

# *Bluffton Exempted Village Schools*

## *Winter District Newsletter*

### ~~ News from the Superintendent ~~

The first semester has come and gone, and our students and staff are settling in to the second semester. We are looking forward to seeing our students excel once again in academics and extracurricular activities during the second half of the school year. Our students and staff are working hard to maintain and exceed our excellent rating on the Ohio Department of Education report card. Specifically, our staff is working on the new academic content standards that have been passed and are being phased in over the next few years. We are confident that through professional development and hard work, our staff will be prepared to help our students meet these new challenges. We have been approved as a Race to the Top Grant School, which means we will receive \$25,000 per year over a four-year period in order to phase in new content standards, offer professional development, and incorporate technology into our teaching strategies. We must stay focused on the changes that are taking place so that we are ready to help our students stay successful in our district and prepare for productive lives beyond high school.

In the next few months we will know more from the new governor on his plan to fund schools over the next two years. What we currently know is that the state of Ohio will be looking to save around five to eight billion dollars depending on which estimate is used for the state budget projections. School funding is a large part of the state budget, and we have already lost over \$160,000 in funding to our district in the past two years. We receive about 57% of our budget from the state, 4% from the federal government, and 39% from local tax dollars. With the state budget in a major shortfall, we will probably see a significant reduction in our state revenue in the near future. We are trying our very best to stay off the ballot for new tax dollars, so with fiscal responsibility in mind, we have made reductions of staffing through retirements to help our financial outlook. We will continue to look for ways to save money when feasible and to have as minimal an impact on student learning as possible.

In other news, I would like to thank Susan Reiss, who retired at the end of October, for her 35 years of dedication to our district. We would also like to thank Emily Crawfis who retired at the end of December after over 21 years of service to our district in the high school

cafeteria. All of us at Bluffton Schools wish them a happy retirement.

Bluffton is a great place to live, to work, and to learn, and I would like to thank the students, staff, and community for making this such an exemplary school district.

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

Greg Denecker, Superintendent

#### Important Dates

February 21	Monday	No School-Presidents' Day
March 25	Friday	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grading Period
April 21, 22 & 25	Thurs/Mon	No School-Spring Break
May 28	Saturday	Commencement 7:00 P.M.
May 30	Monday	No School-Memorial Day
June 1	Wednesday	Last Day of School

The make-up days, if cancellations exceed the state allotment, will be February 21, April 21, and April 25, 2011.

#### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

It's time to think about kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year. Any child who will be five years old by August 1, 2011, 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, and parents' names, address, and phone number. You may send the information via email to [marquart@bf.noacsc.org](mailto:marquart@bf.noacsc.org).

Kindergarten screening is scheduled for May 25-27. All children are required to have their immunizations before starting school. The Allen County Health Department provides an immunization clinic at St. Mary's Church in Bluffton from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every other month. For 2011, it is February, April, June, August, October, and December. More information will be mailed home to future kindergarten students on our mailing list and in future student newsletters.

## Bluffton Elementary Update Tim Closson, Elementary Principal

The first half of the 2010-2011 school year has been filled with numerous fun and educational events. Many enriching activities have taken place inside and outside our classrooms.

September was a good start. A motivational reading assembly "Reading ... More Than Words!" entertained the elementary students. The first graders learned about local history when they visited the Bridenbaugh School and the Swiss Historical Homestead. They also attended Pioneer Days at Johnny Appleseed Park.

October was a busy month. Art Beat began its 26<sup>th</sup> year with 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Artists featured this year were Frans Hals, Francisco Goya, George Bellows, Auguste Renoir, and Grant Wood. We celebrated "Red Ribbon Week" to value a drug-free life. Kindergarten students enjoyed their annual field trip to Suter's pumpkin patch for cider and pumpkins. The first graders attended Operation Band-Aid at St. Rita's in Ottawa. The Bluffton Fire Department gave presentations to our K-1<sup>st</sup> graders for Fire Prevention Week. The third graders visited the Allen County Museum to learn about local history. The second graders enjoyed a Kool-Aid experiment demonstration by SESA (Science Enhancement for Science Advancement - a partnership between Allen County Schools and their industry partners). Fourth-grade students visited the Lamb and Lion Peace Arts Center to learn about accepting differences among people and visited the Imagination Station in Toledo, where they experienced many exciting hands-on activities.

November was full of activities. Parent-Teacher Conferences were held. We had 98% of our students represented by at least one parent. This was an outstanding show of parental support. We are thankful for several veterans who gave presentations to our students in honor of Veterans' Day. The elementary library and the P.T.O. sponsored a book fair which helped raise funds to purchase additional library and classroom books. The third grade visited Bluffton University for a picture book presentation by Floyd Dickman. We were entertained by Jim Steffen's "Fit To Achieve" assembly. He motivated students to exercise, eat healthy, and avoid drugs.

December offered an interesting variety of activities. Our students displayed their musical talents with an instrumental concert (grades 4 & 5) and the elementary Christmas program. Both were well attended and supported by family and friends. We are very proud of our students! The second graders worked hard at their Santa's workshop making Christmas gifts. COSI-on-Wheels, an annual event funded by Allen County's SESA, presented "Incredible Human Machine" to our students in grades 3-5. Students were

introduced to the nervous, digestive, muscular, and circulatory systems and made aware of how proper nutrition and exercise improve each one's function. This fun, educational assembly had hands-on activity sessions, and the students learned what it takes to keep their "engines" in tip-top shape. The fifth graders participated in the OEP (Ohio Energy Project) with the AEP. The goal was to educate students about energy costs, wastes, and ways to save energy and money. As their annual Christmas service project, the elementary staff and students collected "Pennies for Peace". This program helps to supply school materials, to provide teachers, and to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This was a great opportunity for our students to broaden their cultural horizons and learn about their capacities as philanthropists...one penny at a time! Thank you for your support!

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, copying papers, or assisting in various projects. We want to thank our volunteers who have helped during our COSI-On-Wheels program, the second graders' Santa's workshop, and many other activities. Another big thanks goes to the tutors involved with Project MORE. This commitment consists of helping students read four times a week. We have 17 volunteers serving 22 children for this program. We also receive invaluable support from our P.T.O. They help organize volunteers for events, provide a special event meal for teachers, provide popcorn for the Christmas movies, and raise money through various sources to support the elementary school. We really appreciate all our volunteers!

Finally, I would like to congratulate all teachers, staff, parents and students for achieving all positive marks on the District Report Card. It was the fifth consecutive year that all indicators of the Elementary Report Card were achieved. This is the third year we achieved the rating of *Excellent with Distinction*. Our staff, students, and community are very proud of this achievement. Thank you for your continuous support to make Bluffton a top-notch school district! Please visit the school's website for updated information and monthly student newsletters at [www.bluffton.noacsc.org/](http://www.bluffton.noacsc.org/).

## Middle School Review Dean Giesige

The middle school teaching staff and students had a great start to the school year and brought the first semester to a close by celebrating students' academic success with individual grade-level incentive programs, which reward students for their academic performance and good behavior throughout a grading period.

As the spring season approaches and the middle school moves into the second half of the school year, your child will receive information about scheduling classes

for next year. Parents and students should carefully review the information provided in order to build a good educational plan.

For the seventh consecutive year, Bluffton Middle School received the top rating of *Excellent* by the Ohio Department of Education on the local report card.

During the last two weeks of April, our students will be taking the state achievement test, which incorporates skills that have been taught throughout the school year. It is very important for the students to know that adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and hard work and dedication to their daily schoolwork will be very beneficial to them when it comes time to test. If you have any questions or concerns about the test, please contact Mrs. Karen Foltz or me.

Our newly-elected student senate has taken a very active role and done a great job organizing and planning after-school activities and fundraisers. They have sponsored a dance and a spaghetti dinner, collected canned food items for the local food pantry, and supported Toys for Tots. Currently, they are collecting can tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House.

Each month teachers choose two students from each grade level to be students-of-the-month. These students demonstrate potential, put forth extra effort, and respect their fellow classmates; they receive a Pirate t-shirt and two movie passes to the Shannon Theatre. Recognition goes to Isaac Andreas, Sarah Bertka, Eli Bourassa, Tyler McLaughlin, Patrick Rhonemous, Jayme Siefker, Sarah Theisen, Kristen Yost, Mia Edwards, Katelynn Frazier, Lacey Hill, Jack Marcum, Rachel Moser, Blake Sampson, Andrew Spallinger, Dylan Whitlow, Sidney Bonnell, Eric Prater, Jacob Scaf, Kiya Schlievert, Jordan Skilliter, Rebekah Stuard, Colin Thierjung, and Mackayla Wilson.

The middle school band, strings, and choir gave great performances during October and December. The strings also performed for the Allen County Head Start program, Allen County Museum, Lockhaven Nursing Home, Bluffton Mennonite Memorial Home, and a senior citizens breakfast. Their next concert is scheduled for March 25<sup>th</sup> during the Music Boosters BBQ.

Elizabeth Nisly won our school spelling bee, and Jason Bracy was the runner-up. Elizabeth will compete in the county spelling bee February 5<sup>th</sup> at Rhodes State College.

The students, faculty, and administration wish to thank our parents and community for their continued support in helping us strive to meet the educational and social needs of our middle school students.

**News from Bluffton High School**  
**Michael Minnig, High School Principal**

It hardly seems possible that we have reached the halfway mark of the 2010-2011 school year. I am constantly amazed by the talents and work ethic of our students,

teachers, and staff. Our students are continuing to perform at a high level in the classroom as over 200 students have been accepted into the Renaissance Program. This is apparent as our high school was once again recognized by the Ohio Department of Education as an *Excellent* school.

We will begin our student-scheduling process for next year around mid-February. Students will receive scheduling materials and have curriculum changes explained to them. Please review with your child what courses she/he plans to take and how these courses relate to the student's future.

Over 70% of our student body is involved in at least one extracurricular or co-curricular activity. This fall 93 of our student-athletes were named NWC Scholar-Athletes, an honor awarded to those student-athletes who maintain a 3.0 G.P.A. while earning a varsity letter.

Our students continue to excel in our musical arts programs. The band and choir students have done an excellent job with their concerts as has the Drama Club with its production of The Oz Monologues. These students are preparing for future performances, including a musical in the spring, and their monthly **senior citizen breakfast** performance. These performances all start at 8:30 in the middle school cafeterium on the following dates: Feb 9 – Ladies First Choir & Show Choir, Mar 9 – Concert Band, Apr 13 – Drama Club, and May 11 – Jazz Band.

Use our website, [www.bluffton.noacsc.org](http://www.bluffton.noacsc.org), to look up all the upcoming events and activities at our school or to log on to Progressbook to monitor your son's/daughter's grades. The support our students receive from their parents, peers, and our community plays an important role in their upbringing and is why our students have been so successful over the years.

The following are some highlights of the first part of the school year:

- Congratulations to David Yoder, Elvira Tatarokov, Samantha Harrod and David Hooley for being named students-of-the-month. Each student receives a savings bond from Citizen's National Bank or Chase Bank or First National Bank of Pandora.
- A Red Cross Blood Drive was held on September 17 where medical personnel were able to collect 34 units that could potentially save 102 lives.
- The economic class attended a financial day seminar, sponsored by Superior Federal Credit Union, at OSU-Lima on Monday, September 20.
- The PSAT, Preliminary SAT®/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, was given to many of our sophomores and juniors on October 13.
- Jared Staley earned the Honda-OSU Partnership Math Medal Award. Jared was honored at Honda of America Manufacturing in Marysville in November.

- A Financial Aid night was offered to parents on December 8. Lawrence Matthews, Director of Financial Aid at Bluffton University, was available to talk about the financial aid process and the FAFSA form.
- The junior class attended a College Career Day at Rhodes State College on December 10. Students picked three careers of interest. Type of work, job setting, education needed, and benefits earned were discussed regarding their choices.
- Students and staff did a great job with the Toys-for-Tots campaign in the high school office.
- The Latin Club and NHS raised funds and food items that were donated to the Ohio Food Pantry.
- Keshawn Hughes was named to the Allen County Youth Leadership Program, which provides opportunities to meet students from around the county and build leadership qualities.
- All 16 student senate members donated their time and effort for a community service day on Jan. 7. Organizations involved included Bluffton Public Library, Et Cetera Shop, Mission Possible, Maple Crest, Mennonite Memorial Home, St. Mary's Parish, and TLU Rescue.
- Three of our seniors were honored at the Lima Area Laws of Life Essay Banquet on Sunday, January 31.
- Over forty of our high school students are involved in the after-school tutoring program called SOS (Students for Other Students). These students work with 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to enhance their academic progress.
- The Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrator Association presented Jim Raabe with the Northwest District Administrator-of-the-Year award.

Thanks again for the continued support parents and community give to our high school students.

### Bluffton Exempted Village Schools District Board of Education

<b>Renee Smith</b>	<b>President</b>
<b>Brad Fruchey</b>	<b>Vice President</b>
<b>Ken Lugibihl</b>	<b>Board Member</b>
<b>Kay Miller</b>	<b>Board Member</b>
<b>Jeremy Scoles</b>	<b>Board Member</b>

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

Return Service Requested

## Postal Patron

### Technology News

#### Mardy Herr, Technology Coordinator

In seven elementary classrooms this winter, we updated technology with projectors and a mobile interactive whiteboard. The projector enables teachers to further utilize a classroom computer incorporating content-rich resources aiding their quest to engage students in the learning process. The addition of the mobile interactive whiteboard supports student-centered active learning and provides teachers flexibility to deliver engaging lessons from anywhere in the classroom. Currently all our 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms have these additional tools to aid in the instructional process.

TECH TIP: What security measures should I have on my personal computer? If your computer connects to the Internet, it is a very good idea to have basic protection installed and up-to-date. There are three areas of computer security beneficial to keeping your computer in working order. Windows Firewall and Windows Updates are the first two measures that are typically turned on by default. In general, the firewall hides your computer from the outside world while the updates patch your computer from vulnerabilities. The third measure is an antivirus package to protect your computer from unwanted virus and spyware attacks. Due to the nature of viruses and spyware, these programs are constantly changing and updating. There are many subscription-based antivirus products on the market, but AVG and Avast offer free versions that do a good job without the cost. Website links for these programs are <http://free.avg.com> and <http://www.avast.com>. Just download, install, and run the first update so your personal computer has the basic protection necessary to stop virus and spyware attacks.

## District Website

[www.bluffton.noacsc.org](http://www.bluffton.noacsc.org)