

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools

2026-2027 Summer District Newsletter

~ News from the Superintendent~

We are excited to get the 2026-2027 school year started and to welcome around 1150 students into our district on the first day of school.

Some great new staff members are joining the Pirate family. Andy Honse, our new band director, has been busy with marching band this month. Nicole Flory will be teaching engineering and robotics courses at the high school, and Amber Lydick is new to the high school cafeteria. At the middle school, Steven Ford will be teaching 7th-grade science. Adde Berdin will be new to the elementary library, and new teachers in the elementary are Sierra Lieurance in 3rd-grade and Steve Phillips with 5th-grade science. We welcome each new staff member and look forward to working with each one for many years to come.

We are excited to continue our Senior Citizen Breakfast performances, and these dates are listed on page three. Typically, breakfast starts at 8:30 AM with a performance starting a little after 9AM. Please spread the word and invite friends to this monthly event; it is great to watch our students on stage. Thank you to our kitchen staff for preparing these meals and to our sponsors -- Citizens National Bank, First National Bank, Sprunger Insurance, Ellerbrock Spine and Soft Tissue, Chiles-Laman Funeral Home, Lewis Family McDonald's, Blanchard Valley Hospital, Senior Citizen Center, and Mennonite Home Communities -- for donating the free breakfast each month. Our students and staff look forward to hosting these events for the school year.

The financial report on this page shows our general fund information for the 2026 fiscal year. We have been able to achieve financial stability due to the cost-saving measures that have been put in place over many years. Our district spends over \$4,000 less than state average per pupil, but achievement levels for the district are consistently in the top 10% of all districts in the state. This could not be achieved without the support from our parents, students, staff, and community; everyone plays an important role in helping each student succeed. We will continue to look for ways to be fiscally responsible to you, our community, while still providing our students with an excellent education.

On the second page of this newsletter, you will find the permanent improvement projects which were completed over the course of the past year. These funds allow our district to make repairs and improvements to our facilities for our students and community. While our buildings are not new, we believe the updates and upkeep on each of our facilities make for an excellent learning environment. We thank our community for the support of our school district and the ability to keep our district up to date.

Over the past several years, families and local financial advisors have asked about ways to support Bluffton Exempted Village Schools through charitable giving. To make this possible, Bluffton Schools has partnered with The Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation to create the Bluffton School Foundation,

supported by The Community Foundation. Community members can now give to two Bluffton-focused funds held at the Foundation. The Bluffton School Foundation Scholarship Fund supports graduating seniors pursuing higher education, and the Pirates Helping Pirates Fund assists Bluffton students and families facing unexpected hardship, such as medical emergencies or home loss. Once these funds reach endowment level, they will provide ongoing annual support. This is not a traditional fundraising campaign, but an opportunity for those who wish to give to do so in a meaningful and lasting way. For more information, contact Rachel Gerber at The Community Foundation at 419-425-1100.

As a reminder, when school begins next week and whether you are walking or driving, please be careful around all our school buildings.

We want all our students to have a positive experience in our district. Please reach out to your teacher, principal, or me if you ever have a concern about your child. We believe our staff is very caring and nurturing for all our students, and we all want what is best for each one of our children. We look forward to the privilege and opportunity to educate the students in our district.

Thank you for your continued support of Bluffton Exempted Village Schools and the students we serve. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to stop in or call me at 419-358-5901.

Greg Denecker – Superintendent

Financial Information for 2026-2027 General Fund

Beginning Cash Balance (July 1, 2025)	9,493,379
<u>Revenue:</u>	
<u>Local Sources:</u>	
Real Estate	5,671,462
Personal Tangible	5,158
Investment Earnings	252,879
Other Local Sources	527,831
<u>State Sources:</u>	
Foundation Program	6,898,159
Rollback & Homestead	570,779
Other State Sources	107,512
<u>Other Receipts:</u>	
Total Receipts Above	14,096,780
Plus Cash Balance	9,493,379
TOTAL REVENUES	23,590,159
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Salaries & Wages	8,219,409
Fringe Benefits	3,157,796
Purchased Service	1,738,326
Materials, Supplies, Texts	717,556
Capital Outlay	573,656
Other Expenditures	180,761
Transfers/Advances	91,100
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	14,678,604
ENDING CASH BALANCE (June 30, 2026)	8,911,555

Bluffton Schools Permanent Improvement Projects

Over the course of the past year, our district has completed many permanent improvement projects. In each summer's district newsletter, we outline the revenue that was brought in from this 1/2% permanent improvement income tax and the projects completed with these tax dollars. Below is the revenue chart of the combined monies brought in by the tax and the list of expenditures for the projects completed thanks to this fund.

Date	Revenue
Balance July, 2025	\$749,843.60
October, 2025	\$258,337.66
January, 2026	\$230,771.77
April, 2026	\$345,810.66
July, 2026	\$468,553.21
Projects 2025-2026 School Year	Expenditures
Plumbing Repairs and R/R Updates	\$5,378.69
Technology	\$165,138.20
HVAC Repairs and Updates	\$35,601.20
Outside Facilities Maintenance and Updates	\$19,189.42
Flooring	\$40,251.80
Playground/Practice Turf	\$984,500.00
Furniture	\$28,572.76
Windows	\$20,267.73
Equipment, Repairs, and Updates	\$72,908.71
Security/Safety	\$62,272.22
Electric and Lighting Updates	\$104,332.85
Paving/Concrete/Brick Repairs	\$25,530.00
Elementary Gym Repair/Update	\$54,371.30
Classroom Equipment and books	\$84,441.73
Roof/Roof Repairs	\$16,777.84
Total Expenses	\$1,719,534.45

Bluffton Schools will continue to use these funds to update our facilities as promised to the taxpayers of this community. As always, we at Bluffton Schools appreciate the community's support of our district's efforts to maintain and improve facilities. If you would like to see these improvements in person, please call me to set up a convenient time to view these updates firsthand. Greg Denecker, Superintendent

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools - Mission Statement

The mission of the Bluffton Exempted Village School District is to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which flexibility is encouraged in meeting the needs of every student, and to value all persons and learning in order to develop individuals who demonstrate problem-solving skills, personal responsibility, and a desire for lifelong learning.

Please watch closely at all intersections around our district and proceed with caution both as a driver and as a pedestrian.

New Additions to the Staff....

Adde Berdin – Elementary Library Aide

Adde Berdin joins Bluffton Elementary School as the new elementary librarian. She attended The University of Toledo before beginning a career in healthcare administration and executive support. A lifelong reader and believer in the power of stories, Adde also enjoys creating pottery, traveling, and leading a local Girl Scout troop. She and her husband Eric and daughter Hazel (7) love spending time together with friends and family, exploring cities, playing board games, and reading books. As Bluffton's new librarian, Adde hopes to build a library where curiosity is celebrated, kindness is cultivated, and children discover that books can help them better understand the world and themselves. She is excited to meet everyone in the library this year.

Nicole Flory – High School Teacher

Nicole Flory, joining the high school staff, will teach the engineering and robotics courses. She has previously taught MS/HS STEM at Allen East, 6th-grade science at Bluffton, and 8th-grade science at Bellefontaine. She is thrilled to be a Pirate once again. Nicole and her husband Justin stay busy with their 2 children - Theo (3.5) and Eloise (2). She spends her free time with her family and friends and enjoys playing board games, thrifting, and reading. Nicole is excited to be a part of the school and the Bluffton community.

Steven Ford – Middle School Teacher

With over fifteen years of dedicated service in education, Steven Ford has built a diverse teaching career spanning continents and grade levels. His professional journey includes teaching 6th- and 8th-grade science at Edgewood Middle School in Trenton, Ohio; instructing science, social studies, and technology at Kerang Christian College in Australia; and teaching 7th-grade science at Lima West Middle School. Throughout his time in the classroom, Steven has remained committed to creating engaging, hands-on learning experiences for his students. At the center of Steven's life is his family. He and his wife Kirstie live in Pandora with their three children: Adam (5), Liam (4), and Sylvie (2). Born in Australia,

Steven moved to Bluffton, Ohio, at the age of five. Steven graduated from Taylor University with a Bachelor of Science in Education. Outside the classroom, Steven enjoys time with family and friends. On Saturdays in the fall, he can be found eagerly watching Ohio State football. He also enjoys throwing a Frisbee as well as coaching and playing soccer.

Andy Honse – Band Teacher

Andy Honse joins the staff teaching band 5-12, music theory, and jazz combo. He has taught at Lima Perry and Leipsic and spent the last 23 years at McComb Local Schools. He is married to Kelly and has 3 children: Elizabeth, Anna, and Ethan. Andy enjoys movies, playing the saxophone and video games, and spending time with family and friends. He is looking forward to working with the students and the Bluffton community.

Sierra Lieurance – Elementary Teacher

Sierra Lieurance, joining Bluffton as a 3rd-grade teacher, is beginning her 11th year in education. Early in her career, she taught in a special education setting, working with students identified with emotional disturbances; this experience helped shape her passion for meeting the unique needs of every learner. She and her husband have two sons who also attend Bluffton schools. Outside the classroom, Sierra enjoys spending time camping, hiking, and gardening with her family. She is passionate about creating a positive, engaging classroom where every student feels valued and supported and is excited to learn. She looks forward to a wonderful school year and is eager to know the students and their families.

Amber Lydick – Cafeteria Worker

Amber Lydick, is joining the high school as a part-time cafeteria assistant. Amber graduated from Cory-Rawson High School in 2005. Now she, her husband Jarrad, and their four children (Jaiden 20, Zyven 18, Emekkabo 17, and Aalayah 10) reside in Rawson. Amber enjoys spending quality time with her family, taking walks, and relaxing on her back porch with a cup of coffee in the morning while enjoying the company of her two dogs. She attends Cedar Creek Church, is very excited for the new school year, and is eager to meet all the students during lunch.

Steven Phillips – Elementary Teacher

Steve Phillips joins the Bluffton Elementary staff as a 5th-grade science teacher, bringing 26 years of experience to the district. Steve and his wife Carrie, director of the

library at Bluffton University, are Bluffton University graduates and have been in the Bluffton community since 1996. Their two children, Claire and Simon, are lifelong Pirates. Steve is excited to join the 5th- grade team after some 23 years as a science educator in Shawnee.

Meet-the-Teacher

Meet-the-Teacher will be Wednesday, August 26. The elementary, middle school, and high school will be open from 5:00-6:00 P.M. This is an opportunity for parents and children to meet the teachers.

Athletic Alerts - Go to blufftonschools.org under parent alert system to sign up for athletic event reminders that will be sent to you for upcoming athletic events.

If you do not want your child's name or picture released to any media outlet or on our website, please tell your child's building office in writing by September 21, 2026.

**School Cancellations
or Delays/Parent Alert System**

During the school year there may be times, especially during inclement weather, that we may have to delay school or cancel classes for the day. Please go to www.blufftonschools.org and click top right menu, parents, and Bluffton alert system. Follow the simple steps to receive text messages and emails for delays, cancellations, announcements, or for cases of an emergency at school. In addition, you may listen to your local radio or television stations for announcements of delays or cancellations.

Bluffton School Open House

The Bluffton Schools will hold a district-wide open house on Monday evening, September 28th, from 5:00-6:00 P.M. Several community organizations will have booths set up in the elementary gymnasium, and information will be available on ways to provide support to the school and community.

All parents and community members are invited to this open house to meet staff members, observe facilities, and learn more about the educational opportunities available to Bluffton students.

2026-2027 School Calendar Bluffton Exempted Village Schools

August 31	Monday	School Opens
September 7	Monday	No School - Labor Day
October 30	Friday	End of 1st Grading Period
November 24/25	Tues./Wed.	No School-(Elem/MS)
November 25	Wednesday	No School – (HS)
November 26/27	Thurs./Fri.	No-School– Thanksgiving
December 18	Friday	Last Day of School for 2026
January 4	Monday	School Re-Opens 2027
January 15	Friday	End of 2nd Grading Period
January 18	Monday	No School-King Day
February 15	Monday	No School-Presidents' Day
March 25	Thursday	End of 3rd Grading Period
March 26 & 29	Fri/Mon.	No School-Spring Break
May 28	Friday	End of 4 th Grading Period
May 29	Saturday	Commencement

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Listed are the dates and times for parent-teacher conferences in the Bluffton Schools. This is an excellent time to meet with our teachers and discuss the educational progress of your child(ren). We hope you plan to attend.

Bluffton Elementary and Middle Schools

Monday, November 23	5:00 – 8:00 P.M.
Tuesday, November 24	9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. 5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Bluffton High School

Monday, November 23	5:00- 8:00 P.M.
Tuesday, November 24	5:00- 8:00 P.M.

Senior Citizen Breakfast 2026-2027

	Performance	Sponsor
September 9	Marching Band	Citizens National Bank
October 14	Show Choir	Senior Citizen Center
November 11	Drama Club	Chiles-Laman
December 9	Concert Choir	Sprunger Insurance
*January 20	Orchestra	Ellerbrock Spine/Soft Tissue
*(3 rd Wednesday of the month)		
February 10	Solo/Ensemble	Blanchard Valley Hospital
*March 17	Band	Mennonite Home Communities
*(3 rd Wednesday of the month)		
April 14	Drama Club	First National Bank
May 12	Jazz Band	Lewis Family McDonald'

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools
102 S. Jackson St.
Bluffton, Ohio 45817

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

Central Office

419-358-5901

High School

419-358-7941

Middle School

419-358-7961

Elementary School

419-358-7951

Visit Bluffton Schools Website:

www.blufftonschools.org

Bluffton Exempted Village School District Board of Education

Roni Kaufman, President
Alice Basinger, Vice President
Brad Dailey
Wesley Klingler
Jeremy Scoles

The Board of Education typically meets the third Monday of each month at 5:30

P.M. in the Elementary Media Center. If there is a change in the date, time, or meeting place, it is announced in the newspaper.

Annual Notification of Federal Funds

The Bluffton Exempted Village School receives federal funds in the areas of reading, math, library, and education of handicapped children. If you have any suggestions on how these funds should be used, please contact the district superintendent at 419-358-5901.