



# VOICE OF THE VALLEY

THE RIVER VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER - 2023 BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE

River Valley Community,

It feels just like yesterday that students and staff left for summer break. But now, the excitement of a new school year is just around the corner. The signs are all around: Football, marching band, soccer, volleyball, flag corps, tennis, and cross country have all been practicing for the Fall Season. Our custodians and buildings and grounds staff have worked hard preparing our schools for a new year, and teachers have been getting their classrooms ready. We cannot wait for our first day of school on August 16th! Below are some of the programs and upgrades we wanted to highlight for the 2023-24 school year:

**A. Bus Safety Awareness Campaign: "Stop on Red, Kids Ahead!"**

Last year, River Valley buses experienced over 100 "red light runners" - incidents when a vehicle passed a bus with red lights flashing and stopped to pick up or drop off a student. River Valley Bus Driver, Heather Demorest, experienced a close call one morning two years ago when one of her students was nearly hit by an oncoming vehicle that did not stop when she was stopped with her red lights flashing. Her experience led to this campaign to raise awareness of the need for vehicles to stop when buses have red lights flashing. Please help us to spread the word and protect our children: "Stop on Red, Kids Ahead!"

**B. All Heritage and Liberty Students Qualify for Free Breakfast this Year**

Each morning, every student at our elementary schools will be able to have free breakfast in their classroom as an expansion of the opportunity that has been available over the past few for our Liberty students.

**C. USDA Farm to School Grant**

River Valley Schools was one of only five schools in the state of Ohio to receive this grant. This grant allows for more opportunities to expand our RV Farm area and to grow fresh produce that can be used by our food service in meals for our students. This will also allow for our Biology, Agricultural Science, and FFA students to have more hands-on learning opportunities.

**D. Building Safety Upgrades**

Over the next couple of months we will be highlighting the various improvements to our buildings as part of the State of Ohio Safety Grants. Each of our four buildings received the maximum \$100,000 from the state grants. Stay tuned for more information.

We are looking forward to a great school year. Go Vikings!

**Adam Wickham** - Superintendent



**Adam Wickham**  
RV Schools Superintendent





Welcome to the '23-'24 school year!! Bus routes can be viewed on the RV website under Transportation ([rvk12.org/bus](http://rvk12.org/bus)). All open enrollment students will not have transportation for the first two weeks of school. Please make sure FinalForms are updated, indicating your student(s) needs transportation and the address is correct. Please contact Trista Thorpe at 740-725-5410 to sign your student up for open enrollment busing. This is on a first-come, first-served basis. Open enrollment students will be able to start riding a bus on August 29th.

There will be buses at the elementary Open House again this year. Kindergarten students are encouraged to stop and learn how to load/unload a bus and practice an emergency bus evacuation. All students will be given a flyer with information on loading/unloading a bus and rules for the bus. Parents are encouraged to go over these rules and procedures with the students.

# SCHOOL NURSE NOTES



As we prepare to begin the 2023-2024 school year, we are examining vaccination documentation for our students. The State of Ohio mandates that students have an updated vaccination record or a valid vaccination waiver on file to attend a public school.

As time goes by and booster shots are recommended, it becomes crucial for us to review our records to ensure the health and safety of all our students. If your child is entering Kindergarten, 7th grade, or 12th grade, I kindly ask you to consult with your physician to confirm your child's vaccinations are up-to-date.

To comply with state regulations, please submit an updated copy of your child's vaccination record or a vaccination waiver to the school office or upload it through FinalForms before October 1st. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated, and we eagerly anticipate a safe and healthy school year.

## THE 2023 VIKING BASH

Friday, August 25, 4:30 – 6:00pm  
River Valley High School Campus  
(Between the Middle School and Tennis Courts)



- Free Food!
- Apparel Vendors & Shaved Ice
- Bouncy Houses

*PLUS - Kids PreK-5th Grade get a free football game ticket w/ parent ticket purchase*

## News from the Food Service Team

Even though we aren't serving meals in our cafeterias during summer break, it has been a busy one for The Lunch Bunch.

Through our Summer Food Service Program, we provided almost 28,000 meals to kids in Marion and Morrow counties.



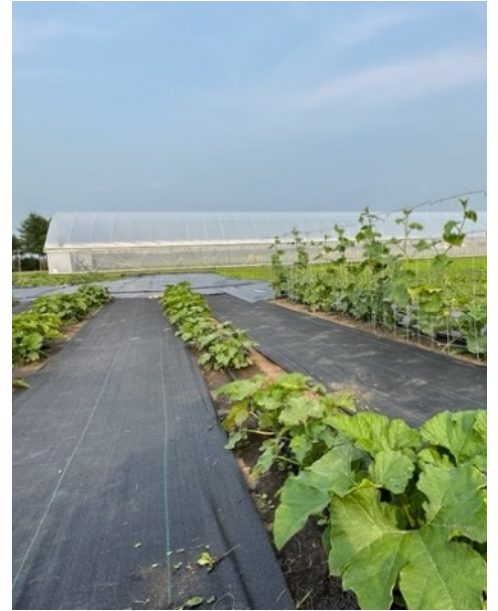
The Lunch Bunch Food Truck has made its way to several community events this summer. Through these events, we have quickly learned the great potential to build revenue that can be reinvested into our school food service program. Contact The Lunch Bunch team at 740-725-5420 or [jkitts@rvk12.org](mailto:jkitts@rvk12.org) to book your next event!



The Lunch Bunch continues to grow and serve our communities. We have built a new partnership with the Morrow County Seniors on Center to provide meals for the Morrow County Meals on Wheels program. Even though this service has just begun a few weeks ago, we have learned valuable lessons on recipes and nutrition that will prove helpful in our school cafeterias. Again, revenue generated from this will go directly into our food service program for our students.



Our farm program continues progressing, with the installation of our high tunnel completed at the end of June. Shortly after, on July 21, 2023, it was announced that River Valley Schools Food Service Department was awarded \$100,000 from the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program. River Valley's Food Service Department was one of five programs selected by the USDA to be awarded in 2023 in Ohio. We currently have a variety of vegetables growing in our outdoor space and look forward to more learning opportunities for our students. Visit [rvk12.org/farmentoschool](http://rvk12.org/farmentoschool) for more information.



See Upcoming Events at:  
[rvk12.org/calendar](http://rvk12.org/calendar)



## Treasurer's Talk

The May five-year forecast reflects the reality of River Valley Local School District's financial situation over the course of the next five years. Despite additional anticipated funding passed in HB33, the state biennium budget for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, our District is still expected to have a significant revenue shortfall due to current levy terms expiring during the forecast. As many of you know, the two levies placed on the ballot in the May 2, 2023 special election did not pass. After listening to members of our community over the last several months the Board needed to weigh both the needs of the District and the feedback received from the community before deciding what the next steps forward would be. In response, the District will be placing two issues on the November 7, 2023 ballot, as well as making financial changes beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

The two issues being placed on the ballot by the Board are similar to what was on the ballot in May 2023, but with modifications in terms for both levies, as well as the dollar amount for the bond, based on the feedback that was received from the community. The first issue that will be on the ballot will be a Bond+Permanent Improvement (PI) combination levy. The bond component of the issue will be a 20-year bond for \$10M, a reduction in term from 25-years to 20-years and a reduction in the dollar amount from \$21.1M to \$10M; the PI component of the issue will be a 5-year, 2.5 mill PI levy, a reduction in term from continuing to 5-years. The second issue that will be on the ballot will be the Earned Income Tax Renewal. The income tax renewal will be the same 1% of earned income as is currently in place for a term of 5 years, a reduction from the 20-year term proposed in May.

In addition to the levies that will be on the ballot in November, the Board of Education has implemented some changes for the 2023-2024 school year to save money and assist with our financial situation. While these changes will help, the need for additional changes if the levies do not pass in November remains. The changes being made during 2023-2024 include: reducing open enrollment numbers, 5% reduction in building supply budgets, elimination of the District's virtual school, no parking lot improvements, and nine positions not filled following staff resignations.

We appreciate and value the feedback from our community over the last several months. However, the reality is that the needs of our District have not changed, which is why we decided to continue forward with the two issues we had in May, but with the modifications outlined above. We have building projects that still need to be addressed, such as roofs, HVAC, and parking lots, along with the continued goal to provide our students a quality education and be a valuable resource to our community.

You can learn more about the District's finances by visiting the Treasurer page of our website at [rvk12.org](http://rvk12.org). We encourage everyone to learn the facts about the issues that will be on the ballot and to stay informed about its impact on our schools and community.



**Brittany Keller**  
RV Schools Treasurer



View more resources  
from the  
Business Office at:  
[rvk12.org/fiscal](http://rvk12.org/fiscal)

**Let's Go Vikings**

# Heritage Elementary

## Welcome Back

We hope everyone had a wonderful and relaxing summer! It is nice for students, families and staff to get away, reset, refresh and get ready for another school year. We are excited to kick off the 2023-2024 school year and this is just a reminder that school begins on Wednesday, August 16th.

## New Staff Members

We would like to welcome two new staff members to our Heritage Team for the 2023-2024 school year. Charity Pahl will be joining us as a fourth grade teacher. She has taught in the Marion City School District and Buckeye Valley School District. Also, Allison Howard will be joining both the Heritage and Liberty staffs as the new RV Elementary Art Teacher. We welcome both Charity and Allison to our team!

## Kindergarten Gentle Start Days

The kindergarten students will follow a gentle start schedule for the first several days of school. The schedule for kindergarten students is as follows:

- Wednesday, August 16: Last Names starting with A-G will attend only.
- Thursday, August 17: Last Names starting with H-N will attend only.
- Friday, August 18: Last Names starting with O-P will attend only.
- Monday, August 21: ALL kindergarten students report.

## Staff Team Building

Many of the Heritage Staff Members took some time for some fun and team building during the month of July and participated in a mud run. There were many laughs, challenges and lots of mud! It gave staff the opportunity to reconnect during the middle of summer and have some fun while doing it.



## Open House

We would like to invite everyone to join us on Monday, August 14th for our Heritage Open House. Open House will be held from 4:30-6:00 p.m. When you arrive, you will be directed to the gym where you will discover who your child's teacher is. Please feel free to bring your child's supplies to Open House, so that you may drop them off to your child's classroom.

Mel Comstock - Heritage Elementary Principal

# Liberty Elementary

I have been in education for 29 years and taught elementary and middle school at Elgin before transitioning to River Valley Middle School as the assistant principal over the past two years. My wife is also in education as the superintendent of Ridgedale Schools. We have been married for 26 years and have 4 wonderful children. As principal, I will emphasize the Viking P.R.I.D.E. matrix that focuses on the values we want to see from our students. We will work as a staff to develop **P**ositive and **R**espectful students who live with **I**ntegrity, make a **D**ifference, and expect **E**xcellence. These core values will be key to our success inside and out of the classroom.

I look forward to meeting and talking with you as we begin the 2023-24 school year. Don't forget, our open house is Monday, August 14, from 4:30-6:00 p.m.

## Go Vikings!

Tom Bower - Liberty Elementary Principal

# RV Middle School

Dear Middle School Families,

I hope everyone has been able to enjoy summer break and your students have been able to recharge before coming back to school in a few weeks. River Valley Middle School will now be operating on a 9 period schedule. We are no longer able to block Math classes, but English/Language Arts (ELA) classes will stay blocked. This is a minor adjustment to the day.

## Middle School Cafeteria Prices

- Breakfast
  - Free and Reduced - \$0 / Full price - \$1.75
- Lunch
  - Free and Reduced - \$0 / Full Price - \$3.05

## School Fees

School Fees are \$40.00 and can be paid by visiting [rvk12.org](http://rvk12.org) and click on Parents at the top and selecting **MySchoolBucks**. You may also load money onto your student's lunch account in MySchoolBucks.

## Conferences

- ➔ September 14 - 4:30 - 7:30pm
- ➔ November 9 - 4:30 - 7:30pm
- ➔ January 23 - 4:30 - 7:30pm
- ➔ April 11 - 4:30 - 7:30pm

## PBIS

We will be continuing our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) this year. Each morning students will be reminded to demonstrate their P.R.I.D.E. Viking P.R.I.D.E. at the middle school stands for being:

**P**ositive  
**R**espectful  
**I**ntegrity (Live with Integrity)  
**D**ifference (Make a Difference)  
**E**xcellence (Expect Excellence)

Staff members will have the opportunity to nominate students every month who exhibit these values.

## New Staff

- ★ **Marty Schuster** is our new Assistant Principal. He is a veteran teacher and administrator that will be a great addition to RVMS.
- ★ **Susan Everhart** will be taking over as our 6th grade SPED teacher. She is a retired teacher and was in our building for most of the 2022-2023 school year as a substitute.
- ★ **Madison Staton** will be joining us as a new 7th grade SPED teacher this year. She recently graduated from Bluffton University.
- ★ **Jake McDivitt** is another new teacher for RVMS and will be teaching 7th grade Math. He recently graduated from Otterbein University and competed in tennis in college.

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!

## VIKING PRIDE!

Mike Davis - RVMS Principal

## Open House Reminder

- Heritage & Liberty Elementary  
Monday, August 14th 4:30PM - 6:00PM
- River Valley Middle School  
Monday, August 14th: 5:30PM - 7:30PM
- River Valley High School  
Monday, August 14th: 5:30PM - 7:30PM

# RV High School

## Welcome Back to the 2023-24 School Year

I hope that everyone has been having an enjoyable and relaxing summer. I would like to welcome our students and families to the high school for the 2023-24 school year. I am excited for the start of the school year and am looking forward to its beginning.

I would like to share how wonderful it was to see that we had a number of students participate in the Marion County Fair and also students that participated in the presentation of "Beauty and the Beast", held at the Marion Palace Theatre this summer. It's always so encouraging when I see current students and past graduates that are engaged in activities in which they have a passion for and the community in which they live.

At the school, our Buildings and Grounds staff and custodians have been working very hard preparing the buildings and campus for the upcoming school year. Thank you to all of them for their hard work!

Another great thing to see is our students back on campus already, as the start of the fall sports season is beginning and the teams and band are preparing for scrimmages and games. Best wishes to all our students, coaches, and advisors involved in an extra-curricular this year! Thank you for representing River Valley High School!

## RV High School Open House & Final Forms

The RV High School Open House will be held on Monday, August 14th, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. I want to extend an invitation to our students and their parents and/or guardians to join us that evening to meet the teachers and staff and see the facilities.

Parents and/or Legal Guardians and students; Please log into Final Forms and update your information. This information is used to make sure we have the correct contact information for the 2023-2024 school year, as well as other important documents that need to be completed.

## New Staff

I would like to welcome the following new staff to the high school.

- ★ Kelly Triplat – Kelly will be teaching Biology and also helping with Math at the high school.
- ★ Kim Robinson – Kim is new to the high school and will now be teaching math at both the middle and high school.

## Upcoming Dates

- ➔ Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> – High School Open House 5:30-7:30pm
- ➔ Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> – First day of school for all high school students
- ➔ Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup> – School Picture Day – Smile!
- ➔ Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup> – Viking Bash and first home football game (1-hour early dismissal)

Again, I look forward to seeing our student and community as they come out and support the student activities throughout the year. Go Vikes!  
Barry Dutt - High School Principal

"Alone we can do so little.  
**Together**  
we can do so much."  
— Helen Keller





## River Valley Local Schools Board of Education Members

**PRESIDENT- DON RENGERT**  
**VICE PRESIDENT- CHERYL BEINEKE**  
**STACI GLENN-SHORT**  
**ROBERT STUMP**  
**BEN ALBRIGHT**

### **River Valley Administration Office** **740-725-5400**

Heritage Elementary  
740-725-5500

Liberty Elementary  
740-725-5600

River Valley Middle School  
740-725-5700

River Valley High School  
740-725-5800

**“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.”**

**– Robert Collier**