

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools

2016-2017 Winter District Newsletter

~ News from the Superintendent ~

The first semester has been fantastic; being well into the second semester now, we are in the process of planning and scheduling for next school year.

The mild winter last year, and the same so far for this year, has kept our school schedule running smoothly with few delays and one cancellation. Hopefully, the rest of the winter will be mild.

As spring approaches, our students and staff continue to work hard not only to prepare for the assessment season but also to address issues for life-long learning that students encounter beyond the halls of Bluffton High School.

You already may be aware of the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was issued by the federal government. Over the course of the past year, Ohio held meetings and focus groups met to comply with the new act and to make adjustments from the previous law under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In January 2017, the Ohio Department of Education published the draft plan overview for Ohio's response to ESSA titled "Driving Education Excellence: Securing the Future for All Ohio Students." Below are the highlights taken from this document for K-12 schools:

- Continuing to update Ohio's Learning Standards to ensure that they remain world-class and set our students on a path of success after high school.
- Implementing the Third Grade Reading Guarantee to make sure Ohio's younger students have the reading skills they need to succeed later in school.
- Revising the state's approach to testing students to be more efficient and require less testing time.
- Enacting the A-F School Report Card, which provides parents a better understanding of how their child's school and district is performing and where it can improve.
- Strengthening dropout prevention and recovery programs to help keep Ohio's students in school.
- Expanding student access to career and technical education, beginning in 7th grade, and giving more students a jumpstart on career education.
- Increasing student access to high-quality STEM education programs and project-based learning initiatives.

As new laws and standards are passed at both the national and state levels with varying degrees of changes to

assessments, we will continue to strive to keep our district's performance index on these assessments in the top 6% of all schools in the state. However, we also understand the things that we teach outside of assessments can many times be of even more importance to our students. With that being said, our staff's professional development focus has been to engage students utilizing technology along with many other active learning methods to bring learning to life and to keep students engaged in their learning.

Thank you for being supportive of our school district, and, as I have said many times, with such great parents, students, staff, and residents, 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 2016-2017

February 8	Solo and Ensemble
March 1	Concert Band (1st Wed. of Month)
April 19	Musical (3rd Wed. of Month)
May 10	Jazz Band

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

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

It's time to think about kindergarten for the 2017-2018 school year. Kindergarten screening is scheduled for April 3 & 4, 2017. Any child who is five years old by August 1, 2017, 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. All children are required to have their immunizations before starting school. The Allen County Health Department provides immunizations, but appointments must be made. Their website is allencountyhealthdepartment.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

The first half of the 2016-2017 school year has been filled with fun and educational events. Many enriching activities have taken place inside and outside our classrooms.

During October and the celebration of Red Ribbon week, students had an opportunity to sign the pledge board to support a drug-free life.

In November, the school district partnered with Blanchard Valley Health System and held a DaVinci Robot Day. Students and community members were able to view the new DaVinci robot that is used for robotic surgery in Bluffton. A contest was held to name the robot . . . and the winner is "Robo Pete".

Kindergarten students have 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 OSU Lima campus to enjoy a play titled "Ugly Duckling." The students went to the Apple Festival at Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District where they learned to make different things out of apples and tasted delicious foods made from apples.

The first grade has been busy. The children learned about life in the past and around the world with special visitors and field trips to the Swiss Historical Homestead and the Bluffton University Historical Library. 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.

The second graders are having fun. They visited the Lion and Lamb Center where they learned about getting along with others and had a Chinese culture lesson. The children also visited the Center a second time for a drumming session. They attended the Young People's Concert at the Lima Civic Center, visited the McElroy Science Center in Findlay to learn about worms from Beth Theisen of the Johnny Appleseed Park District, and mass-produced over 1,400 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 the crafts for gifts.

The third grade students are always eager to learn. They visited the Allen County Museum to study local history and enjoyed two SESA presentations (States of Matter and Forms of Energy). Students and teachers worked hard to prepare for the English/language arts state testing that was held in November. 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, along with Louise Matthews, visited Maple Crest as part of their Lion and Lamb Peace Center series on "What It's Like to be Me." John Murray, joined by several of his friends, spoke to them about growing up in Bluffton. Afterwards, the students had a chance to play their recorders and sing Christmas carols with the residents. The children had the opportunity to walk along the banks of the Great Miami River to Sunwatch Village, an extraordinary place hidden within

a seemingly ordinary setting. This is the original site of the 800-year-old American Indian village. This trip included an explanation of the astronomical alignments of the village, information about the process of building the houses, and a look at the harvesting techniques used by the Fort Ancient Indians. Students heard stories that helped bring the Fort Ancient culture to life.

The fifth graders were extremely busy. At Bluffton University, these students attended a Band Petting Zoo. Here they were able to experience all the different band instruments to help generate interest toward future music endeavors. Students recently began the popular DARE program, which lasts several weeks.

November was a busy month. Parent Teacher Conferences were held, and 98% 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 and offered annually, presented Astounding Astronomy to our students in grades three through five.

A flurry of activity was found in our building during the past Christmas season. Students displayed their musical talents 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 their annual Christmas service project, the elementary staff and students collected \$3,172.44 for the "Pennies for Patients" drive for 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 15 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. Also, the organization has purchased SmartBoards, Document cameras, and AR books for classrooms and raised funds through various sources such as Bakery Bingo, BoxTops for Education, and Pirate Spirit Wear sales.

Thank you for your continuous support. Please visit the school's website for updated information and monthly student newsletters at www.blufftonschools.org.

District Website
www.blufftonschools.org



Middle School Update

Kyle Leatherman, Middle School Principal

Our students and teachers are again realizing great achievements this school year. Doing this requires great effort. Pirates are daring, adventurous, and willing to set forth in uncharted territories with no guarantee of success. Our students and staff, along with constant parent and community support, embrace the Pirate code of being creative and embarking on new adventures in and out of the traditional classroom. This is what separates Bluffton Middle School from other middle schools. 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.

For three days and two nights in October, our seventh-grade class experienced outdoor school at Camp Berry. The students were engaged in many educational activities at camp that enhanced not only skills in science, math, history, and language arts, but also strengthened many other skills. This venture required many volunteers from teachers and parents to education students from the University of Findlay.

Bluffton Middle School teachers were recognized by the Ohio Middle Level Association for implementing middle-level best practices with their Night-at-the-Museum project. The interdisciplinary project, which included a culmination of social studies and language arts lessons, was honored during the annual OMLA conference in Cincinnati. Educators from around the state nominated our middle school for the award. Natalie Armstrong, Robin Ault, Janelle Bogart, Jackie Bourassa, Jared Byers, Sandy Karhoff, Cindy Lee, and Lauren Moser received marble apples and framed certificates for their efforts.

The middle school hosted its third annual Teach-Like-A-Pirate day. Students were presented with various challenges of varying skill levels in their attempts to win points for their teams. Challenges consisted of mental, physical, or critical-thinking skills. Students were anxious to go from station to station to attempt to conquer the challenges. The entire day was memorable for students, staff, and curious spectators. Special thanks go to the parent volunteers who helped at various stations.

Each month teachers select two students from each grade for Pirates-of-the-Month. These students put forth extra effort, show respect for their peers, and demonstrate positive character traits. The Pirates-of-the-Month receive a t-shirt and Shannon Theatre movie tickets. Recognition goes to the following students: Makayla Schweingruber, Kameron Coughlan, Avery Zuercher, Kenny Lovett, Olivia Spallinger, Daniel Siders, Riley Pearson, Emerson Meza, Caitlin Dailey, Ethan Beach, Krystal Kaufman, Elijah Conley, Amy Jebson, Isaiah Mikesell, Kylie Stackhouse, Luke Shadle, Allison Burghaze, Adam Fredritz, Hannah Davis, Dawson Schultz, Anna Knauss, Nate Schaadt, Adelaide Kinn, and Grant Klinger.

Student senate members have been busy this school year. Along with providing concessions for the home volleyball and basketball games, they organized a food drive during the holiday season to help the local food pantry. The effort brought in over 1,900 items. They also collected items for Toys for Tots and pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House.

Congratulations to Nicole Boyle who took first place in the school spelling bee and to runner-up Elizabeth Bourassa. The Allen County Spelling Bee will take place on February 18th at OSU-Lima.

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 17th.

On the athletic playing fields, our student-athletes continue to excel. The boys cross country team finished runner-up at the Northwest Conference meet this past fall. Our winter sports teams are in full swing with competitions. The wrestling team finished runner-up at the Elida Duals just a few weeks ago. Soon our winter teams will be competing in their respective NWC tournaments. Congratulations to all student athletes who competed in the fall and are currently competing this winter for demonstrating sportsmanship throughout the seasons.

As we move toward spring, students will be starting to work on their cross-curricular project for the third annual Night-at-the-Museum on May 1st. Last year this community event saw over 850 people walk through our "museum." Visitors learned about many famous people and explored the culture of many countries. Please feel free to join us on May 1st.

Again, the middle school wishes to thank the parents and community for the continued support in helping our students exceed educational goals and prepare for the future.

News from Bluffton High School

Mike Minnig, High School Principal

The first half of the 2016-2017 school year had our students and teachers focused on new technological methods to enhance education. Additional classroom sets of Chromebooks have been added, giving our students and teachers more opportunities to be creative in the learning process. These resources have helped our teachers focus on new ways to differentiate their instruction.

Over the past couple of years, the Class of 2018 and beyond have been working towards the new graduation requirements set forth by the Ohio Department of Education involving end-of-course exams. This year, the junior class will be taking the ACT test on March 21 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 and use their top score for their college entrance exam. The normal test fee for the ACT is \$42.50 with an additional \$16 for the writing portion.

Our students continue to excel academically, and our Renaissance Program has continued to maintain high numbers. Through the students' talents and work ethic, 202 students made either the A/B or All-A honor roll during the first grading period and 182 during the second. Additionally, the fall sports season had 69 of our student-athletes awarded with 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 Left in the Wicker Basket. These students are currently preparing for future performances including the spring musical The Addams Family. These various music groups are also featured at senior citizen breakfasts held in the middle school cafeterium. All performances start at 8:30 on the following dates: Feb 8 – solo and ensemble students, Mar 1 – concert band, Apr 19 – musical, and May 10 – jazz band.

Athletically, our students have learned numerous characteristics to help them be successful now and in the future. Many of our teams and individuals received accolades in the fall, and the boys and girls soccer teams earned Northwest Conference championships. Currently, our boys and girls basketball teams and 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 will be aired on TV 44.

During one of our fall assemblies, Scott Grant from the University of Findlay spoke to our students about making positive choices on the topic of personal branding. The focus of this topic was to get students to think about their use of social media and the positive and negative images they are advertising about themselves to friends, community members, colleges, and future employers.

Our SADD Club, Students Against Destructive Decisions, had students sign a pledge to stay drug and alcohol free during Red Ribbon Week, and it is hosting after-game parties during the basketball season. 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/TakeAction/ParentsGrandparentsCaregivers/ParentTipSignUp.aspx>.

Parents and community members are able to help our students in two drives. The Ball Metal Aluminum Can Challenge is an aluminum can 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 2, April 6, and May 11. Also, a Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the high school on May 9. 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 considering courses for the coming school year. Parents are encouraged to talk with their son/daughter on their course selections and contact the office with any questions. Students interested in taking College Credit Plus courses need to attend the CCP meeting in the B.H.S. library on February 23 with their parents. The application for acceptance into the CCP program has a deadline of April 1.

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 our community plays an important role in their development and success.

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools
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Technology Update Mardy Herr, Technology Coordinator

District technology infrastructure was updated in 2016. Each of our four network closets have new 48-port POE (power over ethernet) switches that provide internet access to our technology devices as well as power to our phones and wireless access points throughout the district. These switches provide connectivity to our district's 80+ IP phones, 250+ computers, and 1000+ chromebooks.

Thanks to the generous donation from our elementary PTO, all elementary classrooms now have the benefit of interactive whiteboards. These boards facilitate teaching and learning for our students in the classroom while engaging their various learning styles, including visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic modalities.

Important Dates

February 20	Monday	No School – Presidents' Day
March 24	Friday	End of 3 rd Grading Period
April 14	Friday	No School-Spring Break
May 26	Friday	Last Day of School
May 27	Saturday	Commencement 7:00 P.M

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.

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

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools **District Board of Education**

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Pirate Pride!