invaluable support from our P.T.O., which helps to organize volunteers for events such as COSI-On-Wheels, special-event meals for teachers, and popcorn for the Christmas movies. They purchased T-shirts for every student at the beginning of the year and rewarded classrooms with donations of games and supplies.

Thank you for your continuous support. Please visit the school's website for updated information and monthly student newsletters at [www.blufftonschools.org](http://www.blufftonschools.org).

### Middle School Update Kyle Leatherman, Middle School Principal

Our students and teachers are again achieving great things this school year. I want to congratulate all students, staff, and parents on such a great first half of the school year. The students continue to come to school ready to learn and achieve through innovative and well-constructed lesson plans. The teaching staff continues to prepare our students to meet the goals and challenges that have been set before them. Parents have been a constant support for student growth and achievement as well. As we take a glance at the year thus far, our students and staff can be proud of their many accomplishments. It is amazing to see the talent and work ethic our students, teachers, and staff exert each day.

In October, our seventh-grade class experienced Outdoor School at Camp Berry for three days and two nights. Joining the Bluffton students were students from Findlay City Schools. The students were

engaged in many educational activities at camp that enhanced not only science, math, history, and language arts skills but also many other skills. This event required many volunteers including teachers, parents, and education students from the University of Findlay.

In December, the middle school hosted its 5th annual Teach-Like-A-Pirate day; it was a fantastic day. Our teachers created lessons and experiences appropriate for all middle level ages. The students were able to create their own schedule and attend any experience once throughout the day. Students were very excited to go from class to class to see what was waiting for them. The entire day was memorable for students, staff, and curious spectators.

Each month teachers select two students from each grade for Pirates-of-the-Month. These students demonstrate extra effort, respect for their peers, and various positive character traits. The Pirates-of-the-Month receive a t-shirt and Shannon Theatre movie tickets. At this time, recognition goes to the following students: Ava McCamery, Marek Donaldson, Alissa Beck, Ian Rieman, Alaina Grothouse, Riley Verb, Emma Green, Caleb Davis, Izzy Stechschulte, Gavin Bogart, Rylee Setzer, Daniel Creeger, Mackay Tuttle, Terron Boblitt, Ashley Fleece, Hayden Dearth, Jasi Crawfis, Ethan Oglesbee, Avery Talavinia, Quinn Eachus, Morgan Fruchey, Jacob Granger, Destinee Bandagski, and Steven Sprague.

The student senate has been very busy this school year. Along with providing concessions for the home volleyball and basketball games, the student senate organized a food drive during the holiday season to help the local food pantry. The food drive brought in over 1,700 items. Members also collected over 200 Toys for Tots and countless pounds of pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Student senate members also decorated a tree for the Ada Tree Festival. Their tree was auctioned with the proceeds benefitting local health services. In November, our active student senate sponsored a dance for our middle school students.

The local Lions Club recently held a Peace Poster contest and awarded three students for their work. Congratulations to Shylee Kaufman who took first place and will have her poster submitted for the state competition. Morgan Fruchey earned second place, and Aryonne Baxter earned third place.

The middle school band, strings, and choir gave excellent performances in October and December. The strings performers also traveled to Allen County Head Start, the Mennonite Memorial Home, and Allen County Museum to play Christmas music. They will perform again at the Music Boosters Chicken BBQ on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

In fall athletics, the middle school saw many successes. The boys cross country team finished the Allen County meet as champions; they finished runner-up at the Northwest Conference meet.

The winter sports teams are in full swing and in competitions. Individual wrestlers have had their share of first place awards. Recently, Thayne Kleman and Mason Davis won their respective weight classes at the Archbold Invitational. Soon our jr. high basketball teams will be competing in the NWC tournament. Congratulations to all student athletes who competed in the fall and are currently competing this winter for demonstrating sportsmanship throughout the season.

The spring season will offer exciting opportunities. In May, the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students will take a trip to the Ohio Caverns and learn about the many rock creations. The 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students will have an opportunity to visit the newly renovated Neil Armstrong Museum, and the 8<sup>th</sup> graders will have an opportunity to experience our nation's capital, Washington D.C.

Again, the middle school wishes to thank the parents and community for their continued support in helping our students exceed

educational goals and prepare for the future.

### News from Bluffton High School Mike Minnig, High School Principal

It hardly seems possible that we have reached the halfway mark of the 2018-2019 school year. I am constantly amazed by the talents and work ethic that our students, teachers, and staff possess. Throughout the year, our students have been excelling in a variety of ways including academics, music, athletics, and leadership skills.

To help our students continue to develop in these areas, a few new programs have been instituted this year. **Ohio Means Jobs of Allen County** has provided a job coach for a few hours each week to work with our students on a variety of topics to further prepare them for life after high school. A volunteer program, B.O.S.S -- Bluffton Outstanding Student Services – also will give our students a chance to be recognized for giving back to the community. All Choices Matter is a program used in certain classes to address career planning, character development, addiction, bullying, safe driving, health and fitness, and self-improvement. To help students with their plans after high school, the junior class will be asked to complete a job shadow experience for a career planning project. Finally, our sophomores and juniors will be able to participate in a college visitation program to explore some of the more popular institutions that traditionally have interested our students.

Our students continue to excel academically, and our Renaissance Program has continued to maintain high numbers. Through the students' talents and work ethic, 213 students made either the A/B or All-A honor roll during the first grading period. In the fall sports season, 110 of our student-athletes were awarded Northwest Conference Silver and Gold Scholar-Athlete certificates for maintaining a 3.0 or higher grade-point average while earning a varsity letter.

Our students also continue to shine in our musical arts programs. The band and choir students did an excellent job with their concerts as did the drama club with its production of Free Ice Cream. These students are currently preparing for future performances including the spring musical, The Wizard of Oz. These various music groups are also featured at senior citizen breakfasts held in the middle school cafetorium. These performances all start at 8:30 on the following dates: Feb 13 – solo and ensemble students, Mar 6 – concert band, Apr 10 – musical, and May 8 – jazz band.

Athletically, our students have perfected numerous characteristics to help them be successful now and in the future. Many of our teams and individuals achieved successes and accolades in the fall, as evidenced when both our boys and girls soccer teams earned Northwest Conference championships. Currently, our boys and girls basketball teams and the wrestling squad are working hard to excel during the winter season.

In November, a group of our student-athletes attended an NWC Sportsmanship Conference. These students met and worked with student-athletes from other schools in our conference to discuss ways to improve character and sportsmanship. Three of our students were selected to appear with other students from the conference in student-led commercials representing these ideals. These have been aired on TV 44.

Many of our students are involved in the Students Against Destructive Decisions club (SADD). These students have pledged to stay drug and alcohol free. One of their main events in the winter is hosting after-game parties during the basketball season for high school students. These have been well attended and continue to be a positive activity for our student body. For other ideas to mentor your son or daughter on these topics, parents are encouraged to sign-up with

Know! Parent Tips through the Start Talking Ohio program @ <http://starttalking.ohio.gov/Schools/Know>.

Parents and community members are able to help our students in two school drives. The Ball Metal Aluminum Can Challenge is a drive that can earn money for the school. Aluminum cans can be dropped off before school between 7:30-8:00 a.m. at the Jackson Street doors on March 14 and May 9. Also, a Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the high school on May 16. Each donation helps us qualify for a Young Minds Change Lives Scholarship from the Red Cross; the award will be given to one of our seniors.

In the approaching spring months, students will be asked for course requests for the upcoming school year. Parents are encouraged to talk with their sons/daughters on their course selections and contact the office with any questions. Students interested in taking College Credit Plus courses need to turn in the application for acceptance into the program by April 1.

The junior class will be taking the ACT test on February 20 to meet the college and career readiness requirement. This test will be given at Bluffton High School one time, free of charge. Students may take the ACT as many times as they wish, using their top score for their college entrance exam. To register for a test date other than February 20, go to [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org).

As the school year continues, please visit our website to find upcoming events and activities at our school and to access the Progressbook link to monitor your son's/daughter's grades. The support our students receive from parents, peers, and the community plays an important role in their development and success.

**Mardy Herr**  
Technology Coordinator

When it comes to using technology, do you have a fixed mindset or a growth mindset? In many conversations over the years regarding cell phones and computers, I have heard comments such as, "I don't get how to use those things." On the other hand, I also have observed people who simply grab the device and go. I've also heard "I don't want to break it." and "What can I make it do?" Of course, these mindsets go beyond just the use of technology devices, and they can touch every aspect of our lives.

The fixed mindset focuses on intelligence and talent, implying a person has a set ability that will not change, an "I don't get it" approach. The growth mindset believes that with time and experience, a person can learn because of the effort invested, an "I don't get it YET" approach. This school year our district hopes to raise awareness of these two mindsets and embark on a journey to embrace a growth mindset in the classroom and beyond. It is the journey that creates the challenges which are opportunities to put forth the effort to increase our learning.



**District Website**  
[www.blufftonschools.org](http://www.blufftonschools.org)

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#### Important Dates

|                                       |                                   |   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>February 18</b>                    | <b>Monday</b>                     | <b>No School – Presidents' Day</b>          |
| <b>March 22</b>                       | <b>Friday</b>                     | <b>End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grading Period</b> |
| <b>April 18,19<br/>&amp; April 22</b> | <b>Thurs/Fri<br/>&amp; Monday</b> | <b>No School-Spring Break</b>               |
| <b>May 25</b>                         | <b>Saturday</b>                   | <b>Commencement 7:00 P.M</b>                |
| <b>May 27</b>                         | <b>Monday</b>                     | <b>No School-Memorial Day.</b>              |
| <b>May 29</b>                         | <b>Wednesday</b>                  | <b>Last Day of School</b>                   |

**The make-up days, if cancellations exceed the state allotment, will be added after the last instructional day.**

Listed below are the phone numbers for each of the buildings in the Bluffton School District. Please write or call our offices with any questions and concerns you might have about the schools. We appreciate any input you might have in helping maintain a quality education for our students.

|                                     |                     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b><u>Administrative Office</u></b> | <b>419-358-5901</b> |
| <b><u>High School</u></b>           | <b>419-358-7941</b> |
| <b><u>Middle School</u></b>         | <b>419-358-7961</b> |
| <b><u>Elementary School</u></b>     | <b>419-358-7951</b> |