



# VOICE OF THE VALLEY

THE RIVER VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER - 2024 WINTER ISSUE

River Valley Community,

As the leaves drop from the trees and farmers harvest the fields, the unmistakable signs of fall are all around. The first grading period of school has gone by so quickly that it is almost hard to believe. We are excited for a great start to the school year, and in September, we received more great news to celebrate!

The State Report Card showed the district received 4 out of 5 stars! Only 21% of districts in the state of Ohio received this 4-star rating. Another bright spot was that Liberty Elementary School received a rating of 4.5 stars, the highest rating of the four schools in the district! Only 25% of all schools in the state of Ohio scored 4.5 stars or higher. Join us in celebrating our students, parents, and staff on the results of the 2023-24 State Report Card.

**Bond Updates:** Our bond projects continue to move forward, with the parking lots and tennis court projects being completed over the summer. Below is an update on the roof replacement and HVAC upgrades:

### Roofs:

Meade Roofing has nearly completed the roof replacement at Heritage Elementary. They will then move on to Liberty Elementary and should complete the project by the end of December or early January.

Revere Roofing has begun putting the standing seam metal panels on the High School and continues replacing the flat rubber roofs. The masonry work continues on both the Middle and High School to repair the through-wall flashing. Shingle removal on the Middle School is projected to begin later in October. The MS/HS roof replacement is expected to be completed in early January.

River Valley Schools  
Overall Rating  
Exceeds State Standards

<b>94%</b> STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE	<b>★★★★★</b> GRADUATION RATE	<b>★★★★★</b> GAP CLOSING	<b>85.9%</b> ENROLLED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
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RVHS Metal and Low Slope Roof Installation

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## HVAC:

All Temp Refrigeration was selected during the bid process to replace the following:

- Middle School Chiller (AC unit for the building)
- Two Roof Top Units (RTU) at both Heritage and Liberty Elementary School (these units provide the heating and cooling for nearly all of the classroom spaces).

The above HVAC upgrades are projected to be completed by the middle of 2025.

Thank you for your continued support!

Go Vikings! - **Adam Wickham** - Superintendent



Now that we are two months into the school year, bus routes are becoming more consistent with pick-up and drop-off times.

Please make sure your student is waiting outside for the bus at least five minutes prior to the pick-up time.

We also want to welcome our new Bus Drivers, Rachel Foster & Jeffrey Jordan.

## Grow Your Own Teacher (GYOT) Scholarship Program

Last year, the Ohio Department of Higher Education launched an initiative called Grow Your Own Teacher (GYOT) Scholarship Program. This program is designed to help Ohio school districts recruit, develop, and retain their own students and staff to become teachers within the district. We are excited to announce an RV staff member, Paige Conklin, was awarded a GYOT Scholarship.



**Paige Conklin**

Paige is an educational aide in one of our Pre-School classrooms at Liberty Elementary School and is currently pursuing coursework to become a teacher.

## RVHS Sophomore Liberty Davis in Germany for CBYX Program

From Caledonia, Ohio, to halfway across the world, River Valley High School Sophomore Liberty Davis is soaking in the German culture as part of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) Program. Liberty was selected through an intensive process and is the only student from Ohio who was chosen for this prestigious program. She went to Germany in August and, along with the other students in the CBYX program, took part in language immersion preparation courses. Liberty will be assigned a host family and attend school for over a year in Germany. She was also recently featured in a Marion Star article highlighting her participation in the program. Liberty is the daughter of Chad and Melisha Davis of Caledonia.



**Liberty Davis**





# River Valley Schools Safety Update

**Adam Wickham, Superintendent - October/November 2024**

At River Valley Local Schools, protecting our students and staff is our highest priority. We take a multi-layered approach to safety in our district, and we continue to evaluate our safety protocols, identify areas where upgrades are needed, and propose future safety programs to protect our students and staff.

## **School Safety Plans and Safety Drills**

The School Safety Plans (or Emergency Operation Plans) are at the heart of our safety-driven mindset at River Valley Schools. These were updated in the summer of 2024 and are reviewed annually.

Every building in the district practices monthly safety drills focusing on one or more of the following ALICE principles: Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. ALICE focuses on options-based decision-making, and for younger students, we use the simpler phrase: "Run, Hide, Fight." Depending on the situation, different actions can be taken by staff or students to protect themselves. Staff members are also encouraged to review and practice these safety procedures in their classrooms.

## **Secure Entrances and Cameras**

All buildings have secured front entrances where visitors must ring a doorbell camera to be given access to enter. Doors are automatically locked and staff can access them with a key card. All visitors who come into our buildings during school hours MUST report to the office and have their government-issued ID scanned by our Raptor Visitor Management System.

Video cameras are also in various places throughout all buildings. These cameras are also accessible by the Marion County Sheriff's Office, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with live access to the video feed.

## **School Resource Officer**

River Valley Schools partners with the Marion County Sheriff's Office to provide a School Resource Officer (SRO) for our district. Our SRO is Deputy Brett Rinker, a graduate of River Valley High School. He is a member of the Special Response Team (SRT) in Marion County and works to provide ALICE training and oversee our safety drills and other related training.

## **Armed Staff**

In January of 2023, the River Valley Local Board of Education approved a resolution authorizing the use of armed staff in the district. House Bill 99 (HB 99) allows districts to give written authorization for the use of armed staff in Ohio school districts. River Valley has a select number of staff who have met and exceeded the minimum training required by the state of Ohio to be armed staff.

A few of the requirements outlined in HB 99 for authorized armed staff include:

- Receive written authorization from the Board of Education to be armed within a school safety zone.
- Complete 24 hours of initial training on Active Shooter Response, firearms training, and school safety as detailed in HB 99. Training can be provided by the Ohio School Safety Center or an OSSC-approved trainer.
- Hold a valid Concealed Handgun License and complete a Background Records Check.
- Complete an 8-hour annual re-qualification training.

There are two primary reasons for adopting the armed staff program:

1. Our schools will no longer be soft targets and unprotected.
2. Armed staff provide a more immediate response time to an active shooter and knowledge of. Unfortunately, in rural areas, response times from law enforcement can often be minutes away.

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## Layered Approach to Safety

As you can see in the graphic below, River Valley Schools takes a multi-faceted approach to safety, utilizing several layers; everything from Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to hardened security measures for our buildings to safety drills. There is no panacea for school safety, but all of the layered components work together to provide crucial elements of protection for our staff and students.

# A LAYERED APPROACH TO SAFETY

1	School Safety Plans - Updated every three years (2024)
2	Safety Drills & Rapid Release Practice
3	ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) or (Run, Hide, Fight)
4	Secured Entrances
5	Cameras
6	Two-Way Radios (Increased Communication)
7	School Resource Officer (SRO)
8	Safety Detectors (MS/HS)
9	Bus Cameras & Bus Driver Safety Training
10	Raptor Visitor Management (Scans ID's for Background Check on all visitors)
11	Building Upgrades (Vestibules, Window Film, and Security Shutters)
12	Coordinating Access for Law Enforcement
13	"See Something, Say Something" Safer Ohio Tipline
14	Behavioral Threat Assessment (6-12)
15	Social-Emotional Learning & Mental Health Services
16	Armed Staff

As mentioned above, the use of armed staff is meant to be just one layer of a comprehensive safety plan. If all 15 layers fail to prevent an active shooter, then armed staff are in place to respond to the threat.

### Staff, Students, Parents, and Community All Play a Role

While many of the above layers can work to provide safer schools, our community itself plays a significant role in keeping our schools safe. First, we encourage parents and families to talk with their children and grandchildren about sharing safety concerns with you to make our schools a safe place for all. Stress the importance of following the mindset of: "See Something, Say Something."

Another way to make our schools safer is for our community to use the Safer Ohio Schools Tipline (1-844-SAFER OH). This is operated by the Ohio Dept. of Homeland Security, and anyone can anonymously call or text, 24 hours a day, about a safety threat to any school or individual.

We also encourage all students, parents, and community members to contact the building principal or the district office to share safety concerns. If there is an imminent safety concern outside of school hours or over the weekend, we ask you to immediately contact law enforcement by calling 911.

Finally, every safety measure at River Valley is put in place to try to ensure our staff and students can go home safely to their families and loved ones each and every day. We want to thank you for your help in making River Valley Local Schools a safe place for our staff and students.

# Bond & PI Refresher

In November 2023, our community passed a bond + permanent improvement combination levy. This levy included two separate components, and each of the two components of this combination levy has specific allowable uses. As a refresher, I'd like to outline the intended uses, as well as some of the already completed projects and how they align with the factual information that was shared leading up to the November 2023 election. It is also important to remember that the bond + permanent improvement levy is separate from the income tax levy that was also renewed in November 2023.

The use of these funds is based on having separate silos where these dollars have specific allocated uses:

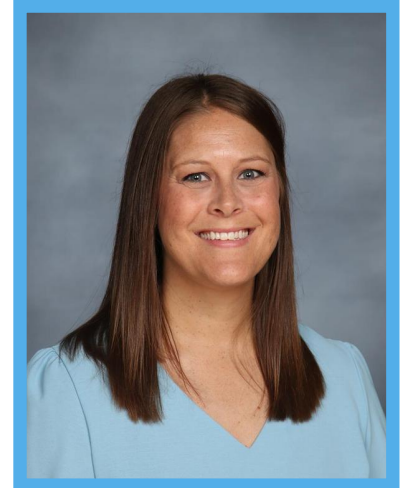
- Bond: addresses immediate capital improvement needs that will last five years or more (such as: roofs, parking lots, etc.)
- Permanent Improvement (PI) funds: address long-term capital improvement needs (such as: buses, flooring, desks, tables, chairs, paving maintenance, facility improvements, etc.)
- Income Tax: day-to-day operating expense

The bond component of the combination levy is a 20-year, \$10 million bond being used to address four immediate capital improvement needs:

- Roof replacement at all four buildings
  - Replacing shingles with standing seam metal and replacing all flat rubber roofs
- HVAC upgrades
  - Specifically, the chiller at the middle school and two rooftop units at each elementary building that provides heating and cooling for all the classrooms
- Parking lot paving
  - All parking lots were either milled down and repaved or seal coated along with deep patching done, where needed, which will put our district on a rotation schedule for maintenance moving forward in an attempt to prevent us from having to address all parking lot needs at the same time again in the future
- Replacement of the existing tennis courts
  - The five existing asphalt courts were taken down to the base with new drainage added, and the courts were replaced with five post-tension concrete courts that have a 20-year warranty to match the term of the bond. There are now lines for five tennis courts and eight pickleball courts, leaving the center court as a "championship" court for tennis only.

The permanent improvement (PI) component of the combination levy is a 5-year, 2.5-mill levy that generates approximately \$965,000 annually and is being used to address long-term capital improvement needs in the district. The administrative team built a capital improvement plan to help plan the rotation of addressing district capital improvement needs that are allowable with this funding source, such as:

- Buses (Example: This year, we purchased one new bus and will use this fund to purchase buses on a rotation in the future)
- Desks, chairs & flooring (Example: New HS & MS cafeteria tables)
- Security cameras & other security upgrades (Example: High School, Heritage, and Liberty secured entrance projects)
- Ongoing & preventative maintenance on HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and facilities (Examples: Heritage and Liberty student restroom sink replacements)
- Athletic Building upgrades (epoxy flooring over cracked concrete and tiles, lockers repainted)
- New door opening & door for the athletic training room in the athletic building
- Heritage and Liberty playground mulch replacement
- Parking lot ongoing maintenance
- Computers & technology



**Brittany Keller**

RV Schools Treasurer

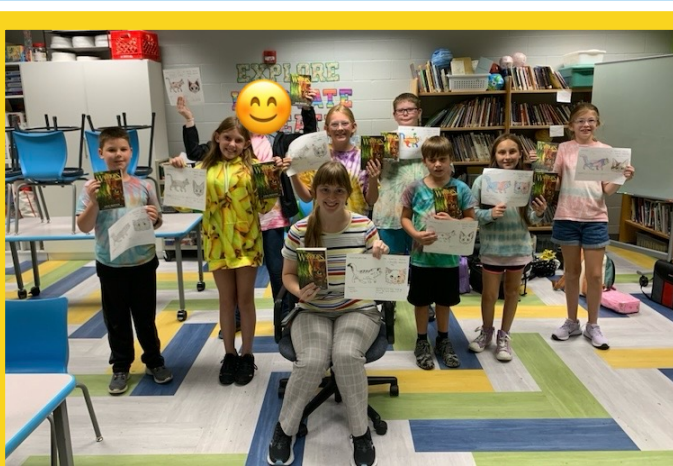




# Heritage Elementary News

## Kindergarten Bootcamp

Kindergartners worked during one of the first weeks of school on using school supplies properly. Each day, there was a supply challenge that the students took part in, and on Friday, they all received a certificate for working hard. These challenges included cutting, gluing, coloring with crayons and markers, and using Play-Doh and paint daubers.



Our first Book Club was led by Mrs. Shubirg, and the students read the book, *Warriors Into the Wild* by Erin Hunter. The books were donated and provided to the students by Modern Woodmen of America.



## Food for America -Grade 3 Field Trip

Our third-grade students went on the first field trip of the school year to the Marion County Fairgrounds to participate in the RV FFA's Food for America program. The students were able to interact with our FFA students and learn about agricultural programs. Each year, our students enjoy this program, and the RV FFA does an amazing job putting it all together!





### Heritage Clubs

The Heritage students have been given lots of opportunities to join some clubs this year. Mrs. Herdman has started several different clubs for the 2024-2025 school year: Book Club, Good Morning Club, and Try Something New Club.

The Good Morning Club is a group of students that stands at each entrance of the building in the morning to greet the students as they arrive and see a welcoming face as they enter the building.



The first meeting of the "Try Something New Club" met with Jordan Belton with Props & Pots. The students learned about plant propagation in both water and soil. They made a terrarium and took home new starter plants they propagated themselves.

## 2024 Farm to Summer Challenge Winners!

### Gourd Award Winners

River Valley Local Schools; Marion, Ohio  
River Valley Local Schools offered a variety of farm-to-summer activities to children. Children tried school-grown lemon cucumbers for Cucumber Crunch Day and made a cucumber salsa. Children also tried borage, an edible flower that tastes like cucumber. River Valley hosted a two-week farm camp for 25 kindergarten to 5th-grade students. During the two weeks, children participated in scarecrow making, learned about pollinators, and helped harvest vegetables from the school garden. Campers also made bee houses and planted pumpkin and carrot seeds. River Valley promoted Farm to Summer activities on the district's social media pages. Their program also received local media coverage

For more information on Ohio Farm to School projects in Ohio, click on the link below.

<http://ohioproud.org/2024-farm-to-summer-wrap-up/>



# Liberty Elementary News

Greetings, Liberty Elementary families. I would like to introduce myself as the new principal at Liberty Elementary School for the remainder of the school year. I am honored to be back in the River Valley School District, having recently retired as the RVHS principal. Since starting at Liberty on October 1st, I have enjoyed getting to see the students and working with the staff. I am excited to be part of the Liberty staff and look forward to a great school year.

Tucker the Turtle has also joined Liberty Elementary this school year as part of our social/emotional learning lessons. Tucker helps students to slow down, think about how they feel, and then respond appropriately. Tucker joined Ms. Jen in all her September classroom guidance lessons, focusing on tools and strategies that students can utilize to handle big emotions.

Students are encouraged to email Tucker the Turtle for guidance in solving problems they may encounter. Tucker also enjoys it when students send him jokes and memes!

Teachers have invited Tucker into their classrooms to celebrate whole class success, have allowed students to visit Tucker to help them calm down when needed, and have used him as a reward for accomplishing tasks in the classroom. Tucker is excited to continue his career at Liberty Elementary by helping students learn about feeling zones and how to regulate emotions.

I want to highlight the following events that our Liberty students have participated in at the beginning of the school year.

- The week of September 23rd, the Kindergarten students at Liberty attended Safety City of Marion. During their time at Safety City, the students learned about fire, the police, and stranger danger. At the end of that week, on Friday, September 27th, the Kindergarten students graduated from Safety City.
- The 3rd-grade students participated in Food for America on Friday, September 27th, hosted by the high school FFA members and advisors at the Marion County Fairgrounds. The focus of the program is to raise students' awareness of a variety of agricultural items, topics, and equipment. This is a great event that provides the opportunity for our high school FFA members to pass on what they have learned to the 3rd graders within the district.

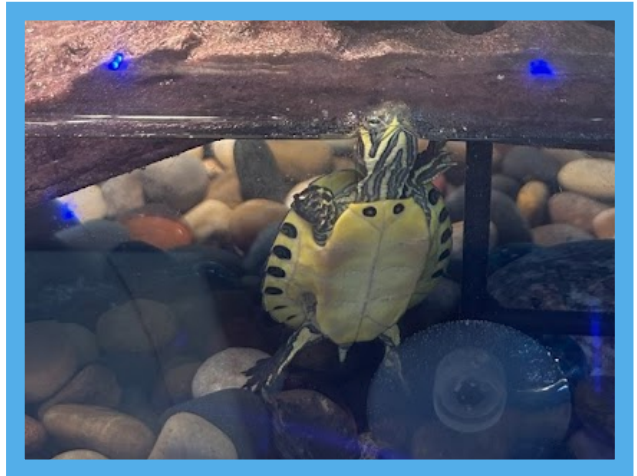
The following are upcoming events at Liberty Elementary.

- Thursday, November 7th - Liberty Elementary will be recognizing Veterans Day.

Again, I look forward to seeing our students and families at events occurring throughout the year.

Go Vikes!

Barry Dutt, Liberty Principal



Tucker the Turtle



Students learning fire safety at Safety City.



Students learning basic traffic laws at Safety City.



## Down on the F.A.R.M.

It's incredible to see how teachers are embracing the RV F.A.R.M. program this school year, transforming their classrooms into vibrant learning environments that engage students in practical, hands-on experiences.

Mr. Brown's Construction Trades class got right to work teaching students how to safely use many different tools and measuring devices while constructing more raised beds for our second high tunnel.

Ms Elfrink's Food Science class learned all about growing fresh herbs and how to dry and preserve them once they are ready to harvest.



Mr. Albert taught his Agriculture Science class different subject matters, from learning about parts of a flower and their functions from one of our tomato plants, how to test soil samples and the benefit of healthy soil on plants. The class also planted, cared for, and harvested some vegetables in the high tunnel.

## Farm to School Month

October was Farm to School month. To celebrate, our kitchen staff participated in the Great Lakes Region "Great Apple Crunch". Since our orchard was just planted this past spring, we partnered with Country Road Farms located on Salem Road right here in Marion County to acquire enough apples to serve all our students and staff fresh-picked, delicious Rosalee apples in a crunchy Apple Salad. As they enjoyed their fruit dessert, made from the freshest apples we have ever served, the nutrition team provided nutrition education material for students to learn the health benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables.



The RV F.A.R.M. has been a topic of conversation with many organizations that focus on Farm to School initiatives in Ohio, including the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and The Ohio State University Extension of Ohio. The success of this program heavily relies on the teamwork of our Food Service Department, RV F.A.R.M. team, Middle School Ag Science teachers, High School Food Science teachers, many teachers and staff from our elementary schools, and our district's Administrative team. Together, we are providing an enormous amount of hands-on learning opportunities to our students at all levels.

As we move forward, the continued success of the RV F.A.R.M. program will rely on maintaining these strong partnerships and exploring new opportunities for collaboration. Together, we are paving the way for a healthier, more informed generation and demonstrating the power of teamwork in transforming education through agriculture.

As the school year unfolds, it's essential to shine a light on our dedicated food service staff. With an unwavering commitment to feeding our students, they play a crucial role in nourishing young minds and bodies. Since we have rolled out the Community Eligibility Provision to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students, we continue to increase the number of meals we serve each day. Serving meals to nearly 85% percent of our students that are in attendance each day, these remarkable women pour their hearts into every meal, ensuring that no child goes hungry.

As we move forward this school year, let's continue to appreciate and applaud our remarkable food service staff. Thank you for all you do!

# Middle School News

The end of the first quarter of school is almost here, and many exciting things have taken place at River Valley Middle School.

## Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Our Viking PRIDE PBIS is in full swing. Parents who have signed up for the PBIS app can see their students' PBIS points and any comments teachers might make. Students who exhibit the Viking PRIDE characteristics (Be Positive, Be Respectful, Live with Integrity, Make a Difference, and Expect Excellence) can earn PBIS points that they can exchange for various items. The end of the quarter will culminate with an all-school PBIS reward that students can earn with enough points. The middle school is looking to accentuate the positive behaviors our students are exhibiting.

## New Courses

Students have several new courses they may be involved in this year. Students may be in one of the following courses: Reader's Theatre, Creative Writing, Environmental Science, Genius Hour, Current Events, Journalism, and Digital Arts. Our teachers are doing a great job of creating fantastic learning opportunities in each one of these new courses.

## Extra Curricular Activities

Our students have also had many opportunities for extracurricular activities. Our cross country, football, and volleyball teams have all had success this year, while Mr. Albert and Mr. Kinzel have the RVMS Archery Club up and running.

## Parent Square

Teachers are having success with communication using the platform Parent Square. The platform is used to communicate building and district updates and alerts, while teachers have the ability to message classes or even parents directly. If you haven't downloaded the app, you will want to do so.

## Building Projects

We are also noticing building changes at the middle school. We have new cafeteria tables paid for by permanent improvement funds. You may also notice that the roofing project has reached RVMS. We thank the taxpayers of River Valley for graciously supporting the school district and these projects.

RVMS is excited about the wonderful start to our school year and all the great things that are yet to come!

Go Vikes!

Tom Bower - RVMS Principal

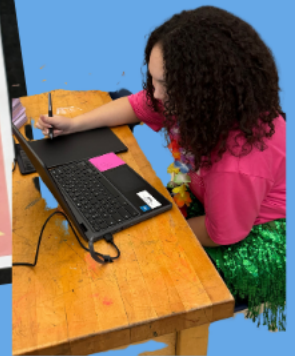




# ARTBYTES: INTRO TO DIGITAL ARTS AT RVMS



Thanks to a Marion Foundation TEACH grant, this new art class became possible for our middle school students. The generous grant allowed the purchase of new tools to begin the creation of this class. Students have been excited to dive into learning.



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





# High School News

We have had a tremendous start to the school year here at River Valley High School. Our focus coming into the year has been to create a safe and organized environment that allows our students to bring their best each and every day. Our staff has done a great job in helping make this happen.

RVHS has benefited greatly from bond and permanent improvement items since the beginning of the summer. A couple of examples are our new parking lots that have numbered spaces for students. This allows students to have one less thing to worry about as they come to school and creates an overall safer atmosphere in our parking lots. We also have new cafeteria tables with attached stools that have greatly improved the environment in our cafeteria. It creates a quieter and safer atmosphere in the cafeteria and has helped contribute to a decrease in student discipline issues during that part of the day.

Looking forward to the remainder of the fall, River Valley High School will be finishing the fall sports season strong while heading into another busy winter season. Please make sure that student forms are updated on FinalForms and that you are mindful of eligibility requirements and expiring physicals should you plan to participate in winter sports.



RVHS would like to thank our community and board of education for their generous support, to purchase new cafeteria tables for students to enjoy.

## HS Administration Contact Information

- Travis Stout - Principal - [tstout@rvk12.org](mailto:tstout@rvk12.org) - 740-725-5805
  - Kyle Strzelecki - Assistant Principal - [kstrzelecki@rvk12.org](mailto:kstrzelecki@rvk12.org) - 740-725-5800 ext. 1809
  - Sage Brannon - Athletic & Activities Director- [sbrannon@rvk12.org](mailto:sbrannon@rvk12.org) - 740-725-5806
- \* Please feel free to contact us anytime with questions or concerns.

**November 8th, 2024**  
*All Veterans Welcome*  
**RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL**  
**VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION**

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR A LIGHT BREAKFAST, PROGRAM AND LUNCH. VETERANS ARE WELCOME TO STAY AND TALK TO STUDENTS IN SMALL GROUPS BEGINNING AT 11AM (AFTER LUNCH).**  
**REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 7:15AM IN RVHS GYMNASIUM, WITH THE BUILDING WIDE PROGRAM BEGINNING AT 8:00AM.**

**PLEASE RSVP BY SCANNING THE QR CODE, OR CALLING RVHS GUIDANCE SECRETARY, ANNETTE STUMP AT 740-725-5800 (EXT. 1802)**







RV Homecoming Court (left to right) - Freshman-Sutton Weston, Sophomore-Avery Street, Senior-Madeline McFarland, Senior-Sidney Street, Senior-Gabrielle Garrett, Junior-Kamryn Fowler (Not Pictured - King Court-Daniel Laytart, Chase Ebert, and Carter Park



Congratulations to our Homecoming Queen, Gabrielle Garrett, pictured here with her parents, Jody and Kelly Garrett.



Congratulations to our HS and MS band for their fantastic performance last week. Mr. Neff, our band director, is doing a great job in his first year leading our instrumental music department.



Congratulations to our junior class powderpuff team, who defeated the sophomore team and the senior team on their way to this year's crown of Powderpuff Champions. Great job to ALL of our kids who helped coach and participate in the games.

**Let's Go Vikings**

# Food for America - 2024

On the 27th of September, the River Valley FFA/ agriscience department put on one of the most impactful events they take on each year, Food for America. Over 150 high school students and members attended this event. During this time, RVHS students hosted a total of 130 students from Heritage and Liberty elementary schools. Elementary students were treated to a day full of fun, agricultural-based education. They moved through various stations that were organized, created, and planned by the high school students. Others served the students as group leaders.



Many of these younger students were thrilled to have an opportunity to see and learn about lots of these agricultural concepts with real-life examples, such as at the equine station and the tractor safety demonstration. Our high school students were excited to have this opportunity to promote agriculture and share their passions with the next generation!

## Farm Science Review Field Trip

On the 19th of September, the River Valley FFA and aviation department went on a field trip to the Farm Science Review located in London, Ohio. 120 students and members attended this trip. On this field trip, they got to see a lot of new innovations alongside

traditional farm technology. For lunch, students had their pick over lots of good fair food and other delicious food trucks and tents. While the students walked around, they enjoyed getting lots of free items like bags, stickers, and even walking sticks. But this field trip wasn't all centered on free stuff and fun. The students also learned about new farming practices and equipment and how it's used while networking with professionals in the agricultural industry. Chapter member Aiden Jordan said, "It is a good mixture of fun and learning all in one place."



Download the  
**ParentSquare** app today!

Stay involved with your student's learning and activities at school. From anywhere.

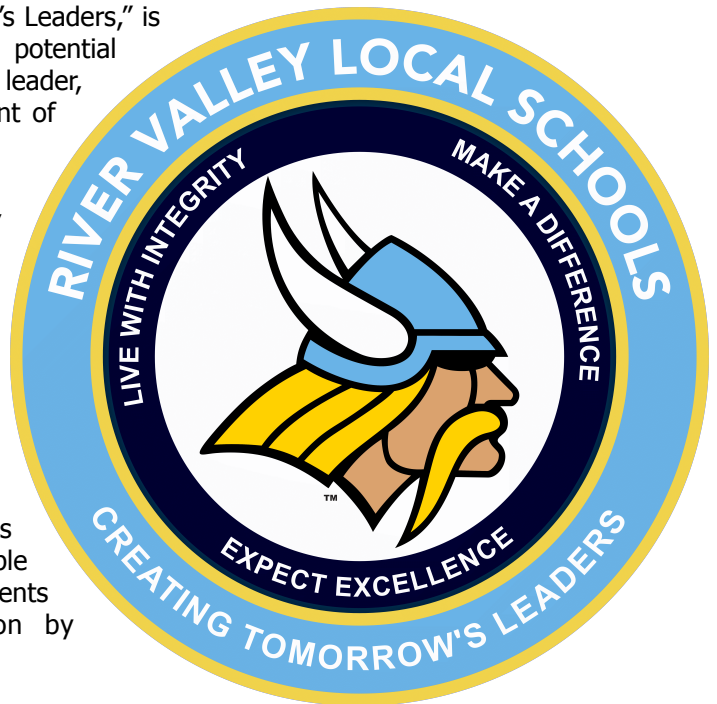




# Creating Tomorrow's Leaders

At River Valley Local School, our motto, "Creating Tomorrow's Leaders," is more than just words; it's a commitment to nurturing the potential within each student. But what does it truly mean to be a leader, and how can we, as a community, support the development of these future leaders?

Leadership is Vision. A leader sees beyond the present, envisioning a future that others might not yet see. They inspire others with their vision, encouraging them to strive for greatness and to believe in the possibility of a better tomorrow. In October, we had a guest speaker for our staff professional development. Dr. Paul Imhoff, a nationally recognized school leader and former Upper Arlington school superintendent, provided a keynote address focused on leadership. During his presentation, Paul shared his journey and how his community and educators helped him overcome many of the various barriers that were put in his way as a young person. He shared how these influential people encouraged him to believe in himself and dream big. As parents and community members, you can foster this vision by encouraging our students to dream big and think creatively.



Leadership is Courage. It takes courage to make difficult decisions, to stand up for what is right, and to face challenges head-on. Leaders are not afraid to take risks and are resilient in the face of adversity. We can encourage our children to be brave, to take on challenges, and to learn from their failures.

Leadership is Integrity. True leaders are guided by a strong moral compass. They are honest, ethical, and transparent in their actions. Integrity builds trust, and trust is the foundation of any successful team or community. We can model integrity in our daily lives, showing our children the importance of honesty and ethical behavior.

Leadership is Empathy. Understanding and sharing the feelings of others is crucial. Leaders listen actively and show compassion, creating an environment where everyone feels valued and heard. Empathy fosters collaboration and strengthens relationships. By teaching our children to be empathetic, we help them build strong, supportive networks.

Leadership is Service. At its core, leadership is about serving others. Great leaders prioritize the needs of their team and community, working selflessly to uplift and empower those around them. We can instill a sense of service in our children by involving them in community service projects and teaching them the value of helping others.

Leadership is Growth. Leaders are lifelong learners. They seek out opportunities for personal and professional development, and they encourage others to do the same. A growth mindset leads to innovation and continuous improvement. We can support our children's growth by providing them with opportunities to learn new skills and explore their interests.

As parents and community members, we play a crucial role in shaping the leaders of tomorrow. By embodying these qualities and supporting our children in their journey, we can help them develop into confident, capable leaders who will make a positive impact on the world.

At River Valley, we are dedicated to creating an environment that nurtures these qualities. We believe that every student has the potential to be a leader, and with the support of our community, we can help them realize that potential. Let's work together to create a brighter future for our children and our world.



## River Valley Local Schools Board of Education Members

**PRESIDENT- DON RENGERT**  
**VICE PRESIDENT- CHERYL BEINEKE**  
**ROBERT STUMP**  
**BEN ALBRIGHT**  
**NATHAN SMITH**

**“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”**  
**– George Washington Carver**