



Board of Education News

The May 12th Board of Education meeting began on a high note, as 5th grade musical students led the Pledge of Allegiance. Afterward, the students shared reflections on their recent performance of Winnie the Pooh Kids, offering board members and attendees a joyful glimpse into the creativity, teamwork, and confidence built through the arts.

Another heartfelt moment came when two senior swim team members addressed the board to express their gratitude. Four years ago, as 8th graders, they had come before the Board to request the opportunity for Blair students to participate in swim through a cooperative program with Fremont. Thanks to the Board's approval, both students were able to pursue a sport they love, represent Blair and Fremont at the State Swim Meet, and grow through years of commitment and competition. Both seniors are now headed to college where they will continue their swimming careers—an incredible outcome made possible by the board's support.

In further support of hands-on learning and workforce readiness, the Board gratefully accepted two generous donations to Blair High School's small engine program. Sid Dillon Chevrolet donated \$6,000 to purchase two ATV lifts, expanding the program's instructional tools. Rehiko also donated 10 engines, valued at approximately \$3,500, which will give students valuable real-world experience in engine repair and maintenance.

The Board also approved a trip for six Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) students and their sponsor, Mrs. Vicki Schrick, to attend the FBLA National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California, from June 27 to July 3, 2025. This prestigious national event gives students the opportunity to compete, network, and further develop their leadership and business skills.

Thank you to all who continue to support our students, staff, and programs across the district. Your commitment makes a lasting impact!

Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Randy Gilson



Dear Blair Community,

As we close the chapter on the 2024–2025 school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many accomplishments, milestones, and moments of growth that have defined this year across our district. It has truly been a remarkable year filled with learning, collaboration, and community spirit.

First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our parents and families. Your ongoing support, encouragement, and partnership have played a critical role in helping our students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Whether attending events, volunteering, or cheering on your children, you make a difference every day.

Our teachers and staff have gone above and beyond this year. From participating in professional learning workshops focused on foundational literacy skills to nurturing creativity through music and arts programs, your dedication has made a lasting impact. Our music teachers and students have once again been recognized nationally for their excellence this year, continuing to enrich our school culture and community pride. We also celebrate our students' achievements beyond the classroom. From athletic successes to academic competitions, our young people have shown determination and leadership.

This year, Blair Community Schools has once again been rated “Excellent” by the Nebraska Department of Education—for the third consecutive year. This top-tier classification places us among just 29% of schools and districts statewide recognized for outstanding academic performance, student growth, graduation rates, and overall educational quality. This achievement reflects the incredible work of our entire school community—from talented educators and support staff to dedicated leadership and engaged families. We are deeply grateful to be recognized for what we already know to be true: Blair Community Schools is a place where All Students Learn.

Safety remains a top priority across our district. Throughout the year, we have continued to implement and refine safety protocols to ensure a secure learning environment for all students and staff. This summer, further updates will be taking place in our buildings as we continue with this focus. We are committed to maintaining a welcoming and protected space where every student can focus on learning and growth.

Finally, I want to especially honor our retiring educators—seven remarkable individuals who have dedicated decades of service to Blair Community Schools. Their passion, commitment, and care have helped shape generations of learners, and we wish them all the best in this next chapter of life.

As we prepare for summer, I encourage everyone to take time to rest, recharge, and reflect on the year's successes. We look forward to welcoming students and staff back in the fall, ready to embrace new challenges and opportunities.

Thank you for being part of the Blair Community Schools family. Together, we continue to build a strong, supportive, and inspiring environment for all our students.

With Gratitude,

Randy Gilson, Ed. D.



Randy Gilson, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Blair Community Schools

First Annual 3rd – 5th Track Meet

On May 9th, students from Deerfield Elementary and Arbor Park Elementary came together for the first annual 3rd through 5th Grade Track Meet. Held under beautiful spring skies, the event provided students the opportunity to participate in a variety of running and field events while building community and celebrating physical activity.



From sprints and relays to long jump and throwing events, students gave it their all—but what truly stood out was the incredible sportsmanship and encouragement shown throughout the day. Students cheered not only for their classmates but also for friends from across town. The loudest, most enthusiastic cheers were often for students with special needs, who were met with overwhelming support from the crowd—showcasing the best of our school communities: inclusion, respect, and kindness.

This event's success was made possible by our amazing parent and student volunteers, who helped manage events, time races, guide groups, and cheer students on. Thank you for creating a day our students won't soon forget.

We are proud of all our young athletes and grateful for this new tradition that brings our school communities together. We're already looking forward to next year!

Chief Meteorologist Rusty Lord Visits Otte-Blair Middle School

On Wednesday, May 14, students at Otte-Blair Middle School had the exciting opportunity to learn firsthand from a weather expert. Rusty Lord, Chief Senior Meteorologist from WOWT 6 News, visited the school to speak with the entire 6th grade class about meteorology, forecasting, and severe weather safety.

During his engaging presentation, Lord shared insights into how meteorologists track weather patterns, make predictions, and keep communities informed and safe during severe weather events. He also answered student questions and helped them better understand the science behind the weather they experience every day.

We're grateful to Mr. Lord for taking the time to visit and inspire our students. His visit not only reinforced key science concepts but also offered a glimpse into careers in meteorology and the important role science plays in keeping people safe.



Blair Community Schools Named One of the Best Communities for Music Education — Six Years Strong!



Blair Community Schools has once again been recognized as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by The NAMM Foundation—marking the sixth consecutive year our district has earned this prestigious national honor. This recognition highlights our ongoing commitment to providing students with high-quality, comprehensive music education at every level.

The award celebrates school districts across the United States that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to make music education accessible and impactful for all students. From elementary music rooms to high school performance ensembles, Blair's music programs continue to inspire creativity, build confidence, and foster a lifelong love of learning through the arts.

This achievement would not be possible without the incredible dedication of our music educators. Their talent, passion, and commitment to students are the heart of our success. We are proud and grateful for the work they do every day to create meaningful musical experiences that enrich our school community.

Each year, The NAMM Foundation recognizes school districts and individual schools nationwide for their commitment to music education. This year, over 1,000 were honored, including Blair Community Schools.

The NAMM Foundation, the charitable arm of the National Association of Music Merchants, works to expand access to music-making and ensure music remains a vital part of every student's education.

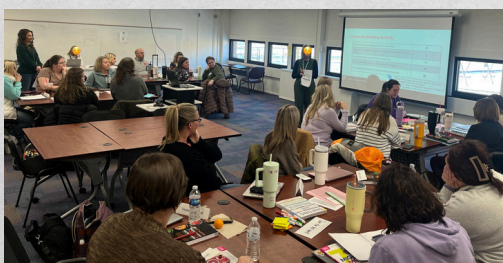
Congratulations to our outstanding music teachers, talented students, and the families and community members who make this achievement possible. Your continued support keeps music alive and thriving in our schools!

Strengthening Early Literacy: K-3 Teachers Complete UNO Workshop

Blair Community Schools recently completed a five-session professional learning workshop focused on strengthening foundational literacy skills for K-3 educators. The UNO Early Literacy Workshop, held after school over several weeks, gave teachers a valuable opportunity to deepen their understanding of evidence-based early reading practices.

Through hands-on activities, collaborative discussions, and selected readings, participants enhanced their knowledge of effective literacy instruction. The workshop aligned with Nebraska state standards and supports the district's upcoming implementation of a new reading supplement this fall.

We're incredibly grateful to our dedicated teachers for investing their time and energy into this professional growth. Their commitment to continuous learning plays a vital role in helping every student build a strong foundation in literacy. Thank you for your passion and dedication!



Happening In Our Schools



Blair High School

As we wrap up another school year, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our graduating seniors. Your hard work, dedication, and achievements have made us proud, and we wish you all the best as you embark on your next journey.

This year, our shop classes accomplished an exciting project by building two sheds from start to finish—providing students with valuable hands-on experience and real-world skills.

We also want to thank our parents and teachers for their ongoing support and commitment. Your partnership is essential to our students' success and helps make each school year meaningful and rewarding. Here's to a wonderful summer and a bright future ahead!



Otte Blair Middle School

As we wrap up the 2024–2025 school year, OMS has plenty to celebrate!

Teacher of the Year: Congrats to Mrs. Carrie Swaney, named DAR (Mary Katherine Goddard Chapter) Teacher of the Year! She used her grant to buy a 3D printer, allowing students to design and create their own fidgets.

Musical Celebrations: Choir and band students wrapped up the year with fantastic spring concerts. Each grade celebrated with music and an ice cream social.

Students of the Week: We concluded our final round of weekly recognitions—celebrating students with a Rare Bear, snack, and certificate at lunch. Thanks to all for making OMS special!

ELA Gallery Walk: 7th graders showcased their favorite books with creative visual projects during a novel gallery walk—highlighting key reading elements and inspiring others to read!

Happening In Our Schools



Arbor Park Elementary School

As we close out the 2024-2025 school year, we want to celebrate the growth, curiosity, and kindness that define Arbor Park Elementary. This year, our students have embraced challenges, built new friendships, and made lasting memories.

We're thankful for the strong partnership with our families and community. Your support and involvement have helped create a vibrant learning environment where every student feels encouraged to explore and succeed. A heartfelt thank you goes to our wonderful teachers and staff, whose dedication and creativity have made this year so meaningful. Their commitment ensures that Arbor Park remains a place where students not only learn but thrive.

Enjoy a summer full of fun, rest, and discovery. We look forward to seeing all our students back next year, ready to continue their learning adventures!



Deerfield Elementary School

As we wrap up the 2024-2025 school year, we want to take a moment to celebrate all the growth, achievements, and memories made at Deerfield Elementary. This year, we've seen our students shine in so many ways—whether through their creativity, teamwork, or dedication to learning.

Thank you to our amazing families and community members for your unwavering support throughout the year. Your partnership has been essential in creating a welcoming and inspiring environment where every student feels valued and empowered. Together, we truly are one school, one team, making an infinite impact.

We also want to recognize our incredible teachers, staff, and volunteers who go above and beyond every day to nurture our students' potential. Their commitment to fostering curiosity, kindness, and resilience is the heart of Deerfield. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to inspiring, empowering, and educating every student, every day. Thank you for being part of the Deerfield family—we couldn't do it without you!

Happening In Our Schools



South Early Childhood Center

As the school year comes to a close, we want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible growth and achievements of our South Preschool students. It has been a joy to watch each child explore, learn, and develop new skills throughout the year. From early language milestones to building friendships and gaining independence, every step has been a milestone worth celebrating.

We are deeply grateful to our dedicated teachers, families, and community for their continued support and partnership. Together, we have created a nurturing environment where our young learners feel safe, inspired, and excited to discover the world around them.

Thank you to our families for trusting us with your children's first school experiences and for being active partners in their learning journey. We look forward to seeing our students continue to grow and thrive as they move on to kindergarten and beyond.

Wishing everyone a joyful, restful summer and a bright start to the next chapter!

Inclusive Mural Brightens Blair High School



Blair High School recently unveiled a new mural celebrating inclusion, collaboration, and creativity. The project was a joint effort between art teacher Kari Schueth and special education teacher Monica Maly, who envisioned a piece that would reflect the school's commitment to belonging and community.

BHS art students brought the idea to life, designing and painting the mural with care and purpose. The result is a vibrant visual reminder that every student has a place and a voice at Blair High School.

Thank you to Ms. Schueth, Mrs. Maly, and the talented student artists for creating something so meaningful for the BHS community!

Avenue Scholars Senior Celebration

On Friday, May 2nd, Avenue Scholars seniors were recognized at their Senior Celebration, marking the completion of their two-year journey focused on self-discovery and career preparation. The event featured alumni speakers who shared how Avenue Scholars has continued to impact their lives beyond high school, offering inspiration and encouragement to the graduating seniors.

Students enjoyed a special lunch and heartfelt send-offs from their Career Coaches. Two students from each participating school were honored for going above and beyond in using the program's resources. Representing Blair, congratulations go to Markus Popa and Riley Weatherley for their outstanding dedication.

Although this year's Avenue Scholars senior class from Blair included 27 students, 17 were able to attend the celebration—each of them leaving with well-deserved recognition and excitement for the future.



A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Retiring Educators



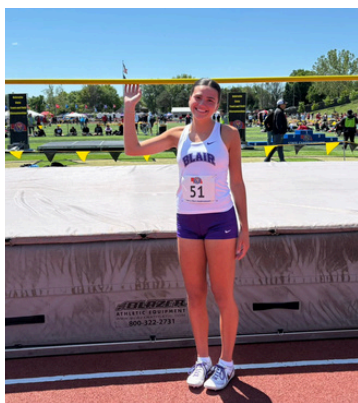
The annual Blair Community Schools End-of-Year Breakfast was held on Friday, May 23, serving as a wonderful opportunity for staff, administrators, and community members to come together and reflect on a successful school year. This special event not only celebrated the hard work and achievements of students and educators but also honored those who have dedicated decades of their lives to shaping the future of our community—our retiring educators.

This year, we were proud to recognize seven outstanding professionals who are concluding remarkable careers with Blair Community Schools. Their combined experience spans over 160 years of service, commitment, and passion for education.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Mariann Andersen, who served 34 years; Laura Bloomfield, 24 years; Teri Otte, 28 years; Kristine Pfeil, 25 years; Barb Trulin, 34 years; Mary Jo Veskrna, 16 years; and Todd Wick, 34 years. Each of these individuals has made an indelible impact on countless students, colleagues, and families throughout their tenure.

Their dedication to fostering learning, growth, and community within Blair schools has helped build a strong foundation for future generations. From the classrooms to extracurricular activities, these educators have been pillars of knowledge, support, and inspiration. As they embark on the next chapter of their lives, we thank them wholeheartedly for their service and wish them all the best in retirement.

This celebration was a heartfelt reminder of the lasting influence teachers and staff have on our school district. It also inspired us to continue the legacy of excellence they helped create, ensuring Blair Community Schools remains a place where students thrive and educators are valued.



Activities & Events

It's been an exciting and successful spring for Blair Community Schools! Our Unified Track team wrapped up a great season with several athletes earning medals at the State Meet. Congratulations on an incredible day at Burke and thank you to everyone who supported the team along the way! Blair High School also had student-athletes represent us in individual state competitions—Hailey Roewert won the Class B High Jump State Championship, and Jack Schroeder competed at the State Golf Tournament, representing Blair with pride and sportsmanship.



Our girls soccer team qualified for the Class B State Tournament, continuing to raise the bar for Blair athletics with their determination and grit. This was a tremendous achievement and a testament to their hard work throughout the season.

Blair also had strong representation in academics and the arts. At the Class B State Journalism Competition, several students placed in various events, showcasing their creativity, writing talent, and storytelling skills. In fine arts, two Otte Middle School students, Thayer Johnson and Gehrig Anderson, had the unique opportunity to participate in the Omaha Performing Arts Jazz Academy this semester. Their involvement highlights our district's commitment to nurturing student talent and offering enriching opportunities from elementary through high school.

Whether on the field, stage, newsroom, or course, Blair students continue to impress with their dedication, teamwork, and talent. Congratulations to all of our student-athletes, coaches, and supporters. Thank you for a memorable season and for representing Blair with pride, sportsmanship, and heart! **[Please click here for a full list of events.](#)**



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