



BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION SCHOOL

Annual Report to the Community



2023

Wells River, Vermont

A HOME AT BLUE MOUNTAIN

The hope that we as parents have when we send our children off to school, whether for the first day of kindergarten or the last day of senior year, is that they will find a place for themselves where they feel safe, connected, and a sense of belonging. Students at BMU have the rare opportunity to do so in one building, with one community, in one group, and in one place with teachers, staff, and administrators who care for them and help raise them. These students are so very fortunate to be BMU Bucks from the time they are just learning to read until that day they walk across the stage at graduation and go off to apply all they have learned to the amazing things they've set their minds to accomplish.

The staff and students at BMU share a legacy, an enduring bond, for the thirteen plus years they are together. This time that is shared symbolizes the commitment of the communities that merge together and the knowledge that wherever they might find themselves in this wide world, they always have a place – a home – at Blue Mountain. This is an experience to be valued and treasured by the entire BMU community.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our children, our staff, and our school. It means more than you can know.



Randy Gawel

**SUPERINTENDENT
ORANGE EAST SUPERVISORY UNION**



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

This has been a year of reassessment, reorganization, and renewed vision for BMU. We have come through the pandemic, the impacts of which are still being felt throughout public education, and BMU is no exception.

We have seen Dr. John Barone become the OESU assistant superintendent and Dr. Emilie Knisley return as our high school co-principal. Her vision has stewarded BMU through many challenges, and working with Scott Blood as her co-principal, the future looks bright.

While Act 46 is behind us, the impact on small rural schools still presents potential challenges and opportunities for BMU students. As a Board, our goal is to continue to see BMU students thrive and strive to reach their potential through academics, athletics, the arts and sciences, and the trades. We recognize that one size does not fit all and that our efforts should be focused on the needs of the students to help them regain what was lost over the last two years of "Zoom" and isolation. This will take time and investment as teachers, administrators, parents, and community members.

Dr. Rowe's vision is as true today as when he first voiced it, "What's best for the community is a good school, one that has a good reputation. What is best for the kids is a good school."

The 2021-2022 school year brought home a Division IV Boys Basketball Championship, ending a 20 year drought at the Aud; a meal service program that continues to grow and provide universal meals to students; and an engaged student body through the Middle and High School Student Councils. The students have spoken eloquently to the Board, which resulted in a school-wide Wellness Day in 2023 to help address the mental

health challenges we are seeing as a result of the pandemic.

The class of 2022 was a competitive group that produced a valedictorian, Coco Huang, who is now attending Brown University; and co-salutatorians Maggie Emerson and Zoey Zhong. Maggie is attending Fairfield University and Zoey is attending UVM. Taking advantage of everything our little school has to offer through dual-enrollment classes, Riverbend Tech Center, enrichment activities like the Cape Cod trip, Boston trips, Governor's Institute summer sessions, and other leadership programs, 2022's senior class has gone into the world prepared for work, the military, trades, and both two and four year degree programs.

As the Board looks to the future and our next five-year academic improvement plan, we want to invest in the needed curriculum and internal supports to help students regain what has been lost over the last three years as a result of the pandemic. In 2018, BMU won the battle with the state to remain a school district within the Orange East Supervisory Union. At that time we saw the potential of STEM and other programs to build on what BMU was already doing in math, science, and

robotics. We were planning additional theatrical productions in the coming years, and putting interventions in place to support children in math and literacy; and we were beginning to see the benefits in our assessments. Fast forward to March 17, 2020 when the school closed, Zoom became the norm, and teachers were asked to support learning in a totally new way.

While students came back to the classroom in 2021-2022, there were still many challenges and learning opportunities lost, particularly for students in the elementary school. The administration and teachers have worked together this year to assess students' learning and determine needed supports to meet their needs, as well as provide enrichment and other learning opportunities to engage their minds and bodies.

All of these investments are focused on the students and their future success, which is why we fought for BMU and will continue to grow BMU as a PreK-12 school.

Respectfully submitted,

Angeline Alley

OESU AND BMU BOARD CHAIR

BMU SCHOOL BOARD

Angeline Alley, Chair, *Ryegate (2021-24)*

Paul Hazel, Vice-Chair, *Ryegate (2022-25)*

Allison Ingerson, Member, *Groton (2022-25)*

Kristen Murray, Member, *Ryegate (2022-25)*

Judy Murray, Member, *Wells River (2021-24)*

Allana Page, Member, *Ryegate (2020-23)*

Kelsey Root-Winchester, Member, *Wells River (2022-25)*

Sandra Woodworth, Member, *Groton (2022-25)*

Avery Nelson, Student Rep., *Class of 2023*

Abigail Emerson, Student Rep., *Class of 2024*



“We have incorporated some stop-gap measures to cut down on disruptions during instruction, and this has improved learning environments throughout the school.”

As I sit down to write this annual report letter, I'd first like to take this opportunity to thank the BMU community for being my true home as an educator. December 2022 marked my 20th year in education serving students, staff, and families in the Blue Mountain Union School District. It has truly been an honor to live, work, and raise my family in such an incredible school community with such caring and top-notch people!

In an effort to meet the needs of our students, staffing levels have been on the rise. Our teachers and support staff are working with tremendous levels of effort to incorporate social emotional learning along with the implementation of individual student plans and universal instruction, all aligned with curricula and educational standards. The learning opportunities being created on a daily basis for students are truly impressive and they are paying dividends.

This past summer and during our pre-service work, our elementary staff

came together to revise our literacy programming and build a schedule to support that work. The time students are spending on reading and writing, across the elementary grade levels, has increased and is allowing teachers to apply learning strategies with greater fidelity. Additionally, we have incorporated some stop-gap measures to cut down on disruptions during instruction, and this has improved learning environments throughout the school.

As we progress into our second semester of the school year, we are looking forward to engaging learning adventures for students, collaboration with families, and celebrations to highlight the accomplishments to come!

Sincerely,

Scott Blood

BMU ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL



GRADES 7 - 12



I am pleased to be back at BMU for my 18th year in the school system. As I write this report in mid-December, I have been back in the role of principal for grades seven through twelve for only a few short days. However, I return energized and excited for the work ahead of us.

As we look forward together, we are finally able to shift our focus from pandemic schooling to post-pandemic growth. All of us endured a turbulent period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our students, staff, and families have enjoyed a more typical school year thus far, but there are new challenges to face and meeting the needs of all students has become a little more complex.

For many students the typical school day feels unfamiliar, as nearly three years have passed since school was what we used to think of as “normal” — and three years is a long time through the lens of a young learner. As a result, we are all filling our toolboxes with strategies to help students and families through this transition.

We continue to work on strengthening our support systems for students,

be it academic or social-emotional, and we work with a variety of community partners and school staff to meet our students’ and families’ varying needs. We are thankful for the support they offer.

For middle and high school, we are hoping to return to many of the traditions that were once part of the BMU school experience. This means supporting more activities and enrichment experiences for all. We continue to support our proud athletic traditions, while also looking to grow opportunities for those who may not participate in athletics or who may want to expand their extracurricular experience beyond athletics. We hope to see a return of a theater program, a new version of the seventh grade class trip, and an expansion of clubs and activities. If you have a great idea for a BMU program we would love to hear from you!

I look forward to the work that we have ahead of us. It is wonderful to be back in the hallways of BMU once more, with so many new and familiar faces. We have a wonderful school community!

Emilie Krisley
7-12 PRINCIPAL



“For many students the typical school day feels unfamiliar, as nearly three years have passed since school was what we used to think of as ‘normal’ — and three years is a long time through the lens of a young learner.”



If you have a great idea for a BMU program, please get in touch!

STUDENT SERVICES

By **Alison M. Kidder**, OESU Director of Student Services and **Jessica Schaffer**, OESU Student Services Coordinator

Special education services are provided to students identified with a disability and in need of specialized instruction. Through direct instruction from special educators, paraprofessional support, and quality universal instruction with accommodations from classroom teachers, Blue Mountain Union seeks to equip eligible students with disabilities the concepts, skills, and tools for success, both in school and in their transition to adulthood. Each child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is tailored to each student's particular learning needs.

The BMU Student Services team consists of special educators, paraprofessionals, and a Speech Language Pathologist. In addition, BMU has a part-time Occupational Therapist, a part time Speech Language Pathologist Assistant, part time School Psychologist, and a Student Services Coordinator who share their time between three OESU schools. Special education teams collaborate with a variety of specialists and consultants as needed.

In addition, the BMU Student Services team is always looking for ways to professionally grow and improve. This school year staff members have attended the following professional development courses/workshops: Wilson Reading System Training, Assessment in Special Education, Emotional/Behavioral Challenges in Special Education, Fostering Independent Problem Solvers and Learners: Prioritizing Executive Functioning in the Classroom, Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Support Planning.

Blue Mountain Union is committed to ensuring that all eligible students receive a free and appropriate public



education in the least restrictive learning environment.

The BMU/OESU Special Education team values our family and community partnerships, which help students achieve their academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral goals. New this year is a required parent/guardian input form that offers the opportunity for families to share their thoughts/ideas about the IEP development process so that our team can ensure that we are using a team approach. We invite parents and guardians to reach out at any time if they have questions, concerns, or feedback about ways we can best serve students.

OUR VISION

BMU and OESU recognize that students have unique individual needs. To meet those needs, we provide individualized programs that address the academic, physical, social, behavioral, and emotional needs of each student so they are afforded opportunities to succeed and positively contribute to their community.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Comprehensive evaluations
- IEPs with SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals and objectives
- Related service provider screenings, evaluations, services, and consultation
- Collaboration with community organizations that support students and families
- Special educators who are knowledgeable in research-based programs and instructional practices in reading, math, and writing
- Trauma-informed special educators
- Staff trained to make functional behavioral assessments and student success plans
- Direct services that target identified areas of educational need and progress reports that measure student growth
- Commitment to meaningfully collaborate with families and caregivers during the evaluation and IEP development process

BMU 2022-2023 BY THE NUMBERS

110

PreK-12 Students with IEPs

10

PreK-12 Special Educators

20

PreK-12 Paraprofessionals

SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

By **Samantha Page, Julie Gaudin, and Dawn Blanchard**, School Counselors

Greetings from the School Counseling Department! This year we welcomed Mrs. Samantha Page into the role of Elementary School Counselor. A huge thank you goes out to Mrs. Kimball for supporting the elementary grades at the start of the year. We are happy that Mrs. Gandin continues in the role of School Counselor. She has been an integral part of supporting the middle grades this year (5-8), while Mrs. Blanchard continues to be the School Counselor at the Middle and High School level.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELING REPORT

Last year, we introduced “The Positivity Project (P2),” and we continue with the curriculum this year. This program provides digital resources and training on 24-character strengths. A large focus of this is directed towards building positive relationships. Teachers have incorporated a short lesson into their daily schedule, usually lasting 5-10 minutes, and many have found it works well during morning meetings.

A large part of the week is spent in classrooms, offering a 30-minute guidance lesson to each grade. Lessons are based on the P2 character strengths, and typically consist of a read-aloud book or activity.

We continue our pre-recorded announcements every Monday, including a song, birthday announcements, upcoming events, some humor from Mr. Blood, and an introduction to our P2 topic of the week. Our announcements are a fun and positive way to keep the elementary school connected. We are also continuing with our PBIS program. Each month has a specific focus (citizenship, perseverance, self-control, fairness, empathy, honesty, respect, generosity, enthusiasm, and responsibility). Teachers choose a student who they feel best models the topic, and they are recognized at our first Friday of the month assemblies. We are SO happy that families, and the community, can now join us in this celebration!

We look forward to the spring when the Grafton County Department of Corrections will offer “Operation

Impact.” This program teaches students about bullying, cyber-bullying, stranger danger, and kindness. And we are benefiting from the Back-Pack Program sponsored by the Vermont Food Bank. This program is available to families who find it challenging to keep enough food for their students over the weekend. Bags of food are placed into roughly 30 students’ cubbies or lockers on Fridays. Finally, we are continuing with our mentoring program, where upperclassmen have the opportunity to serve as positive role models for our younger students.

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING REPORT

Students are supported in a variety of ways here at BMU in the areas of academics, career, and social/emotional development. Students come to BMU with the understanding that our doors are always open and that we will support their success in any way we can. Currently, the advisory block in both the middle and high school are supported by the Positivity Project (P2). P2 is a social/emotional program that emphasizes positive character development. Meaningful conversations are happening during these times regarding personal character development.

DUAL ENROLLMENT OFFERS A TASTE OF COLLEGE

Students in their junior and senior years are able to take dual enrollment courses at BMU. A dual enrollment course is one in which a BMU faculty member teaches a college level course on the BMU campus. Students earn high school and college credits simultaneously. Dual enrollment courses are accepted at most colleges and universities and in the end, may reduce the cost of a college education. BMU collaborates with Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) and the Community College of Vermont (CCV) to offer dual enrollment. This year’s courses are: Pre-Calculus with CCV, and Environmental Science and U.S. History with SNHU.

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Portfolio Work

Students in grades 7 through 12 have been busy filling out their BMU E-Portfolios. The portfolios include the following:



All About Me: a brief description of family systems, interests, community involvement, and post-secondary goals.



Career Plan & Interest Inventory: an interest inventory that allows students to explore career paths that align with their interests.



Personalized Learning Plan: goals focused on academic, personal, and post-secondary plans, with reflections on the process of achieving those goals.



Academic Plan: a list of courses taken during each year of high school



Transferable Skills: progress in transferable skills such as clear and effective communication, creative and practical problem solving, informed and integrative thinking, responsible and involved citizenship, and self direction.



ATHLETICS AT BMU

By **Todd Powers**, Athletic Director



As the Athletic Director here at BMU, I get to welcome a large number of people into our building on a regular basis. One common observation is how supportive the Blue Mountain fans are of our student athletes and the pride we take in what the young men and women of our community do on a regular basis. One long time Blue Mountain fan recently expressed how BMU always felt like home when he returned, and one of the best things about our community was the fact our students are able to do all this in one small school.

Not only can our student athletes be found on the field or court, but they are officers in our student government, activists at local and state levels, leading the conversation about mental health, and standing up for one another.

You can find our game schedules at bmschool.org under "Athletics Calendar"

They can be found in our elementary grade classrooms lending a hand, mentoring middle school students, and donating their time and resources to food drives and fundraisers.

Basketball season was an exciting time last year, with both girls and boys varsity teams making trips to Barre Auditorium. The girls made it to the semifinals and the boys brought home a title! If you've never experienced it, I hope you get the chance to feel the energy of a Blue Mountain crowd when the Bucks return to "The Aud."

The spring is also a special time here at BMU, and with offerings of baseball and softball at the middle school, junior varsity, and varsity level, almost every night offers a chance to come cheer on the blue and gold. The girls varsity team hosted the quarter final

game in the Division IV tournament, falling just short of a repeat semifinal win. The boys varsity baseball team earned a spot to play for the championship once again!

As soccer season progressed in the fall, the boys varsity team showed continued improvement and the girls team led the season with wins and hosted a quarter final round in the Division IV tournament. We combined our seventh and eighth graders to form a coed team once again this year with hopes to return to separate boys and girls programs next year.

Our varsity and middle school cross country team also represented us well and our runners competed at the state level for their age groups. Our PreK-6 soccer program continues to be a success thanks to the high school athletes and volunteer coaches who lead our youngest athletes.

Participation numbers continue to be strong here at Blue Mountain, and we're working with the Town of

Groton to get enough time for all students in the gym. Basketball season is in full swing, and excitement is in the air. Our cheerleaders have begun as well, cheering at many of our home games and with practicing hard in the cafeteria. January will bring about the start of our K-2 program, supported by our high school athletes and their coaches.



The summer and fall brought about much restorative work to the field surfaces and the completion of our infield rehabilitation on both the Ron Brown and Gerry Piper Fields. Working within the approved budget for the project we were able to bring the infield material up a substantial amount. The material we use is a special mix of sand, silt, and clay with an added conditioner to ensure proper drainage and compaction levels. Continued investment in field surface will be a priority for us to ensure a safe playing environment.

In closing I just want to say thank you again to all of those who have had a hand in the proud tradition that is Blue Mountain Athletics. We invite you to attend one of our upcoming games and cheer on our amazing teams!

"The summer and fall brought about much restorative work to the field surfaces and the completion of our infield rehabilitation on both the Ron Brown and Gerry Piper Fields."

TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

By **John Munson**, Technology Coordinator
and **Todd Powers**, System Administrator

The challenge continues at Blue Mountain to furnish staff and students with the equipment and skills they need to thrive in the ever-evolving education environment and in the world at large. This requires the continued upgrade of our technology infrastructure and ongoing educational opportunities for both staff and students.

Our high school students are required to attain at least a half-credit in direct technology instruction. We offer courses in computer graphics, web design, digital video production, broadcast journalism and robotics. Students may also earn their tech credit through our online high-school partner, the Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative (VTVLC).

New this year, we've added direct technology instruction to seventh and eighth graders. Each student receives a daily class for a full quarter on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) topics. Students in fifth and sixth grades have the opportunity to participate in our STEM Clubs. We have four clubs with 32 students meeting Monday and Wednesday after school. Some of the topics they explore include: 3D modeling and printing, coding, maker cart projects, productivity software, robotics, and RC drones and airplanes.

Over the past several years, we have worked to outfit classrooms with the latest multimedia presentation technology. This includes large, TV-type interactive panels that allow for dynamic classroom instruction. By the end of this school year, all of our classrooms will be outfitted with this kind of equipment through multi-year general fund expenditures and grant funds. Additionally,

to improve our in-school communication, we've introduced several mid-size digital screens in high-traffic areas to publicize the latest events and happenings around the school.

Blue Mountain continues to collaborate with VTVLC. We provide a teacher for the network—John Munson—and in return we receive 45 seats a year for our students to take courses offered throughout the network. This gives students unique educational opportunities in terms of content and flexibility, which in a small school is crucial. All of the offerings through VTVLC are provided by licensed Vermont instructors.

BMU also rolled-out a new school website for this school year. The new website is more user friendly as it integrates all the schools in Orange East Supervisory Union and the central office. Some of the more popular destinations on the website include the school calendar, the Bucks News Network link, current posts, athletics schedules, and of course the lunch menu!

This is the third year we have offered the one-to-one chromebook model to all K-12 students. This has meant regular access to technology for students and better implementation inside the classrooms. Our continued emphasis is to find the right devices for our students to thrive in today's learning environment; while the devices or applications may change, we aim to keep our students equipped to ensure a successful experience.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve a community and school that is clearly dedicated to the success of its students.



“This is the third year we have offered the one-to-one chromebook model to all K-12 students. This has meant regular access to technology for students and better implementation inside the classrooms.”



SAYING FAREWELL TO AN ICON

This year John Munson will retire after 23 years of dedication to the Blue Mountain School community. His vision and partnership in guiding technology and education certainly does not go unnoticed; his impact on students' lives over the years is immeasurable.



BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

By **Clayton Hatch**, Custodial Supervisor

I am pleased to submit my first annual report as your administrator of Buildings and Grounds. This year there have been notable changes within the custodial and maintenance staff. Your previous administrator, Daryl Sulman, retired after nearly four decades of service, as did Bob Longmoore, a trusted and proficient night custodian. I wanted to recognize and express our thanks and appreciation to both of these men for their long standing commitment and service to BMU.

This past spring we had to replace the water pump quite unexpectedly. A wire short in the well caused the pump to literally burn up. The response from our well contractor, custodial staff and the support group from the OESU was prompt and thorough. We were back up and running with a new pump and a sanitized well within 48 hours. My thanks to Mike Gordon, Daryl Sulham and Bob Ratel for working on Sunday to make sure school was in session on Monday!

Mandatory PCB testing began on November 29 and was scheduled to continue into early January 2023. We will monitor these tests and results carefully, and mitigate any findings if they exceed established levels.

AHERA (Asbestos) training for new custodial personnel and myself has been completed. I am the "Designated Person" here at BMU for keeping the 6-month inspections and informational material current and complete.

We were finally able to de-clutter the stage and cafeteria, where Covid supplies and storage had accumulated over the past two years. We have received numerous positive comments on having full use of the stage and cafeteria back again, and we're happy to hear it!

The baseball and soccer fields remain in great shape. I would like to thank Mike Gordon and Todd Powers for their hard work on this important aspect of our campus.

Weston & Sampson completed the annual inspection of the septic system with no issues found. The system has been pumped and remains in good repair.

I have found my new position as custodian supervisor



"The baseball and soccer fields remain in great shape. I would like to thank Mike Gordon and Todd Powers for their hard work on this important aspect of our campus."

both challenging and rewarding. I have been learning something new every day, and meeting great people and support staff. The encouragement I have received is very helpful and most welcome. Together we will continue making BMU an example of a great place to educate our students, and a great place to work.

PROJECTS IN THE PAST YEAR

- ✓ Replacing water pump
- ✓ Mandatory PCB testing
- ✓ Asbestos training
- ✓ Cleaning up Covid supplies
- ✓ Maintaining athletic fields

ONLINE LEARNING EXPANDS OPPORTUNITIES

Outside the traditional classroom, BMU does its best to respond to students' interests. We offer an online program called Edmentum in collaboration with the River Bend Career and Technical Center. Students who want to take courses that aren't available at BMU can also sign up through the Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC). Students complete the course virtually in a one to one setting, supported by frequent communications between VTVLC and BMU staff.

STUDENTS EXPLORE COLLEGES AND CAREERS

We've taken students to a number of college campuses this year. In October, students attended the NEACAC College Fair at Saint Michael's College, and later in the fall they had a chance to visit schools in New Hampshire and Maine. In the spring we will visit Vermont colleges and universities. Students have also had the opportunity to meet with college counselors who have visited the BMU campus.

Sophomores visit the River Bend Career and Technical Center to learn about its various programs and how to apply for their junior year. We've also had visits from military recruiters who've shared information about the services' educational and career opportunities.

School Counseling also offers trips to businesses locally and regional to help students explore different careers. And we welcome business owners to meet with students on the BMU campus.

SCHOOL CHOICE

BMU has visited the Barnet School, Waterford Elementary School, Waits River Valley School, and Monroe Consolidated School. We have several students who attend BMU under School Choice and look forward to welcoming more students for the 2023-2024 school year.

FOOD SERVICE

By **Paul Pellegrino**, Director of Food Service

With the 2022-23 school year half over, and as I reflect back on recent years in food service, it is a relief to say that this has been a typical school year so far. Reminders of the pandemic have become less frequent as we focus on feeding kids and getting back to what matters most.

I am excited to share that I have applied for and received two separate federal and state school nutrition equipment grants over the last year. With some of the equipment in the kitchen dating back to 1970, it is a relief to be able to invest in upgrades and replacements, and to have the costs covered by these grants is icing on the cake (pun intended).

WHAT'S COOKIN'

The Blue Mountain Union School Café aims to get the students and the community excited about what's cooking at BMU. Our mission is simple. That any student should be able to, on any given day, find a meal that they love. With that, I would love to announce the development of a student school food survey. This survey will be developed, in part, by the students themselves and will establish what kids want most out of their school food experience. I cannot wait to read the results and we will be sure to share them!

Breakfast is booming! We are serving handmade custom breakfast sandwiches, bagels, cereal, yogurt with granola, muffins, fresh fruit, juice and other assorted items daily. With all of these choices there is no excuse

not to grab a quick bite in the morning.

Grab and Go meals are hot! We began the year with the introduction of our new grab and go options available at lunch time. It is a beautiful packet full of carefully curated wraps and salads, made fresh every day. Students are loving the new choices, and we're not done yet! Coming soon: Hot Grab and Go options!

With so many food choices available to students, it's the perfect time to thank our amazing team of food service professionals that put them all together. We have an absolute dream team of caring, kind, and dedicated individuals that work incredibly hard each and every day to make it all work. None of this would be possible without them. They are truly amazing.



School Nurse's Report



An average of **60** nurse visits per day, with 3,465 visits as of December 1, 2022.



12 scheduled medication administrations each school day



The school nurse shares Covid-19 guidance with families but is no longer managing individual cases.

FY2024 BUDGET NOTES

OUR COMMITMENT

The BMU Board is committed to the ongoing educationally focused financial support of our students, staff, and community. To this end, we are unwavering in our desire to balance responsible fiscal management with increased student needs in the wake of the pandemic. Collaboratively working with all stakeholders, we look to grow opportunities for our students while understanding the equally important and varied needs of our constituent communities.

OVERALL BUDGET

The overall school budget is up 7.59%. (A percent budget increase that is slightly less than that of last year.) The projected spending per equalized pupil represents a 12.5% increase over the previous year. This budget also represents a 5% decrease in the OESU assessment compared to last year. The Board has again elected to return the entire surplus in the general fund to help offset local taxes.

PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Integrating ESSER funding with local budgets to help meet the needs of students, specifically when addressing academic and social emotional support.
- The impact of the changing CLA on local taxes.
- Full utilization of the budget surplus to offset taxes.
- Increases in wages and state-mandated health care costs.
- Inflationary increases in the price of goods, services, food, and transportation.

We continue to provide academic interventions and classroom support for our students through a combination of strategically utilized ESSER funding and the local budget. To this end we are able to identify students most in need of interventions and provide for them ongoing academic, as well as social emotional support. Moreover, we have expanded our efforts to engage students and staff in building the positive culture and climate we want at BMU through programmatic improvements and targeted interventions.

We continue to invest in the expanded preschool program at Blue Mountain. This enables us to offer full day preschool five days each week, with the addition of home to school transportation. This has dramatically improved our ability to provide early intervention services to our families and we are strongly committed to continuing to do so.

This report has an overview of budget changes, but you can find detailed explanations and related materials on the BMU and OESU websites. If you have further questions please reach out to a BMU Board member or the Superintendent of Schools, and we will be happy to provide you with more information. We also encourage you to attend our annual informational meeting to learn more and ask any questions you may have.

WARNING

BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT #21 ANNUAL MEETING AND PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING

March 6 & March 7, 2023

The legal voters of the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 (the "District"), comprising the legal voters, respectively, of the Towns of Groton, Ryegate, and Wells River, are hereby NOTIFIED AND WARNED to meet at the Blue Mountain Union School in Wells River, Vermont on Monday, March 6, 2023 at 6:00PM to transact the following business from the floor:

Article 1: To elect the following officers as required by law and to authorize the Board of School Directors to fix their compensation: Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer

Article 2: To hear and act on the reports of the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 officers for the past year.

Article 3: Shall the voters of the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 authorize the Board of School Directors to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenues for the next fiscal year?

Article 4: To transact any other business thought proper under this warning.

Said meeting shall be followed immediately by a public informational hearing regarding the proposed budget and other business, to be voted on by Australian Ballot, on Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

The legal voters of the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 are further notified and warned to meet at the following locations:

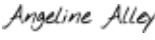
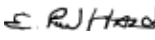


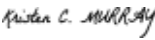

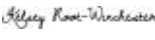

Ryegate:	Town Hall in Ryegate Corner
Groton:	Groton Community Building in Groton Wells River: Village Garage in Wells River

On Tuesday, March 7, 2023 between 10:00 in the morning and 7:00 in the evening there will be a vote by Australian Ballot on the following question:


Article #1: Shall the voters of the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 approve the school board to expend \$9,644,585.00, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

The legal voters of the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 are further notified that voter qualification and registration relative to said Annual Meeting shall be as provided in Section 706u of Title 16 and Chapters 43, 51 and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Signed by the Blue Mountain Union School District #21 Board of School Directors at Wells River, in the County of Orange and State of Vermont this 20th day of January, 2023

 _____ Angeline Alley	 _____ E. Paul Hazel	 _____ Allison Ingerson
 _____ Judy Murray	 _____ Kristen Murray	 _____ Allana Page
 _____ Kelsey Root-Winchester	 _____ Sandra Woodworth	

Recorded on this date prior to posting, January 20, 2023.



Janet Page, Clerk

Tax Worksheet: Final Budget FY2024

	RYEGATE	GROTON	WELLS RIVER	RYEGATE	GROTON	WELLS RIVER
	Proposed Budget 2022-2023	Proposed Budget 2022-2023	Proposed Budget 2022-2023	Proposed Budget 2023-2024	Proposed Budget 2023-2024	Proposed Budget 2023-2024
Estimated Education Spending						
Total Estimated Expenditures	\$8,766,848.00	\$8,766,848.00	\$8,766,848.00	\$9,664,585.00	\$9,664,585.00	\$9,664,585.00
Less Anticipated Receipts						
State and Local Revenues for General Fund	(\$582,412.61)	(\$582,412.61)	(\$582,412.61)	(\$893,349.37)	(\$893,349.37)	(\$893,349.37)
Prior Year General Fund Balance	(\$626,680.33)	(\$626,680.33)	(\$626,680.33)	(\$640,000.00)	(\$640,000.00)	(\$640,000.00)
Total Estimated Receipts	(\$1,209,093.00)	(\$1,209,093.00)	(\$1,209,093.00)	(\$1,533,349.00)	(\$1,533,349.00)	(\$1,533,349.00)
Estimated Education Spending	\$7,557,755.00	\$7,557,755.00	\$7,557,755.00	\$8,131,236.00	\$8,131,236.00	\$8,131,236.00
Equalized Pupils	402.53	402.53	402.53	385.05	385.05	385.05
Estimated Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	\$18,775.63	\$18,775.63	\$18,775.63	\$21,117.35	\$21,117.35	\$21,117.35
Cost Containment Threshold (Previously Excess Spending)	\$18,789.00	\$18,789.00	\$18,789.00	\$22,204.00	\$22,204.00	\$22,204.00
Is Spending per Student below State Spending Threshold?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Estimated Excess Spending Penalty	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Estimated Education Spending Per Pupil	\$18,775.63	\$18,775.63	\$18,775.63	\$21,117.35	\$21,117.35	\$21,117.35
Base Education Amount / Property Yield (Scenario B)	\$12,937.00	\$12,937.00	\$12,937.00	\$15,479.00	\$15,479.00	\$15,479.00
District Spending Adjustment Percentage	145.131%	145.131%	145.131%	136.426%	136.426%	136.426%
Base Homestead Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Estimated Homestead Tax Rate, Equalized	\$1.4513	\$1.4513	\$1.4513	\$1.3643	\$1.3643	\$1.3643
% Pupils PK-12	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.4513	\$1.4513	\$1.4513	\$1.3643	\$1.3643	\$1.3643
Other Components	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
Total Equalized Homestead Tax Rates	\$1.4513	\$1.4513	\$1.4513	\$1.3643	\$1.3643	\$1.3643
Common Level of Appraisal	100.75%	99.09%	98.58%	96.37%	91.60%	88.23%
Estimated Local Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.4405	\$1.4646	\$1.4722	\$1.4156	\$1.4894	\$1.5463
Base Non-Residential Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.4820	\$1.4820	\$1.4820	\$1.3860	\$1.3860	\$1.3860
Estimated Non-Residential Tax Rate	\$1.4710	\$1.4956	\$1.5033	\$1.4382	\$1.5131	\$1.5709

Budget Comparison

	Actual FY22	Budget FY22	Budget FY23	Proposed FY24	Budget Change (+/-)	
REVENUES	State - Support	\$6,718,501	\$7,008,054	\$7,557,755	\$8,131,236	\$573,481
	State - Sp Ed	\$349,540	\$285,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
	State - Transportation	\$163,717	\$120,000	\$115,000	\$120,000	\$5,000
	Tuition	\$125,580	\$166,000	\$128,400	\$140,000	\$11,600
	Prior Year Surplus	\$0	\$382,959	\$626,680	\$640,000	\$13,320
	Vocational Transportation Reimb.	\$0	\$31,000	\$20,000	\$15,000	(\$5,000)
	Ed Fund Tech Center State Aid	\$105,949	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	High School Completion Program	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other Local/Miscellaneous	\$29,768	\$9,401	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$0
	Municipal Bond Refund	\$0	\$7,646	\$6,003	\$7,000	\$997
	Total Revenues	\$7,493,054	\$8,015,060	\$8,461,838	\$9,061,236	\$599,397
EXPENSES	Direct Instruction	\$2,846,459	\$3,129,728	\$3,098,533	\$3,501,948	\$403,415
	ELL	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,250	\$2,200	(\$50)
	Reg Ed Behavior Interventionist	\$0	\$7,800	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Preschool	\$132,149	\$123,028	\$175,013	\$230,351	\$55,338
	Special Ed	\$624,538	\$505,847	\$524,966	\$704,220	\$179,254
	Vocational Education	\$190,080	\$185,820	\$208,784	\$235,207	\$26,423
	Student Activities	\$48,942	\$58,189	\$63,052	\$90,256	\$27,204
	Athletics	\$152,778	\$155,464	\$176,717	\$169,301	(\$7,417)
	Guidance	\$288,275	\$296,800	\$305,894	\$337,387	\$31,493
	Nurse	\$9,938	\$9,675	\$16,864	\$11,125	(\$5,739)
	Staff Development	\$28,230	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$84,800	\$4,800
	Library	\$117,634	\$126,137	\$127,551	\$143,038	\$15,487
	Curriculum	\$89,267	\$101,709	\$98,335	\$57,694	(\$40,641)
	Enrichment	\$6,360	\$36,092	\$31,425	\$54,000	\$22,575
	Computer Instruction Services	\$263,893	\$264,077	\$265,308	\$289,641	\$24,333
	School Board	\$113,132	\$126,750	\$135,072	\$130,896	(\$4,176)
	Staff Relations/Negot./Conting.	\$102,951	\$252,650	\$663,420	\$294,342	(\$369,078)
	Principal	\$213,984	\$219,819	\$217,955	\$335,485	\$117,531
	Dean of Students	\$96,083	\$98,068	\$99,936	\$110,097	\$10,159
	School Administration	\$180,869	\$179,553	\$185,870	\$169,115	(\$16,755)
	Fiscal Services	\$1,501	\$1,150	\$2,442	\$1,992	(\$450)
	Plant Operations	\$592,859	\$656,828	\$663,568	\$731,478	\$67,910
	Transportation	\$377,079	\$368,480	\$364,841	\$384,470	\$19,629
	Pior Year Miscellaneous Expense	\$12,544	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Rowland Foundation	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Transfer to Food Service	\$37,085	\$58,667	\$77,776	\$164,710	\$86,934
	Central Office Assessment	\$376,326	\$376,326	\$446,757	\$313,180	(\$133,578)
	Early Childhood Spec. Ed Assess.	\$47,903	\$47,903	\$32,997	\$74,640	\$41,643
	K-12 Spec. Ed. Teachers Assess.	\$525,111	\$524,416	\$348,510	\$433,752	\$85,242
	Ropes Course Assessment	\$1,234	\$1,234	\$1,293	\$1,302	\$9
	ELL Teacher Assessment	\$15,851	\$15,851	\$17,600	\$12,571	(\$5,029)
	Behavior Specialist Billing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,325	\$35,325
	Technology Director Assessment	\$0	\$0	\$29,109	\$31,117	\$2,008
SU Assessment Surplus	\$0	\$0	\$0	-\$74,402	(\$74,402)	
Total Expenses	\$7,493,054	\$8,015,060	\$8,461,838	\$9,061,236	\$599,397	

Three Prior Years Comparisons: Figures as Provided by Vermont Agency of Education

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Expenditures				
Adopted or Warned Union District Budget (incl. special programs & full technical center expenditures)	\$8,313,839	\$8,328,091	\$8,459,981	\$9,664,585
Adopted or Warned Union District Budget Plus Articles	\$8,313,839	\$8,328,091	\$8,459,981	\$9,664,585
Total Union Expenditures	\$8,313,839	\$8,328,091	\$8,459,981	\$9,664,585
Revenues				
Union Revenues (categorical grants, donations, tuitions, surplus, federal, etc.)	\$1,161,555	\$1,320,037	\$1,209,092	\$1,533,349
Total Offsetting Union Revenues	\$1,161,555	\$1,320,037	\$1,209,092	\$1,533,349
Education Spending	\$7,152,284	\$7,008,054	\$7,250,889	\$8,131,236
Blue Mountain USD Equalized Pupils	415.23	414.70	401.77	385.05
Education Spending per Equalized Pupil	\$17,224.87	\$16,899.09	\$18,047.36	\$21,117.35
Less Share of SpEd Costs in Excess of \$60,000 for an Individual (per eqpup)	\$3.09	\$11.17		
Excess Spending Threshold	\$18,756.00	\$ 18,789.00	\$19,997.00	\$22,204.00
Per Pupil Figure Used for Calculating District Equalized Tax Rate	\$17,225	\$16,899	\$18,047	\$21,117.35
Union Spending Adjustment (minimum of 100%)	156.618%	149.325%	135.552%	136.426%
Anticipated Equalized Union Homestead Tax Rate to be Prorated	\$1.5662	\$1.4933	\$1.3555	\$1.3643
Prorated Homestead Union Tax Rates for Members of Blue Mountain USD				
Groton	1.5662	1.4933	1.3555	1.3643
Ryegate	1.5662	1.4933	1.3555	1.3643
Wells River	1.5662	1.4933	1.3555	1.3643
Anticipated Income cap percent to be prorated from Blue Mountain USD	2.55%	2.45%	2.26%	2.40%

BMU Enrollment

Grade Level	Early Ed	PreK	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total
# Students	9	34	20	37	24	31	26	32	26	24	30	31	35	27	30	416

Blue Mountain Union School
2420 Route 302
Wells River, Vermont 05081



802-757-2711 | bmuschool.org