



APRIL 2026

Superintendent's Monthly Update

Blue Ridge CUSD #18 | Mr. Ryan Peyton, Superintendent

#BR_U_KNIGHTED

Welcome to our April 2026 Superintendent Monthly Newsletter packed with student achievements, school news, and important upcoming events.

District Highlights

Blue Ridge Connect

Held April 15 at the Bellflower Community Center. Our STEM Club led hands-on collaborative learning activities. We also introduced our new **YMCA partnership** to provide programming on six new early-out days (1:30 dismissal) for 2026–2027.

Master Scheduling

All buildings are actively engaged in master scheduling for the upcoming school year. At Schneider Elementary, a primary focus is aligning schedules with required core instructional minutes for the new ELA curriculum. Despite challenges with shared staff across buildings, all teams are making strong progress.

Math Curriculum Review

Our district math committee met this month to begin a formal K–12 math curriculum review. The committee will identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement across grade levels to best support student learning and achievement.

Strategic Plan Update

Our strategic plan is updated quarterly, allowing parents and community members to track district goals and actions taken. Each goal area is monitored for progress and accountability. Strategic plans updates can be found [here](#).



Ruth M. Schneider Elementary — Exemplary Knights

This month we celebrate outstanding students who demonstrate academic excellence, kindness, and leadership in our school community.

Kindergarten: Emmett Morrow

Emmett has shown outstanding academic and social-emotional growth. He has mastered all core kindergarten goals, become a reader, and is fluent in math concepts — all while sharing his creative thinking with peers!

1st Grade: Wyatt Pauling

Wyatt is a strong leader who is caring, dedicated, and committed to others. He includes classmates, helps those in need, and consistently produces quality work. His maturity and kindness are a blessing to our class.

2nd Grade: Ivy Koca

New to Schneider this year, Ivy is a quiet leader who encourages others, includes everyone, and is a good friend to all. She is extremely creative, intelligent, and a true "think outside the box" problem solver!

3rd Grade: Kyler Mitchem

Kyler sets a great example in our school community. He works hard, follows directions, is polite, and is a good role model. His great sense of humor keeps everyone entertained — and he is a wonderful friend!

Schneider Elementary — Staff, Hearts & Learning

🏆 Exemplary Knight Staff: Mrs. Maria Aldrich

Maria provides calm, steady support for every student she encounters. She helps students regulate emotions, greets everyone each morning with warmth, and shares helpful insights with teachers. She is welcoming, supportive, genuine, and leads by example every single day.

❤️ Kids Heart Challenge

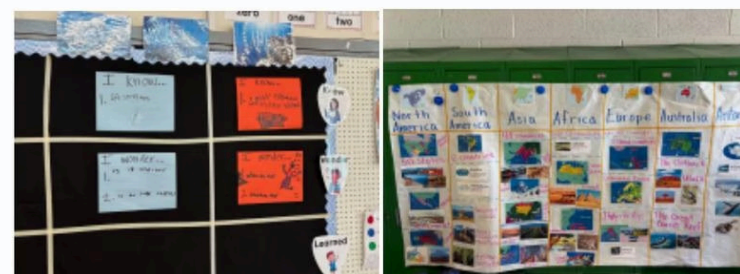
Through Mr. Ethan Hanson's partnership with the American Heart Association and the incredible generosity of our community, Schneider raised **\$15,288.22** for the American Heart Association. WOW!

📖 IAR Testing

Third graders completed the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) following spring break. Results arrive in the fall and will be reviewed against Common Core State Standards to celebrate successes and strengthen instruction.

📖 CKLA Curriculum

Students and teachers are diving deep into rigorous CKLA topics — even our earliest grades are learning about continents, presidents, and seasons. This knowledge builds year over year, creating a strong foundation for future learning.



- ✅ Our school was featured on the **Official Zones of Regulation Facebook Page** for the incredible SEL display created by Ms. Cheyenne Clayton. We are so proud of her work supporting our students' social-emotional growth!

Schneider Elementary – Planning for Next Year

01

Classroom Assignments

At the end of April, teachers and administrators will collaborate to develop class lists for next year. Parent feedback on each child as a learner has been gathered to determine the most beneficial placement. Class lists will be released in August, as changes may be needed based on enrollment shifts over the summer.

02

Car Rider Dismissal

All car riders will be dismissed from the gym and picked up in the circle drive. Students should enter their vehicle on the passenger side. A Schneider-issued sign with the child's last name is required for all family pick-ups – this ensures children are only released to approved adults.

03

Walk-Up Pick-Up Change

Walk-up pick-ups will shift to the **north side of Schneider**. Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria to meet their adult in the area between Schneider and BRHS after their name is announced. Walkers will then follow the sidewalk to the crosswalk to return to vehicles safely.

 Keeping students safe is our number one priority. Any adult without a school-issued sign will be asked to check in at the front office.

Blue Ridge Intermediate and Junior High School

April Exemplary Knights

1	<p>Staff: Melissa Whisman</p> <p>Melissa consistently goes above and beyond, serving as an emergency substitute, supporting all students, and co-sponsoring Student Council. She builds meaningful relationships and fosters a true sense of community.</p>
2	<p>4th Grade: Aaron Isaacs</p> <p>Aaron enters every day with his best foot forward, gives his best effort on all work, and is a kind, considerate friend who looks out for others and is passionate about the welfare of those around him.</p>
3	<p>5th Grade: Korbin Swigart</p> <p>Korbin follows expectations, sets a great example, helps classmates with academics, and offers assistance to adults — all with a consistently positive attitude. He exemplifies what respect should look like.</p>
4	<p>6th Grade: Oliver Poll</p> <p>Oliver is a hard-working, ever-positive presence who leads by quiet example with kindness. He completes work thoroughly, puts forth his best effort, and always finds the good in every situation.</p>
5	<p>7th Grade: Suzy Ellis</p> <p>Suzy has shown significant academic and social growth. She volunteers in class discussions, guides classmates through math problem-solving, and supports peers who are struggling emotionally. Her calm demeanor and maturity are remarkable.</p>
6	<p>8th Grade: Meah Tieman</p> <p>Meah demonstrates strong academic performance with impressive attention to detail and exceptional organizational skills. Beyond academics, her genuine heart, warm personality, and willingness to support others make our school a brighter, kinder place.</p>

BRIJHS – Assessments, Athletics & New Staff



ISA Testing & iReady Spring Benchmark

5th and 8th grade students completed the **Illinois Science Assessment (ISA)**, emphasizing application of scientific concepts. All students will begin the **iReady spring diagnostic** in reading and math on May 4th – measuring growth since the fall and progress toward individual goals. Achievements will be celebrated at our spring Academic Awards Ceremony.



Track & Field

Our junior high track team has already competed in three meets, traveling to LeRoy and Ridgeview. Made up of 6th–8th graders, many competing for the first time, the team is growing with every meet. **Sectionals are May 9th**, with the state meet the following weekend.



Scholastic Bowl

Our Scholastic Bowl team remains active in both home and away matches, with **Regionals on April 29th** and the goal of advancing to sectional competition.

🌟 Welcome New Staff!

Amanda Taylor joins as our new library aide, bringing energy and enthusiasm from her experience with the University of Illinois football office and the CEO program at Paxton High School.

Megan Hardesty has been hired as a 6th grade teacher for 2026–2027. Megan has served as a paraprofessional aide for 10 years and has built meaningful relationships with students and staff throughout our building. She will be a natural fit in the classroom!



Blue Ridge High School

📋 Congratulations to all of our March Exemplary Knights — staff and students who go above and beyond every single day!

🏆 Staff: Elizabeth Raines

Elizabeth has been a library aide at BRHS for many years. She leads study halls, helps students set goals, stay organized, and succeed academically. Her positive attitude is infectious — she greets every person with a genuine smile and is the quiet hero of our school.

🎓 Tyler Holtz (Jr.)

Tyler comes in every day with a great attitude. He is dependable, considerate, hardworking, and helpful to classmates. A leader in FFA and in the classroom, Tyler's responsibility and dedication make him a true Exemplary Knight.

🎓 Gracie Wingert (Sr.)

Gracie has been crushing it in class with high-level questions and serious growth in effort and performance. She is a quiet leader who consistently does her best work and contributes meaningful insight when needed.

🏅 Athletes of the Month — March

Girls Track: Kelly Weiss

Kelly has stepped up her fitness and intent, lowering her times in intermediate running events and filling in emergency events when needed.

Boys Track: Chase Ellis

Chase scored two wins with near school-record results in the 100m and Long Jump, plus a personal best in the 200m Dash.

Softball: Karlee Fenton

Karlee demonstrated a true team-first mindset, stepping up to catch and pitch when needed despite those not being her primary positions.

Baseball: Devin Wrestler

A second-year player and senior, Devin has been locking down second base with the tenacity of a wrestler — hardworking, reliable, and impactful.

BRHS – By the Numbers

Here is a snapshot of Blue Ridge High School data as of April 10th, 2026.

162

Students Enrolled

Total enrollment at Blue Ridge High School

86.8%

Avg Daily Attendance

Average Daily Attendance Rate for March

113

Detentions

Total assigned YTD (vs. 122 at this time last year)

68

Electronics Referrals

34 students received a referral; 9 students on contract

57

Alt Ed Classes Completed

38.5 earned credits via Edgenuity; 12 students enrolled



Congrats to **Indra Nolan** for being named **2nd Team All-State** by the Illinois High School Scholastic Bowl Coaches Association — for the 2nd year in a row!

Board of Education – Action Items

Here is a partial summary of actions approved at this month's Board of Education meeting.

→ Facilities

Approved **BRHS 2nd Floor Insulation Project** Bid and the **BRSE Classroom Conversion Project** to improve learning environments across the district.

→ Curriculum

Approved **BRHS Business Curriculum** and **BRSE & BRIJHS K-5 Music Curriculum**, as well as the **BRHS Course Description Guide** for the upcoming school year.

→ Staffing & Programs

Approved **Summer Positions** for Teaching and Learning, Maintenance, and Technology. Also approved the **FFA BOE Officer Retreat**.

→ Family Engagement

Approved the **Parent and Family Engagement Plan**, reinforcing our district's commitment to meaningful partnerships with families and the broader community.



Upcoming Events — April & May 2026

BRSE — Key Dates

- Apr 16 — Kindergarten Tours (9 a.m. & 1 p.m.) & PreK Parent Education Night (6 p.m.)
- Apr 24 — Progress Reports Go Home
- Apr 27 — School Improvement Day — NO SCHOOL
- Apr 30 & May 1 — Pre-K Parent Conferences
- May 11 — P.I.E. Meeting, 6:00 p.m.
- May 15 — Third Grade Transition Up Day
- May 20 — Last Full Day / 2:20 Early Dismissal / End of 4th Quarter
- May 25 — Memorial Day — NO SCHOOL

BRIJHS — Key Dates

- Apr 13 — Spring Music Concert (Grades 4–8) @ 6:30 p.m.
- Apr 24–26 — BRIJHS Spring Play Performances
- Apr 29 — Scholastic Bowl Regionals
- May 9 — JH Track Sectionals at Ridgeview
- May 13 — JH Museum Open House
- May 15 & 16 — JH Track State Meet at East Peoria
- May 18 — 8th Grade Promotion @ 9:00 a.m.
- May 20 — Last Day of Student Attendance

BRHS — Key Dates

- Apr 10–12 — Spring Play "Too Many Ghosts"
- Apr 26 — FFA Banquet (5 p.m., Moore Gym)
- May 2 — Promenade (5 p.m.) & Prom (8 p.m., Feed Mill in Fisher)
- May 5 — HOME TRACK MEET @ 4 p.m.
- May 7 — Tech Prep Honors (6 p.m.) & BRHS Honors Night (7 p.m.)
- May 12 — Spring Pops Concert (7:30 p.m.)

★ Important Senior Dates

- May 13 & 14 — Senior Finals
- May 17 — **Graduation, 2:00 p.m.**
- May 18, 19 & 20 — Final Exams



In Other News – Technology Update

Our technology team has been incredibly busy this month supporting assessments, infrastructure, and planning for the future.



59 Tech Tickets Closed

Our team resolved 59 technology support tickets this month, keeping classrooms and offices running smoothly across all buildings.



Assessment Setup

Configured testing platforms for Grade 3 IAR (ELA & Math), Grade 5 & 8 Illinois Science Assessment, and Advanced Placement testing at the High School including student accommodations, proctor groups, and session assignments.



Network & Infrastructure

Completed a full site survey of access point placement and began redesigning access point locations. Installed firmware updates for all door controllers, updated door access displays, and replaced 3 failed cameras.



Devices & Summer Planning

Working on Chromebook repair shipments, set up new carts and displays for Schneider, and finalizing plans and schedules for summer technology work across the district.

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