

FALL 2021

VOICE OF THE VALLEY

THE RIVER VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

From the Superintendent

River Valley Community,

We are excited for the 2021-22 School Year to begin! The floors have been waxed, the buses have been serviced, and classrooms are ready for our students! We look forward to having our students return for five days a week of in-person learning.

While we would all like to see a return to normalcy this year, it is important to not let down our guard regarding COVID-19. Following the Ohio Department of Health's recommendations, we encourage anyone eligible to consider receiving the vaccine. We also strongly recommend that all students and staff wear a mask this school year. Wearing a mask is the best way for your child to avoid quarantine and is the simplest way for your children to protect themselves and your household. One important note, masks will be required on buses for all students and staff due to a federal order.

As we restart the "Voice of the Valley" newsletter, we may publish a combination of paper and digital issues throughout the year. We are excited in future versions to focus on our students and staff with pictures and articles, as well as highlighting the contributions of community members to our district.

As Superintendent of River Valley Local Schools, I am grateful for an excellent staff of aides, bus drivers, custodians and maintenance, food service staff, principals, secretaries, support staff, and teachers. We are also blessed to have great parents and community members who support our school district. Let's make this a great year.

Go Vikings!

Adam Wickham - RV Schools Superintendent



Adam Wickham
RV Schools
Superintendent



SCHOOL NURSE NOTES



BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Summer is quickly passing us by! All too soon, the daylight will slip away sooner, and the time for adventure and relaxation will lessen. Personally, summer means the absence of routine for my family. We stay up later; we eat later, and we're outside later....most everything happens differently from day-to-day. For the most part, life is glorious chaos. But is this carefree attitude healthy? Did you know that routines are important for overall health and well-being?

Daily routines influence your quality of rest. Our sleep schedules and bedtime habits affect our mental sharpness, performance, emotional well-being, and energy levels. For our children, routines are important to influence their emotional, cognitive, and social development. Their routine helps them feel secure and understand expectations. It provides a sense of stability. As we say goodbye to summer and prepare for the beginning of a new school year, having a daily routine will benefit our children. Better health is a result of better planning. I look forward to a happy, healthy school year for all of our Vikings!

Melissa Bollinger, RN - Health Consultant
NCOESC/River Valley Local Schools

Intelligence plus character —
that is the true goal of education.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

1

Start back to school routines like getting up earlier and going to sleep earlier

2

Take advantage of any “Open House ” opportunities offered before school begins. Your child will have a better sense of what to expect when the big day arrives if he or she can get a preview first.

3

While at Open House, walk around the whole school. Visit the restrooms (and use them), visit the doors to outside, the library, gym and cafeteria. Take pictures or take a video to review.

4

It is a new year with a new teacher and new classmates; taking the time to talk about the changes and work through what to expect can help your child prepare and reduce anxiety.

5

Many children with special needs have a tough time saying goodbye to old items and an equally hard time getting used to new things. Clothes and shoes can create sensory issues, and emotional attachments can be hard to break. As early as possible, begin the process of sorting through old items and buying new clothes and backpacks for the upcoming school year.

Special Education

I hope you had a fun and eventful summer. The staff has been working very hard to create an enriching and engaging learning environment for our students with disabilities. We are excited to be back five days a week! Staff and families have shared questions about still offering virtual IEP meetings. The answer is yes! We will be offering virtual and in-person IEP meetings again this school year. Be sure to check out our “Back to School Tips” to help your students prepare for the new school year.



Looking forward to a successful year,

Heather Kantzer - Coordinator of Special Ed.

Transportation Update

We hope everyone had a great summer and enjoyed the time off. As we gear up for the start of the year, here are some news and notes from the transportation department.

We were able to purchase a new bus this year! (everyone loves a shiny new bus) Maybe you'll be lucky enough to have this bus on your route! So look out for Bus #8

We recently revamped the transportation handbook, and we encourage everyone to head over to the River Valley webpage and check it out under the “Transportation” link.

Additionally, we are asking everyone to verify that their students' transportation profile is up to date on Final Forms, as this is how we create rosters for each bus route.

Lastly, bus times and numbers for all routes have been rolled out with drivers and corresponding bus numbers. We will not have exact times until the second full week of school as we get a feel for how each route will flow. We ask for your patience in this matter as we begin the school year.

Thanks for your cooperation!

Scott Hoffman - Transportation Coordinator

The River Valley High School Theatre program successfully presented High School Musical in February last year. Watch for details about attending our 2022 production, Seussical the Musical, coming soon!

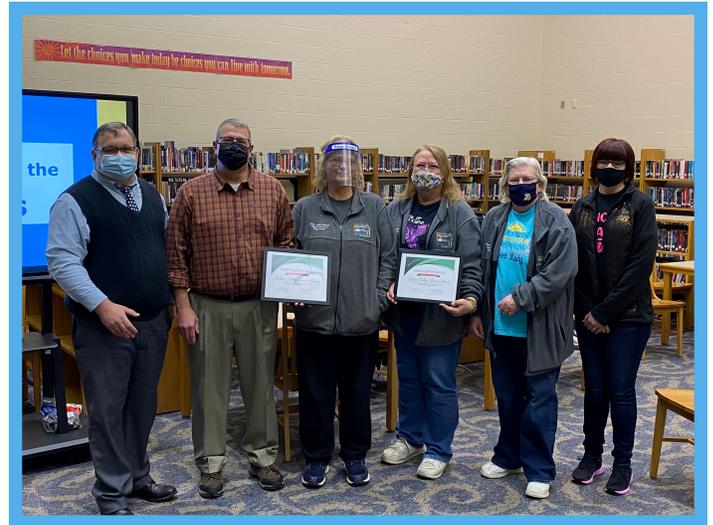


Congratulations to our Food Service Department

At the February Board meeting, RV was awarded the Child Nutrition Award from Children's Hunger Alliance. The award recognized the RV staff's tremendous work to ensure our community received the meals they needed for the 2020-21 school year.

In March 2020, the State of Ohio closed our schools, and our food service department responded with emergency meals and feeding our students. During that time, the River Valley Food Service team was able to serve 207,246 meals and provide over 1,000 produce and family box kits in the RV, Cardington, and Mount Gilead communities.

Due to the quick actions in the ever changing time of COVID-19 relief and our communities positive response, River Valley received a \$15,000 meal grant from "Share our Strength/ No Kid Hungry". With this grant, our food service team was able to increase the breakfast and lunch offerings in the middle and high school buildings as well as increased services through our summer meal program. With the added service, added meal offerings in our cafeterias, and the announcement that all school meals that meet the USDA guidelines will be free for all students through June of 2022, we hope that both school breakfast and lunch will become a more regular part of each and every students' school day.



RV Food Service Staff

Connect with Us!!



@rvschools



@RVschools



@rivervalleyschools

Treasurer's Talk

River Valley Local School District has been fortunate enough to receive federal funds through COVID relief funds (ESSER, CARES, Broadband) and a Coronavirus Relief sub-grant from Claridon Township. Receiving these funds will allow the District to:

- ➔ Purchase educational technology
- ➔ Provide a continued remote learning option
- ➔ Provide instructional support to students
- ➔ Provide continuity of education and extracurricular activities despite decreased ticket sales and state revenue due to COVID
- ➔ Upgrade the sound and lighting in the High School auditorium and upgrade our libraries/media centers at the Middle School and High School to allow for additional learning lab and educational space in each of these buildings (in progress)

These grant awards will be expended over the next three years. They will allow the District to focus on improving our general fund cash balance while still providing new and exciting opportunities and building improvements within our District that will benefit our students and community.

The River Valley Local School District Board of Education has the most recently approved five-year forecast available for review on the District's website. Five-year forecasts are required to be updated and approved by the Board every November and May.

We greatly appreciate the financial support of our community as we continue to strive toward providing our students the best educational and extracurricular opportunities.

Brittany Keller - RV Schools Treasurer

Meet our Treasurer, Brittany Keller



Brittany has served as the Treasurer at River Valley Local Schools since 2020. Before coming to River Valley, she was the Treasurer at Knox County Educational Service Center for five years. She started her career as the Assistant Treasurer for Perkins Local School District in Sandusky, Ohio. Her husband is a River Valley graduate, and they live here in Marion with their two daughters and dog Dewey.

COME TO VIKING BASH 2021

Welcome Back Celebration
Friday, August 27th
4:30 pm to 6:00 pm

Behind the RV Middle School
Games, Food, and Fun

River Valley Football hosts
Madison Comprehensive Rams
Game Time is 7:00 pm

Students Pre-K through
5th grade get a FREE
ticket to the game with
purchase of an
adult admission



Technology Update

Our Technology Department has made vast strides in the last twelve months. From moving to a “one Chromebook per student” model to completely replacing our wireless network, we’ve made significant improvements to our equipment and infrastructure to improve education for our students.

Our most recent improvement is adding touchscreen Chromebook devices for all K through 3rd-grade students. Last year we watched students in our lower grades greatly improve their technological literacy but simultaneously lose some of the hand dexterity we need them to have. To address this concern, we leveraged funding sources to purchase touchscreen devices for these younger grades. These tools will allow students and teachers to have more flexibility with technology devices. Therefore, letting students draw, write and annotate on their Chromebook just as they would using traditional paper and pencil. We can’t wait to see how our incredible staff puts these devices to work in creative and fun ways!

Remember to visit rvk12.org/tech for the latest tips and tricks to help your student get the most from their devices.

Tad Douce - Director of Technology and Communications

Start days for the 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

Kindergarten will be doing a gentle start based on students last name.

August 18th- letters A-G

August 19th-letters H-N

August 20th- letters O-Z

August 18th --First day for students in grades 1-6

August 19th-- First day for students in 7th & 8th grade

August 18th-First day for 9th grade students

August 19th--First day for students in grades 10-12

Preschool Gentle Start Date

August 18-19, 2021

Heritage Elementary

Welcome back to the 2021-22 School Year!

We hope everyone has had a wonderful summer and you were able to spend some time relaxing. We are excited to be back in-person, five days a week this year. The custodians and maintenance staff have been working hard throughout the summer, teachers are working in their classrooms, and everyone is getting things ready for the first day of school! We hope to slowly and safely get back to some normalcy in the classrooms and are looking forward to seeing our students again.



Mel Comstock
Heritage Principal

New Heritage Staff

There will be some new faces at Heritage this year. We want to welcome the following new staff to the building:

- ★ Mrs. Miranda Addis will serve as an aide in our MD Unit beginning this year. Mrs. Addis has helped out in many roles at Heritage Elementary in the past, serving as a substitute teacher, substitute aide, and volunteer.
- ★ Mrs. Katie Criswell will be joining our 3rd Grade Team. Mrs. Criswell completed her student teaching at Heritage Elementary two years ago and taught 5th grade at Colonel Crawford during the 2020-2021 school year.
- ★ Mrs. Michelle Estep will also be joining our 3rd Grade Team. Mrs. Estep is not new to RV, as she served as an intervention specialist at Liberty Elementary, but is excited to transfer to Heritage and serve as a 3rd-grade teacher.
- ★ Mr. Way Ward is joining our custodial staff at Heritage. Prior to his position at Heritage Elementary, Mr. Ward served on the RVHS custodial staff.

Open House

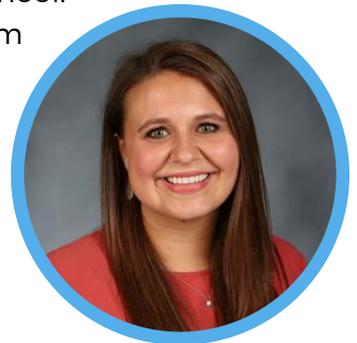
We are excited to be able to host a traditional Open House this school year. Our Open House at Heritage Elementary will be on Monday, August 16th, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. During this time, you will discover who your child's teacher is, be able to meet them and explore the classroom. You will also have the opportunity to drop off your child's supplies. We hope to see everyone there!



School Counselor - Lareese Marston

For those of you that may not have been aware during the 2020-2021 school year, we were able to hire a full-time school counselor at Heritage Elementary. We were able to make this happen due to a State of Ohio grant for children's social-emotional development. Miss Lareese Marston joined us at the beginning of last school year and has been an incredible asset to our school!

Miss Marston goes into each grade level classroom to complete classroom guidance that focuses on the social-emotional development in children, career readiness and development, and to provide tools to help students with their daily lives. She also works with individual students on an as-needed basis and can recommend further counseling services outside of the school day. Miss Marston has been such a wonderful addition to the Heritage community, and we are thrilled to continue to have her working with our students!



Online Learning Tools & Classroom

Last school year brought us new techniques in teaching, creativity with the use of technology, and protocols that have never been used in education. While it was challenging at times, we have learned a lot about using technology while teaching elementary students. We were excited to be one-to-one with our Chromebooks and are eager to merge the more traditional teaching techniques with technology this school year. We have appreciated the students' and parents' responses to the online learning that has occurred in the past, and while we will still be utilizing Google Classroom, we also look forward to returning to more hands-on learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

Heritage Parking Lot

During a typical school year, we have approximately 150 students that are dropped off and picked up daily. However, the 2020-2021 school year increased this number to approximately 225 students. We averaged 120 vehicles entering the school parking lot within a 15-minute time frame. This provided some congestion both within the parking lot and on Route 98. The safety and well-being of our students and families is always at the forefront of our planning. The River Valley Administration and the Ohio State Highway Patrol worked together to make corrections to the parking lot for the remainder of last school year, which will continue throughout this school year. We look forward to improving traffic flow and ask that everyone dropping off and picking up follow signage and the direction of Heritage Staff.

Thank you to Liberty Elementary student, Emersyn, for donating the profits from her lemonade stand this summer to Liberty's school supplies. Emersyn and her mom dropped off supplies that teachers will be able to give students who are in need.



Liberty Elementary

Liberty News

Liberty is excited to welcome our students back for the 2021-22 school year. Liberty will be hosting an Open House on Monday, August 16th, from 4-6 pm. Please check our Liberty Elementary PTO Facebook page for updates throughout this school year.

Summer Learning

Thank you to all of our students who took part in our summer learning opportunities. We had many students in the building for an extra week of learning. Liberty kids also did a great job of staying active on our online learning programs. All of that additional work is greatly appreciated and will help us start the year ready for the next grade level.



Sandy Richards
Liberty Principal

New Staff

Liberty will be welcoming several new staff members this year. We also have several staff members who will be taking on new positions in our building.

- ★ Ms. Levings will be switching intervention roles this year and will be joining our preschool team.
- ★ Mrs. Barnett will be moving from our preschool team to our first-grade team.
- ★ Miss Shawver will be joining our staff as our new guidance program. Miss. Shawver was an intern at Liberty while in college, and we look forward to having her back in our building.
- ★ Mrs. Buhler will be moving from our first-grade team to an intervention position in the building. She will be working with students in grades K-2 this school year.
- ★ Miss Heacock will be joining our staff as an intervention specialist serving students in grades 3-5. Miss Heacock graduated from Heidelberg University and is excited to join our team.

Backpack Blessings

In August of 2019, Liberty began a program called Backpack Blessings. The purpose of backpack blessings is to provide weekend meals for individual students at a Liberty. Dayspring Wesleyan Church has committed to securing funding for the program. The goal is to reach at least 20 students each week with food. Students are discreetly chosen by school leadership and sent to classrooms to go home with students. RV would like to thank Dayspring for continuing to serve the community's needs.

We wish the best of luck to Mrs. Estep, Miss Bradfield, and Mrs. Gilbert as they move on to other schools.

RV Middle School

Greetings Members of the River Valley Community,

I am so excited to be back at River Valley Middle School!

In 2014, I began my journey in the River Valley School Local Schools, at the middle school, where I taught 7th-grade Mathematics for three years. From there, I stepped into the Middle School Assistant Principal role for a year and a half. For the last two and a half years, I have served as the Assistant Principal at the High School, and this year I'll be heading back to the middle school as the newly appointed Principal. The 2021/2022 school year will mark my 8th year in River Valley Local Schools and 16th total in education. I earned my bachelor's degree from Muskingum College in Middle Childhood Education (Mathematics and Language Arts), my Masters of Science in Mathematics from Walden University, and completed my Administrative license from Muskingum University.



Mike Davis
RVMS Principal

While trying to get back to a sense of normalcy this school year, we will be focusing on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a proactive approach used by schools to promote positive behaviors and improve school safety. Each morning, the Vikings of RVMS will be reminded to demonstrate their PRIDE. Viking PRIDE at the middle school stands for being **P**ositive, being **R**espectful, living with **I**ntegrity, making a **D**ifference, and expecting **E**xcellence.

Staff members will have the opportunity to recognize students every week for exhibiting one or more of these values. We will present these students with a certificate of appreciation during a lunch period monthly. Each quarter, our staff will select one Viking PRIDE award winner, and they will be displayed on our "Student of the Quarter" board as you enter our building.

We cannot wait to welcome our students back! Our staff is working tirelessly to prepare our building and classrooms for the upcoming school year, and we look forward to making this year a memorable one!

I reside in Delaware with my wife Erin, our two sons; Mason (6) and Cooper (4); and our dog Jax.

VIKING PRIDE!

Mike Davis - RVMS Principal

RV High School



I am excited to get the school year started and have students back in the building five days a week.

We currently have students, teachers, and coaches in the building preparing for the school year, and it's exciting to see the activity.

I want to pass along a couple of necessary items for our River Valley families. First, the high school will be holding our Open House on Tuesday, August 17th, from 5:30-7:00 pm. Secondly, our first day of school for the 9th-grade students will be Wednesday, August 18th, then all students (grades 9-12) will be in attendance on Thursday, August 19th.

Our River Valley Buildings and Grounds staff and Custodians have been diligently working to prepare the school for the year's start. We appreciate their extra efforts to keep our students, staff, and visitors safe in these times.

A very exciting project happened at the high school over the summer! The RV High School Gymnasium received a fabulous facelift. I would personally like to thank our generous donor, the Mathews Family of Dealerships, for making this possible and our RV High School Athletic Director/Assistant Principal, Travis Stout, for coordinating this project.

Parents and community members, I look forward to seeing you at RV events supporting our students, performers, and athletes.

Have a great 2021-22 school year. Go Vikes!

Barry Dutt - RVHS Principal

It's an exciting time for River Valley Athletics as we approach the fall season. Our teams are starting competitions, and there are many important items our community should be aware of.

First, we will begin selling family, student, and adult sports passes on Monday 8/9 in the high school office from 8-3 pm Monday-Friday. Family passes (up to 6 family members) are \$360, single adult \$150, and students \$90. These passes grant entry to all middle and high school regular season athletic events at River Valley.

Also, we will begin issuing senior citizen passes for district residents (age 60+) on the same date, also in the RVHS office. Interested community members need to bring their ID and proof of address to be issued a plastic pass. These passes are free for qualifying district residents and grant entry to all middle and high school regular season athletic events at River Valley.

Next, at this time there are no restrictions for capacity at indoor and outdoor athletic events. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back and your support for our student-athletes. Please keep in mind that this could change as we advance through the season. Please check the athletic website for updates.

Finally, we have numerous sponsorship opportunities available at River Valley High School and Middle School. These options include the stadium scoreboard, fencing around outdoor venues, and space within our high school gymnasium. Please visit our website for more information at rvk12.org/athletics.aspx.

As always, please contact the athletic office at

740-725-5806 if you have questions. All of us in the athletic department are looking forward to a great fall season.

Go Vikes!

Travis Stout @RiverValleyAD





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Board of Education Members**

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River Valley Administration Office

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Heritage Elementary

740-725-5500

Liberty Elementary

740-725-5600

River Valley Middle School

740-725-5700

River Valley High School

740-725-5800

**"TELL ME AND I FORGET.
TEACH ME AND I REMEMBER.
INVOLVE ME AND I LEARN"**

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN