Bluffton Exempted Village Schools

2017-2018 Spring District Newsletter

**~Superintendent News~**

The school year is quickly coming to a close. We hope all our students had a positive experience in our district.

As you already know, our students perform extremely well on state assessments and consistently score near the top in the state in performance index. However, beyond test scores, it is the experiences and relationships that we build with our students, parents, and community that really make a huge impact on the education of our students. It is great to see each of our schools give our students these experiences, which they will remember for many years to come. Seeing the joy in the eyes of our students during these opportunities is very rewarding.

At the elementary, students of all grade levels experienced presentations and activities from SESA (Science Enhancement for Science Advancement), COSI, Lima’s Safety City, Bluffton University Lion and Lamb Peace Center, Mazza Center at The University of Findlay, Clymer Museum in Columbus Grove, Sauder Historical Village, and the D.A.R.E. program and concert. The annual Field Day for the elementary students was a huge success; it was a fun day on a beautiful spring day.

Our middle school students are exposed to unique learning experiences, too. These include the Camp Berry outdoor school, the Washington D.C. trip, and the “Night at the Museum.” This special night is a cross curricular activity for 6th and 7th graders who pick a country or famous person and then set up a visual display of that topic in the gym for everyone to see. Meanwhile in the cafetorium, 8th graders set up displays and dress up for a possible occupation they may want to have when they become adults. All of these events and activities bring learning to life with these real world experiences. Our middle school students are also very involved in strings, choir, band, and various athletic activities.

The high school students engage in opportunities that help to complement the learning in the classroom. Some of these activities are IVDL surgeries, various field trips (including art museums), an optional trip to Europe in the summer, the Air Force Museum, and nuclear reactor sites. Also, some students have painted murals throughout the district, and students in the Ocean Focus class travel to Florida each year in early June to study in the Florida Keys. Each year the OWE class continues to raise money through a silent auction for the Ronald McDonald House, and student senate members volunteer in various capacities both inside and outside the school. In addition, our high school students are actively involved in art shows, concerts, plays, and recitals for both our school district and the community. Our students participate in athletics as well and learn many skills which can benefit them throughout life.

We have had a great school year, and we wish our class of 2018 the very best as they leave the halls of Bluffton High School and enter a new stage of their lives. We hope we have prepared the graduates to achieve success in whatever career they choose.

We wish the best to Jane Steinmetz, who has been a teacher in our district for the last 17 years. We thank her for her service to our district and wish her the best in retirement.

As I have stated before, we have fantastic students, staff, and parents in a supportive community. This is an excellent school system and a great community in which to live and work.

Please call or stop in if you have any questions regarding the information in this letter.

Greg Denecker, Superintendent

***Congratulations to the Class of 2018!***

**The Bluffton High School Commencement**

**will be held on May 26, 2018, at 7:00 P.M.**

**www.blufftonschools.org**

2018-2019 School Calendar

Bluffton Exempted Village Schools

August 23 & 24 Thurs./Fri. Staff Pre-Service

August 27 Monday School Opens

August 27 & 28 Mon./Tues. Kindergarten Testing

August 29 Wednesday 1st Day of Kindergarten

September 3 Monday No School - Labor Day

September 24 Monday Open House

October 26 Friday End of 1st Grading Period

November 20 & 21 Tues./Wed. No School - (Elem/MS)

November 21 Wednesday No School - (HS)

November 22 & 23 Thurs./Fri. No-School - Thanksgiving

December 20 Thursday Last Day of School for 2018

January 3 Thursday School Re-opens 2019

January 18 Friday End of 2nd Grading Period

January 21 Monday No School - MLK Day

February 18 Monday No School - Presidents’ Day

March 22 Friday End of 3rd Grading Period

April 18,19 & 22 Thurs./Fri./Mon. No School - Spring Break

May 25 Saturday Commencement

May 27 Monday Memorial Day

May 29 Wednesday End of 4th Grading Period

May 30 Thursday Staff Post-Service

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**Elementary Update - Tim Closson, Principal**

This has been a very busy and exciting school year at Bluffton Elementary School. Students have experienced a variety of activities this second semester.

Kindergarten students have been captivated with education. They enjoyed the SESA (Science Enhancement for Science Advancement - Allen County industry partnership) presentation **Water and Weather**.  The children learned about the water cycle, evaporation, and condensation.  They were able to "hold" a cloud. The children visited Lima’s Safety City. Students also enjoyed the Lion and Lamb Peace Center at Bluffton University where they talked about getting along, sang songs, and played with many fun toys. They visited the Toledo Zoo this month.

The first graders have been diligent in their academics. The students had a fun time reading and writing poems during their poetry week.  At the end of the week, they recited a memorized poem during a “poetry café.”    First graders worked very hard to publish their own writing this year.  An author party took place in May to celebrate their success. The children went to Teddy Bear Park and took a nature walk where they explored and learned about local plants and animals in our environment.

The second graders experienced many hands-on opportunities. They enjoyed a **Water and Weather** program by SESA.  In cooperation with Bluffton University students and The Lion and Lamb Peace Arts Center, the students learned about different countries and their cultures.  They were involved in stories, music and movement, and art as they focused on developing friendships and doing activities together. The students traveled to the Clymer Museum in Columbus Grove. They experienced the Edible Landfill (Ohio EPA) program and toured the Mazza Center in Findlay.  Dr. Mark Yoder presented a “Real Eyes” program.

Third graders had fun going back in time. The students studied Bluffton history and took a walk to note the historical buildings and landmarks. The classes attended a **Little House** program presented by Judy Green, a Laura Ingalls Wilder expert, and visited the Sauder Historical Village to experience how life was in the mid-1800’s to the turn of the century in Northwest Ohio. They enjoyed a SESA presentation on energy called “Hot, Hot, Hot!”

The fourth graders learned about diversity. They visited the Lion and Lamb Peace Center several times and experienced many cultural opportunities.  They enjoyed a series of programs entitled “What It’s Like to Be Me.”  Andrea King discussed her experience of marching in Washington D.C. and listening to Martin Luther King Jr. speak. Jim Bemiller spoke about what it’s like to be born with sight and then become blind. A fourth-grade Brazilian student and her mom talked about living in Brazil. Students were eager to participate in a Peace Art Tour scavenger hunt at Bluffton University.

Bluffton fifth graders were definitely busy during the month of May.  The Bluffton students came together with area 5th- grade students in Allen County to attend a D.A.R.E. concert at the Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center in Lima.  Nashville Crush was the country music group invited to celebrate the students’ hard work in the D.A.R.E. program and reinforce their pledge to be drug free. The final D.A.R.E. activity of the year was a morning tour of the Allen County Juvenile Court Treatment & Detention Center, where the center's director explained the types of risky behaviors which could lead to a juvenile's involvement with the detention center. Emphasis was placed on the importance of making wise choices as the children move into their teenage years.  The afternoon was spent celebrating at Edgewood Skate Arena, where students enjoyed a D.A.R.E. graduation and a skating party.   Another end-of-year highlight was the annual 4th and 5th-grade talent show. It was a fun way to see fellow classmates share their musical talents. The 5th-grade teachers wish the class the best of luck as they move from the elementary building into the middle school this fall.

The 4th and 5th-grade strings, 4th-grade recorders, and 5th-grade band students were involved with the Music Booster chicken barbecue dinner to raise money for the music program.

The 5th-grade quiz bowl team, coached by Mrs. Christy Garmatter, had a successful season.

Our students took a tour of the Bluffton Public Library and learned about the summer reading program.

We are very appreciative of the many community partnerships and programs local businesses and organizations provide.

Our special academic emphasis, S.M.A.R.T. Week, was held the week of May 7th. The acronym letters stand for S-Social Studies, M-Math, A-Arts & Fitness, R- Reading, and T-Technology & Science. Students participated in special activities each day. Field Day activities were held at Harmon Field during that special week.

Ongoing, after-school programs, such as S.O.S. homework tutoring and Karl’s Club literacy tutoring, were well attended by our students. The S.O.S. program has been partially funded the past 10 years by The Ford B.Cauffiel Foundation from Toledo, Ohio. The elementary is fortunate to have the Karl’s Club program funded by the Karl Gierman estate. We are grateful that we receive assistance from staff and students from Bluffton University and Bluffton High School. These programs provide important services to our students.

During the summer months ahead, we encourage all parents and families to involve their children in challenging activities, to take advantage of the wonderful Bluffton Library reading programs, and to incorporate fun learning into family vacations.

Thank you for your generous and continual support of our elementary.

**Middle Schools News - Kyle Leatherman, Principal**

Middle school students and staff should be proud of their many accomplishments. It is amazing to see the talent and work ethic our students, teachers, and staff exert each day.

On May 10, our students participated in a cross-curriculum project and held **Night at the Museum**. Students researched a famous historical figure or country and presented their projects in the gymnasium and cafetorium to more than 1,100 people. The students and staff of our middle school have seen national recognition for this event. Teachers and school administrators from around the country have inquired about the many details of this project, and replications of this event seem to be in the planning stages in various schools around the country.

On May 4, our strings students traveled to Parkway High School for their spring contest. The jr. high string orchestra scored an **Excellent** rating. The sixth-grade string orchestra scored a **Superior** rating at the large adjudicated event.

The middle school choir students just completed their final concert of the school year. It is truly amazing how much their voices improve throughout the year.

Each month teachers select two students from each grade to be Pirates-of-the-Month. These students demonstrate extra effort, show respect for their peers, and exhibit great potential. At this time, recognition goes to Nathan Taylor, Jasmine Mayden,Levi Graham, Olivia Smallcombe, Hannah Fenzl, Trenton Donley, Carsen Weaver, Jasmine Hasting, Eli Wenger, Alyssa Speicher, Eli Okuley, Kylie Monday, Theo Andreas, Leah Klinger, Jaden Coonfare, Lauren Speicher, Jordyn Garmatter, Will Neff, Daniel Fredritz, Brooke Camper, Nolan Hoffman,

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Lori Lehman, Trent Howard, and Brooklyn Smallwood.

Outside the classroom and into athletics, Pirate student-athletes had an outstanding winter and spring season. The 8th-grade girls basketball team was the runner-up in the NWC basketball tournament. On the mat, Thayne Kleman, Kaden Basil, and Dustin Mortimer each claimed NWC wrestling championships in their respective weight classes. Elias Mault and Jackson Wilson finished as runners-up on the wrestling mat at the conference meet. Over 60 student-athletes participated on the jr. high track & field team. Our boys team finished runner-up at the Northwest Conference meet. Caleb Stechschulte placed first in the 1600M, 800M, and 400M runs. Ethan Bogart was runner-up in the 110M and 200M hurdles. In the 200M dash, Jude Spallinger and Kenny Lovett finished second and third, respectively. The Pirate 4x400M relay team of Justin Good, Dustin Mortimer, Cole Koenig, and Landon Armstrong placed second at the conference meet. The Lady Pirate track and field team finished fifth at the NWC meet. Kylie Stackhouse was the champion in the long jump, placed second in the 200M dash, and took third in the 400M run. Skyler Scoles placed third in the 100M dash, and Allison Diller finished third in the 1600M run. Congratulations to all our student-athletes for representing themselves and the school with first-class sportsmanship throughout the year.

As always, the support and encouragement our students receive from parents, peers, and community throughout the school year are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

**Bluffton High School Review - Mike Minnig, Principal**

As we enter the final few weeks of the school year, I urge parents to help keep their sons/daughters focused on finishing the year strong. Many of our students are involved in extra-curriculars and, at this time of the year, can see the days of summer ahead, testing their time management skills. Setting aside time to study, do homework, complete final projects, and prepare for final exams helps ensure a successful end to the year.

The summer can provide parents and students a time to reflect on their future planning. Whether it be college, military, or the workforce, students can use a few days of the summer to explore their options. College visitations, job shadowing, and researching opportunities are ways for students to gain their vision for the future.

With the implementation of College Credit Plus, incoming sophomores should begin preparing for and taking the ACT.

Throughout the year, many students participated in community service projects. From the Ironman Volleyball Tournament, the student senate raised funds that were donated to a local family in need. The student senate will continue with its annual clean-up and mulching of the school grounds in May. The OWE/CBI class held its annual silent auction and raised $1000 that was donated to the Ronald McDonald House in Toledo.

Along with community service projects, our students have continued to uphold a high level of academic achievement. This is evident as our Renaissance numbers continue to stay around 180 students each quarter. Twenty-eight juniors and seniors took post-secondary classes, mostly at Bluffton University, and dual enrollment classes through the University of Findlay and Rhodes State University. Over the past couple months, various groups and individuals have been honored for their excellence: the National Honor Society has inducted 23 new members; 97 students received academic letters; and 114 students were honored at the Academic Awards ceremony.

Our students have performed well in the arts also. Through the production of *Emma* and the qualification of numerous band and choir students for the District III Honors Concert, the success in the music department is quite evident. Additionally, many of our students received top marks for their performances at the solo and ensemble contest. Art students also were recognized with nine student art pieces being showcased in the Kewpee Show at Artspace in Lima and one in the Governor’s Youth Art Exhibition. Additional works were showcased at the governor’s show, the Bluffton Public Library, the Mennonite Memorial Home, and the office of Reichenbach & Steiner.

Athletically, our students have begun tournament action. Last sport season, the majority of our winter student-athlete varsity letter winners were named NWC Scholar Athletes for maintaining a grade point average of 3.0 or higher, and the same is expected for this season.

Earlier this month, the Athletic Boosters held another successful Reverse Raffle. The success our students have could not be accomplished without the amazing support of our community.

As the year draws to a close and graduation approaches, all members of the Class of 2018 should have received a mailing concerning their end-of-the-year schedules and commencement. Any questions pertaining to commencement (May 26 @ 7:00 p.m.) should be directed to the high school office.

The last day of school is scheduled for May 25. Exams will be given during the last week of school. It is important that students take these exams seriously as each exam is weighted half as much as a quarter grade. Report cards for the last grading period will be mailed home on Monday, June 4.

Students are reminded once again to finish the year strong. Thank you, parents, for your continued support of our school and your son/daughter.

**Music Department**

Over 250 students were part of the vocal music and drama departments. It was a productive year. The high school 41-member symphonic choir (juniors and seniors), 72-member concert choir (freshmen and sophomores), and 15-member chamber choir (by audition) participated in the fall, Christmas, chicken barbecue, spring, and TV44’s holiday concerts. Center Stage show choir and the chamber choir performed at community banquets, school concerts, and the Blaze of Lights. In April, students successfully performed the musical *Emma* (a pop musical). Students from both the high school and middle schools participated in solo and ensemble contests, and all earned **Superior** or **Excellent**ratings. In the spring of 2019, the choirs will be taking a trip to Nashville, TN. The choirs, from 6th-12th grade, were very fortunate to have had many extremely talented members.

The bands have had a spectacular year. The 52-member marching band had a very successful season performing at half time of all the football games, a couple parades, the Allen County Fair Band Show, and the Bath Band Spectacular. This past November the band took a trip to Indianapolis to watch the finals of the Marching Bands of America, and in the spring of 2020 they will be flying to Disney World. The 38-member concert band performed in the fall, at Christmas, the annual barbecue, and in the spring. The group continues to grow musically each year. The 26-member pep band again kept the crowd on their feet at all the home basketball games. The 17-member jazz ensemble performed at the barbecue, a couple run-out concerts in the community, and the end-of-the-year concert in May. The 33-member junior high band, the 26-member 6th-grade band, and the 54-member 5th-grade band performed in the fall, at Christmas, and the barbecue. Several high school and junior high students performed at solo and ensemble contest this year and all brought home **Superior** ratings. Oliver Romick and Hannah Yost represented Bluffton in the High School District III Honors Jazz Band. Hannah Davis, Dylan Hohenbrink and Jacob Szabo were accepted into the Junior High Honors Concert Band. By audition, Libby Frazier and Jacob Szabo were invited to be part of the Junior High Honors Jazz Band. The band department was well represented in the community. Combining it all,

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we again performed well over 50 times this year.

The music department enjoyed performing at the senior citizen breakfasts in the cafetorium the 2nd Wednesday of every month.

Fifty new 4th graders began playing a stringed instrument this year. Both 4th and 5th-grade orchestras continued to learn new notes and bowings and rhythms to incorporate into various songs.

The annual Christmas field trips for the junior high string orchestra students included performances at Allen County Head Start, Christmas Tree Festival at the Allen County Museum, and the Mennonite Memorial Home.  Strings 8, 7, 6 and a few 5th participated in a large group adjudicated event on May 4th.

The high school orchestra fiddled at the Swiss House, played pre-concert music at the Lima Symphony Musicians-in-the-Making program and at the Swiss Open House.  The students participated in the OMEA state orchestra adjudicated event and received a Superior rating. They also performed an “Around the World” tour at the elementary, Liberty Arts Magnet, Bath Elementary, Lost Creek Care Center, and Mennonite Memorial Home.

The junior high and high school students participated in solo and ensemble contests.

Throughout the year, all string groups performed in the fall concert, the Christmas concert, and the chicken barbecue.

The elementary music students are finishing another successful year. Students in the younger grades concentrated on recognizing note values and learning rhythms. The 2nd and 3rd graders were introduced to solfege, a musical set of syllables, to help them sing more accurately. The 4th and 5th graders added key signatures to their existing curriculum. Each level took a beginning and end-of-year test to measure growth in their rhythmic knowledge for both OTES (Ohio Teacher Evaluation System) and their personal observation.

**Athletics Year in Review - Alex Hanna, Athletic Director**

The high school and middle school offered seven sports in the fall season. Sports offered for female athletes in high school were cheerleading, cross country, volleyball, tennis, golf, and soccer. Sports offered for high school male athletes were soccer, cross country, golf, and football. Nearly 200 high school students participated in these sports. Both our boys and girls soccer teams won the Northwest Conference championship. For the second consecutive year, the boys soccer team won the district competition and advanced to the regional soccer tournament. Senior Aaron Belcher advanced to the state golf tournament and finished 20th in a field of 72 golfers. The middle school offered football, volleyball, cheerleading, and cross country with approximately 70 students participating.

Approximately 50 high school athletes participated in one of three winter sports. Male sports included basketball and wrestling. For the second straight year, junior DeAndre Nassar qualified for the state wrestling meet and finished fourth. Female sports included basketball and cheerleading. Junior basketball player Alivia Koenig scored her 1000th career point this past winter, joining Abbie Parkins and Julie Friesen in the 1000 point club. Caity Matter (Henniger) remains the only member of the 2000 point club with 2274 career points.

The early spring weather can sometimes cause problems for baseball, softball, tennis, and track. This spring has been no different. With cold, rainy, even snowy weather, we cancelled several baseball and softball games.

Tournament action for baseball, softball, track, and tennis has taken place this month. Our softball team hosted Spencerville and defeated the

Bearcats. Our baseball team traveled to Paulding for the first round of the sectional tournament. Boys tennis sectionals took place at the University

**Bluffton Exempted Village Schools Non-Profit**

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of Northwestern Ohio. Justin Haggard set his sights on the district tennis match in Bowling Green. The district track and field meet took place at Findlay High School.

The number of spring sport participants was nearly 100 at the high school level and 60 at the middle school.

Again next year, the Bluffton Athletic Department will be collecting and storing sports physicals online through PRIVIT . This replaces the paper physical packet, handbook, and acknowledgement-of-warning, which athletes and parents receive each year. This transition has improved access to medical records for the athletic department and the Bluffton athletic trainer and, hopefully, has saved time for families. Step-by-step instructions for PRIVIT can be found by going to the school’s home page

<https://sites.google.com/blufftonschools.org/bevs/home?authuser=0>, scrolling to the bottom, and clicking on the link labeled **SPORTS PHYSICALS**. Parents and athletes will need to complete this information prior to seeing the doctor for a physical. Anyone who does not have a computer, smartphone, or internet access is welcome to stop at the high school to use a computer. This online process will take approximately 20 minutes.

Finally, starting this summer, the coaches in the Bluffton Athletic Department will begin the OHSAA InsideOut Coaching Initiative. This approach, based on the teachings of Joe Ehrmann, is detailed in his book *InsideOut Coaching: How Sports Can Transform Lives.* Joe, an All-American at Syracuse, spent a decade in the NFL. He has partnered with the NFL and several state athletic associations to help coaches create an environment where athletes can grow into responsible adults.

***Technology Dept. Update - Mardy Herr, Technology Coordinator***

Technology is valuable, especially when it is related to learning. Thoughtful and appropriate use enhances our daily lives. However, it can also displace other important activities such as face-to-face interaction, family time, exercise, and sleep, to name a few. We want to encourage students to maintain a proper perspective of technology usage and remind them to control their device by making it work for them and within their values while not controlling them.

How can we assist students with personal device usage? CommonSenseMedia.org suggests that “**What you say makes more of an impact.** **Instead of flipping a switch, be the voice in their head**.” When we teach and model a healthy approach to the online world, we make a lasting impact on children. When we say things like, “Remember to think before you post”/“Don’t talk to strangers on the Internet”/and “Make good decisions today,” they’ll remember. Perhaps these comments can lead to further discussions or questions that facilitate important connections with our children.