



Commitment to
Excellence

THE COMMUNICATOR

A Quarterly Publication of Blissfield Community Schools



Commitment to
Excellence

From the Superintendent



I find myself wondering how the 2014 calendar year passed by so quickly and how can it possibly be that we have passed the mid-point in this school year. As I ponder my dilemma, I realize that report cards and progress reports have gone out twice, homecoming has passed, our holiday music/band concerts have been performed, the football, soccer, cross-country and volleyball seasons ended over two months ago and the amount of daylight available to us is considerably less than when school started.

We are very proud of the extremely complementary report from the AdvancED external review team regarding the impact of teaching and learning taking place in the district; the impressive use of resources and support systems; and the upward direction student and teacher performance has exhibited over the past five years. However, the most impressive information shared in the report is the comparison of Blissfield School scores with the average scores of districts across the county – we not only hit a home run we hit the ball out of the park.

Other positives from the first half of the year include:

- The boys' soccer team had their best season in school history
- The Madrigal Dinner puppets put on a display that will long be remembered
- Our district was recognized for the significant number of donations provided to the Keep Lenawee Warm project

Elementary School

- Heritage Day was a tremendous success
- The 2nd and the 3rd grade Holiday Music Performances were so well done they were repeated at the December school board meeting
- Elementary teacher, Gary Koppelman, was recognized as one to the top 50 educators in the WORLD

Middle School

- PLTW program was granted 3D printers from BFEE this fall as well as novels for History classes that have enhanced their learning,
- Mix-It-Up Day at lunch was a huge success. Students were randomly assigned to tables to have discussion with students they may not normally sit with in an effort to create understanding among others and break down barriers.
- Accelerated Reader has caught fire at BMS helping to create a Culture of Reading!

High School

- Was named a REWARD school by Michigan Department of Education
- Had the highest Michigan Merit Exam Scores (MME) and ACT scores in the county
- The varsity debate team was county champion and the novice team was runner up

Although students may have a different view... my 'point of pride' is the fact that we have had a limited (to this point) amount of cancellations/delays due to inclement weather.

As this school year continues, the Board of Education will continue the process of finding the best individual to serve as the next superintendent of schools. As is normally the case, there are individuals who will applaud the choices the board makes and there will be those who will have reservations regarding their decisions. I implore you to afford the next superintendent the same courtesy and support you have given me.

Finally, I find myself appreciating the fact that I have been given the opportunity to be a part of the Blissfield community. The students, parents, staff and community members are truly caring and down-to-earth individuals. This community cares about people (young and old) and demonstrates their caring by giving of themselves to make this school system a wonderful place.

Educationally yours,

David P. Pray

Blissfield High School Graduates Loan Program

Blissfield High School Graduates have available a unique student loan program (Bachmayer & Flora Ellis Fund).

The criteria for the 0% A.P.R. loan are as follows:

1. Your child must graduate from Blissfield Community Schools.
2. Continued advances of \$2000 per college semester will continue as long as your child maintains a minimum grade point average of 2.0 or above.
3. 12 credit hours or more must be maintained to receive continued advances.
4. 0% A.P.R. up to 5 years from the time the loan was taken out.

*Other rules may apply and can be discussed with our friendly staff in the Blissfield Community Schools Administrative Offices (517) 486-2205.

Debate Team Wins Competition

Compiling an 18-5 record over the past two years, the Blissfield High School novice and varsity teams are making their voices heard, literally.

The 2014 debate resolution, "The United States federal government should substantially increase its non-military exploration and/or development of the earth's oceans" was thoroughly researched and the art of cross-examination debate was mastered. Students competed in a 2 day LISD county tournament back in December. Both the novice and varsity teams achieved records of 5 wins and 1 loss with each team advancing to the finals. The Blissfield Novice team, Caleb Schaffer and Isabel Cueto, fell to an outstanding LCS team. However, the Blissfield Varsity team, Josh Hall and Jordan Brenke, took home the 1st place trophy. Their voices can be heard on the LISD cable channel (channel 22 for those with Comcast) in a live videotaping of the event.

Congratulations to all involved that made this year the most successful debate season in Blissfield High School history.



Elsye Jones, Connor McClellan, Jordan Brenke, Josh Hall, Lucas Cassaubon, Isabel Cueto, Brooke Henning, Camryn Patton, Emily Chappuies, Taylor Cantrell. Not pictured: Gabe Villegas, Madison Spano, Caleb Schaffer.

Sports Physicals

As the calendar flips from 2014 to 2015, it is time to begin anticipating sports physicals. For those whose insurance covers annual well checks/physicals, we would like to remind everyone that in order for a sport physical to apply for the upcoming 2015-16 school year, it must be given after April 15, 2015. Therefore, if a student needs a physical to participate in a spring sport, they would need another physical before participating next school year. If at all possible, please delay your physical until after April 15. The Athletic Department will be offering sport physicals this year on May 1, 2015 at the Blissfield Middle School. The cost is \$15.

Website Update

By visiting our website, www.blissfieldschools.us, you can access many of your students' accounts including Meal Magic, Home Access Center and Lunch Deposit. You can also visit district, building, and teacher pages. Please check regularly for updates.

Kiwanis Supports BMS Students

The Kiwanis Club of Blissfield has faithfully supported 7th grade students for a number of years with paperback thesauruses to enhance their learning. With the onset of technology, the Club thought it might be best to support our students a bit differently this year. Pictured are Jane Kelly, Randy Kelly and Glenn Newlin on behalf of the Kiwanis Club presenting Rylee Garno, Student Council President with a check for \$300. The money will be used to purchase iPad apps that will directly enhance the 7th grade curriculum. BMS would like to thank the Kiwanis Club for their ongoing support of our students!



Scholarship Emails

Available again this year to the CCC and to parents and students of Blissfield High School is the electronic notification system for all scholarships. Information about scholarships will be scanned and e-mailed to parents, students, and then posted on the web page. To participate in this process please send us your e-mail address. E-mail addresses can be sent to jnofzinger@blissfieldschools.us

Personal Curriculum

In accordance with House Bills 4465 and 4466 Blissfield Community Schools will offer all of its students the opportunity to request a Personal Curriculum. A Personal Curriculum (PC), if approved by the PC Committee, allows a student to amend certain requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). For more information contact Mr. Mark Willson at 517 486-2148 X 309.

Emergency Closings and Delays

If the school must be closed or the opening delayed because of inclement weather or other conditions, the school will notify you via the Connect5 Alert System and also on the following radio and television stations:

WABJ - 1490 AM Radio
WQTE - 95.3 FM Radio
WLEN - 103.9 FM Radio

WTVG - 13 ABC Television
WTOL - 11 CBS Television

School Safety

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Blissfield Community Schools has always placed a high priority on keeping our schools safe and secure, but the threat of war, domestic and international terrorism, chemical warfare and random acts of violence have seriously heightened our resolve to be as vigilant and informed as the ever changing events of national security demand.

It is important that we keep you informed, and it is important for you to remember that emergency preparedness for the nation and for our schools continues to evolve as we all learn more and more about the issues of safety and security that our nation is facing.

What We Will Do

Should we have a major disaster during school hours, your child/children will be cared for at the local school. Each building has a detailed disaster plan which has been formulated to respond to any major catastrophe.

Transportation

In the event a disaster takes place during the time that students are being transported, students will be kept on the bus and the driver will ask for assistance through radio contact with the superintendent's office. If roads are impassable any child who is at home waiting for the bus will not be picked up and will remain the responsibility of the parent or guardian. In the afternoon, the driver will make every attempt to continue delivering students to their homes. Should road conditions prevent the driver from delivering students home or to their individual schools, all students will be delivered to the nearest school site. You may pick them up after Blissfield Community Schools or the local radio and television outlets have announced the "all-clear" signal.

Parent Support

Your cooperation is necessary in any emergency. Specific parental support needed is as follows:

- Do not telephone the school. Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication.
- In the event of a serious emergency, students will be kept at their schools until they are picked up by the responsible adult who has been identified as such on the Emergency Medical Form, which is required to be filled out by parents at the beginning of every school year. Please instruct your child/children to remain at school until you or an authorized designee arrives or he/she has been cleared by school officials for dismissal.
- Please be sure you consider the following criteria when you authorize another person to pick up your child at school:
 - He/she should be 18 years of age or older
 - He/she should be known to the child
 - He/she should be both aware and able to assume this responsibility
 - He/she has the required identification
- Tune in to local radio and television stations for emergency announcements. The decision to keep students at school will be based upon the nature of the emergency and whether or not streets in the area are open. If students are to be kept in

school, radio and television stations will be notified.

- Impress upon your child/children the need for them to follow the directions of any school personnel in times of an emergency. Your children also have a part to play in the safety and security of our schools. Please help us by making it clear to them that jokes and pranks about bombs, anthrax or any other acts of terror will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such pranks will be subject to our most severe disciplinary actions and may face criminal charges by law enforcement agencies.

Security Measures and Preparation

You should know that we meet regularly with village safety officials. We are regularly being updated on the latest health and national security measures that must be put in place and followed for the safety of our children and school staff. The following are general security procedures that are being updated constantly to meet the needs of schools in the present and changing climate of security and safety.

- All principals, administrators, and supervisors are provided with step-by-step procedures for reporting and handling all serious incidents (suspicious mail, bomb threats, hostage situations, etc.) that might occur in or within close proximity of their schools and/or buildings during regular school hours. Incidents will be reported via telephone to the local 911 and to the superintendent.
- Blissfield Community Schools' staff members are being informed regularly about crisis response to incidents.
- All Blissfield Community schools have an emergency response plan and will activate the plan in the event of an emergency. Each school also has a general safety and security plan and an evacuation plan that is tested by regular and random drills.
- Teachers and principals are being informed about how to handle and report suspicious visitors or unusual activities in and around schools.
- Information is being shared between superintendents and department heads throughout Lenawee County.
- School psychologists, counselors, social workers and the Lenawee County Youth/Community Crisis Team are available to work in all schools to provide crisis counseling, debriefing and other support services to students and staff.

Please discuss these matters with your immediate family. Planning ahead will help alleviate concern during emergencies. If you have specific questions about your child's school, please call the school principal. Please know that we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to make sure that all children are safe and secure in our schools. We appreciate your continued support.

David P. Pray
Superintendent

Reminder to all parents:

Applications for free and reduced price meals are available throughout the school year at any of our school offices or online at www.lunchapplication.com.

Kindergarten Updates

Our Kindergarten year is well underway – almost half over as a matter of fact! We are working very hard at becoming good readers and writers. We have spent some time with simple machines and learning about wants and needs. We are ready to move on to bigger and better things. We continue to be excited about hearing weekly stories and becoming masters at printing our letters and numbers. We will be preparing for our March Is Reading Month activities by attending a play at The Crosswell. The play, *The Cat in the Hat*, will take place at the end of February, just in time for us to start our March fun with reading. Our field trip has been made possible, in part, by the Michigan Youth Arts and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. We were approved for their Arts Trek grant to pay for our transportation. We wish to thank them for supporting this activity.



Blissfield 8th Grade Chosen for National Test

On February 24, our 8th grade students will be participating in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP is a tool used for The Nation's Report Card. The test results are used to compare our students to other districts, states, and countries. Our 8th grade was chosen at random to be tested in either English, math or science. The test is only one day and takes approximately 90 minutes. If you are the parent/guardian of one of our 8th graders, you should have received a letter with more explanation. In addition, you can check out these websites: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/parents/2012469.pdf> and <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/> or email Cyndi Pollet, Behavioral Specialist, at cpollet@blissfieldschools.us or call 517-486-4420, ext. 209.

Lenawee County Foundation Scholarship

Dawn Richards, from the Lenawee County Foundation and LISD, presented to the BHS Seniors on Monday, December 8th, 2014 to talk about the LCEF Scholarship Process. Instructions on how to apply for the LCEF Scholarships can be found in the CCC. Applications are due by 3 p.m. on February 20th, 2015.

The Word Doctors



Mrs. Mills' second grade class studied contractions this winter. This lesson came to life as students performed word surgery. Dressing the part with masks and gloves, students assisted each other during surgery. Cutting off the letters that were not needed, they bandaged them back together with Band Aids. "We had a lot of fun. They were excited to be able to take their gear and patients home to show their parents," said Mrs. Mills.

Drs. Trey Zeipekis and Daniel McKinney don their surgical masks and gloves for a bit of contraction surgery.

Therapy Dog Read-Aloud Program



Blissfield Community Schools substitute bus driver, John Abbott, is well-known locally for his skill in training dogs. His dog, Katie, has been trained to do a number of things. One of her skills is to lie still while students read to her. On the most recent teacher professional development day, Mr. Abbott introduced his dog and the services she can offer to the school. His program was well-received and over 50 students have already signed up to read to Katie.

During Mr. Abbott's weekly visits students select and read a book at their current reading level. While they read, Katie lies on a mat at their feet listening intently. When the students finish reading Mr. Abbott asks if they would like one of Katie's "Pawtographs." Katie obliges by raising her paw and stamping her paw print on a small piece of paper. Students are then presented with the "Pawprint" and a certificate welcoming them to Katie's Good Student Club. The popularity of the program will keep Mr. Abbott and Katie busy for several months. A number of students have asked, "When can I read to Katie again?"

Mr. Abbott has also presented a special program for Mrs. Seidl's kindergarten class and Mrs. Head's 1st grade class. During these special programs, Katie was introduced to the entire class and used her highly developed sense of smell to find items placed around the room. The students are excited to see Katie in the hallway on Wednesday mornings and love to have her visit them in their classrooms. Needless to say, Katie and Mr. Abbott have made many new friends.

Under the Sea Book Fair Coming to BES

March is Reading Month will be here before you know it. That means that the Scholastic Book Fair will soon be coming to our Blissfield Elementary Library/Media Center. Mark your calendars for March 9-13, 2015 from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. Monday through Thursday. Friday, March 13 will be the last day of our book fair from 8:00 A.M. until 12:00 (noon). This year's theme is Book Fair Under the Sea! On Tuesday evening, March 10, our Elementary staff will be hosting a Family Reading Night/Pancake Dinner, during this time the book fair will be open for shopping.

If you are out of town or cannot make it to our Book Fair, you can also help support our school by shopping online. Our shop online option will be open March 1-21 by visiting scholastic.com/schoolbookfairs. Click on Michigan; next click Blissfield; finally make sure you choose Blissfield Elementary School. All online orders will be shipped free to the school at the end of March. You can also browse an expanded book selection, including Stora eBooks for your tablet.

Everyone –parents, grandparents, and the general public-- is welcome to stop in and shop. All 100% of the profits from the Scholastic Elementary Book Fair are used to purchase new books for the Blissfield Elementary Library/Media Center. Thank you for all of your support!



Reaching New Heights



Physical Education strives to offer activities that will physically challenge the students. The pictured students are among those who met the physical and emotional challenge of climbing the rope to the top. These are the Blissfield Middle School first semester Royal Rafters.

Back -Clayton Montange, R. J. Keller, Adam Southward, Anthony Roddy
Middle - Sarah Weidmayer, Logan Pitts
Front- Emma Ball, Dakota Hoenig, Benny Williams

Spirit Store

The Blissfield Athletic Department has partnered with the on-line spirit wear shop MyLocker to provide fans with an on-line shopping opportunity for Blissfield Spirit Wear. Please go to the school website: www.blissfieldschools.us and click on high school in the top line. Then click on Athletics in the left column followed by Spirit Items. This will bring you to a list of places where you can find spirit items either locally or on-line.

The on-line store, MyLocker will donate 12% of all sales back to the Blissfield Athletic Department. Find the Royals Shop logo to order on-line products. This store allows you to personalize and customize items with colors, numbers, names, and sports utilizing our Blissfield logo. It is fun to make your own spirit clothing and accessories.



Graveyard Book Makes Vocabulary Come to Life

8th graders played a vocabulary matching game that they created in Mrs. Gray's Language Arts class. The game helped students practice the meanings of new vocabulary words found in their classroom novel "The Graveyard Book" by Neil Gaiman. Mrs. Gray was able to purchase 75 student books with a grant awarded to her by the BFEE last spring. The 8th graders were intrigued by Gaiman's ability to make a fantasy book seem so believable and enjoyed how he entwined foreshadowing throughout the novel that led to a bit of a surprise ending.



Adam Southward, Gaven LaGore, Caitlyn Gray, Jared Bangerter, and Merissa Stubli work together to review their vocabulary words.

Elementary Concerts

BES second and third grade classes shared the sounds of the season in their December 9th winter programs. Ms. Kim Kruger, the Elementary Music Teacher, led the students in their performances to standing room only crowds. Second grade students celebrated A Blissfield Christmas, highlighting all of the wonderful seasonal traditions we enjoy in our homes, at school, and in our community.

Third graders took a heartwarming (and often humorous) journey through The 12 Days of Christmas Vacation, celebrating everything from the "First Day of Winter" to that traditional dessert that just won't disappear ("Everlasting Fruitcake"). Both performances featured many wonderful vocal soloists and narrators, and each program was followed by a festive audience sing-along. Our young musicians have worked very hard to prepare programs that showcase their developing musical skills and expressive understandings.



3rd graders Alyssa Barnhart, Layla Smith, Kaydence Van Etten, Mikayla Marisa, and Alexia Handy perform their part in the winter program.

Blissfield Drama Department Presents "Spy School" by Don Zolidis

Do you remember the 60's? No, not those 60's. The early 1960's, the "Leave it to Beaver" and "Father Knows Best" era, and don't forget the space race and the cold war. The world of perfect families and niceties where children only got into mischief. It is in this world where our play takes place.

Meet Jane, a local teen who gets recruited by the CIA to infiltrate a local high school and find a Russian spy before they can kill one of America's astronauts. This comedy is a tongue-in-cheek look at the way things used to be.

"Spy School" performs live on the Middle School stage Thursday, March 19th and Friday, March 20th at 7pm, with a matinee on Saturday, March 21st at 3pm. Tickets will go on sale Monday, February 23rd. Prices are \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and senior citizens, children 5 yrs and under are free. Call Jolene Witt in the Middle School office at (517)-486-4420 ext 202 to reserve your seats.

Global Teacher Prize

Congratulations to 5th grade teacher, Mr. Gary Koppelman, on the announcement of being a finalist for the Global Teacher Prize. Out of the 50 finalists, only 16 of them teach in the United States. Mr. Koppelman's nomination comes after receiving the Shell National Science Teacher of the Year Award, and his induction into the National Teacher Hall of Fame. All of these honors and recognition are well deserved from Mr. Koppelman's hard work, vision, planning, and creation of the B.E.L.L. (Blissfield Environmental Life Lab). This wonderful lab has had, and will continue to have a tremendous impact on how students are taught, learn, and experience the world of science, as well as other subjects.

The Varkey GEMS Foundation launched the Global Teacher Prize to celebrate the best teachers around the world, those who inspire their students and the communities around them. The Global Teacher Award seeks to do for education what the Nobel Prize has done for science, literature, and peace. The focus is to uplift the valuable contributions that teachers make every day to establish a flourishing global society.

For more information on Mr. Koppelman's nomination and the other 50 finalists, please visit:

<http://www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/gary-koppelman>



Mr. Koppelman and his class take to the rainforest to celebrate his status as one of the top 50 teachers in the world.

Spanish Class Fiesta

Spanish II students hosted "La Fiesta Internacional" for students and staff. Students worked in pairs and prepared traditional foods from several Spanish speaking countries. Students were able to go around the room and sample foods. Some favorites were pinto gallo, dulce de leche, and flan.



Blissfield High School Blood Drive



The Blissfield High School National Honor Society hosted the Blood drive for students and staff on December 4, 2014. We recorded another successful drive with more than 82 presenting donors, 63 pints of blood collected. Thank you students and staff for your participation. This is a great way to serve our community. The next Blood Drive will be May 12.

The NHS would also like to thank Cakes 'N Shakes, McDonald's, and Borchardt's for their generous donations of cookies, drink mix, and water bottles for our canteen. In addition, many students and parents donated cookies, snacks, and supplies and we greatly appreciate your involvement. The blood drive would not be possible without this community support.

MEAP Testing Moved to Spring

The Michigan Department of Education has moved all of its fall summative assessments to the spring. The ACT and WorkKeys tests will be given to juniors the first week of March, while the other summative assessments (M-Step, formerly MEAP, & MI-Access) will be given to students in grades 3 – 11 beginning the second week in April and running through the first week in June depending on the grade level and test.

Music Man Comes to Blissfield

The Blissfield Community Schools Department of Fine Arts, in cooperation with the Blissfield Troupe of The International Society of Thespians, Proudly Presents...



Featuring the students of Blissfield Middle and High School.

Thursday, March 12th @ 7PM

Friday, March 13th @ 7PM, and

Saturday March 14th @ 3PM and 7PM

Admission:

Adults: \$8; Students and Senior Citizens: \$6; Children Five and Under: \$4

(Tickets for the Saturday Matinee are half price!)

Reserve your seats now by calling Mrs. Linn at (517)486-4420, ext. 326.

Acting at the Crowell

Ali Waigle, a 3rd grader in Mrs. Wilson's class, was excited when she found out she would be Sally in the play *Cat in the Hat*. When asked what inspired her to try out for the play, she replied, "My mom told me there was a play and they wanted a little kid that had gymnastic skills and was little like me. I felt like they made it just for me. I went wild and couldn't wait for Sunday when the auditions were." This play will be performed at the Crowell Opera House, February 20th through March 1st.



Hands on Math



Blake Wood and Jacob Becker work with Versa Tiles. All second grade students will have the opportunity to use the Versa Tiles to support and reinforce math skills taught in the classroom. Thank you BFEE!

Community Service

Students in Mrs. Kalmar's class completed a community service project in the month of November by walking to the Blissfield Coney Island and decorating the inside. While it was work, we all had fun. Students followed this trip up by writing about their community service day.



Blissfield Community Schools District Calendar of Upcoming Events

Feb 2	AAA Perfect Attendance Luncheon
Feb 6	Coming Home Basketball and Dance
Feb 7	HS District Solo & Ensemble
Feb 11	Student Count Day
Feb 13	Boys Basketball vs. Onsted
Feb 16	No School for Students Professional Development Day Board of Education Meeting
Feb 20	Grades 7-12 Pre Festival Band Concert
Feb 27	Progress Reports Distributed District Band and Orchestra Festival
Mar 9-13	ES Book Fair
Mar 10	ES Family Reading Night
Mar 13-14	High School Musical
Mar 16	Board of Education Meeting
Mar 16-18	Fifth Grade Camp
Mar 17	Kindergarten Round-Up Winter Athletic Awards Night
Mar 19-21	Middle School Play
Mar 21	State Solo and Ensemble
Mar 24	1st and 4th Grade Music Programs
Mar 25	8th Grade Science Fair Open House
Mar 26	5th Grade Wax Museum
Mar 27	3rd Quarter Marking Period Concludes
Apr 1	No School K-12 Parent/Teacher Conferences
Apr 2-10	Spring Recess
Apr 13	School Resumes
Apr 16-20	MS Book Fair
Apr 18	MS Solo & Ensemble Festival
Apr 20	Board of Education Meeting
Apr 25	Prom
Apr 27-30	3rd Grade Victorsville

Please visit our website for the latest updates to the calendar. Note that school cancellations may have caused an event to be rescheduled or cancelled.

Star Gazing



Our 5th graders have been looking to the stars! Part of the 5th grade science curriculum is the study of our solar system and space. Students had a hands on experience when they were able to go into the Blissfield Planetarium that was set up in the BELL. Students found constellations and watched the movement of the stars. Students learned how to find constellations in the night sky.

Blissfield Board of Education



Dave Brewer
President



Scott Abbott
Trustee



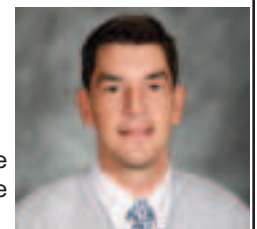
Vicki Lombard
Vice President



Bruce Carter
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Brian McEwan
Treasurer



Tyler Wyse
Trustee



Bob Beckey
Secretary

Please join us in thanking our school board members for their dedicated service to Blissfield Community Schools.

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