

JULY 2025



BOE Adopts New Cell Phone Policy at July Meeting

At the July 14 Board of Education meeting, Blair Community Schools officially adopted an updated district-wide cell phone policy following community input and new state legislation (Nebraska LB140).

Under the newly adopted policy:

- All student use of personal communication devices (including cell phones and smartwatches) is prohibited during the school day, for all grade levels.
- Devices must remain off and stored in lockers throughout the entire school day—including passing periods and lunch.
- Consequences for violations remain in place, with a 10-day restriction issued after the first offense.

The change aligns Blair with LB140, which requires that school districts establish a formal policy limiting communication device use during school hours. The Board's decision follows weeks of public discussion, including two parent feedback sessions and ongoing staff review.

Supporters of the policy believe it will create a more focused and respectful learning environment while helping to combat distractions, social media pressure, and cyberbullying. School leaders emphasized that office phones remain available for urgent communication, and that the district is committed to ensuring student safety and family access at all times.

The new policy will take effect at the start of the 2025–2026 school year.

In addition to the cell phone policy update, the BOE also approved the Blair High School Choir to sing alongside the Omaha Symphony on Sunday, November 09, 2025. This will be an incredible experience and event for Blair students.



Blair Community Schools

Where all students learn.

CELL PHONE EXPECTATIONS

BCS will not allow the use of personal electronic devices during the instructional day.

Personal Technology Expectations:

- All personal electronic devices must be in lockers (NOT PE lockers) or vehicles from 8:10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- Personal electronic devices must remain in lockers (NOT PE lockers) or vehicles during passing period and lunch.
- Teachers and staff will monitor expectations among students in a fair and equitable manner.
- Personal electronic devices will be confiscated by administration if seen in violation of expectations. Parents or guardians will be able to pick up the confiscated technology after school.
- Accommodations will be made for students that require a personal electronic device for medical assistance or for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Reach out to your school administrator for support.



At Blair Community Schools, we put education and instruction first. The new personal technology policy limits student cell phone use during the school day to minimize distractions and maximize learning.

Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Randy Gilson

Dear Blair Community,



As we prepare to welcome students back for the 2025–2026 school year, I want to take a moment to thank you. Our district's strength lies in the people who support it. We greatly appreciate our families, educators, and community and look forward to building strong partnerships to make a difference in the lives of the students we serve.

Over the summer, our buildings were busy with preparation for the upcoming school year. Teachers collaborated on curriculum and professional learning, custodial and maintenance teams worked hard to ready classrooms and facilities, and staff across every department gave their time to ensure we're ready for a successful start. I'm deeply grateful for their dedication much of which happens behind the scenes.

As we begin this new year, we do so with hope. Our students have made meaningful academic progress, and we've seen positive trends in areas like reading, math, science, and college readiness. These improvements are not the result of any one program or person, but rather the collective work of a community that believes in its children and puts them first every day. We commend our teachers, support staff, and school leaders for their ongoing commitment and our students for their resilience and work ethic. Thank you families for being steady partners in this important work.

We've also made investments where they're needed most expanding early childhood programs, growing mental health supports, updating curriculum and technology, and strengthening career and college pathways. These changes reflect our belief that every student deserves a safe, supportive, and meaningful learning experience.

This year, we are especially excited to introduce new iPads for every student in grades K–12. These updated devices will enhance personalized learning, enable more creative and collaborative opportunities, and help students build essential skills for the digital world ahead. These devices support students academically as we implement a new district-wide cell phone policy in accordance with Nebraska state law. Our aim is to create more focused and respectful classrooms where students can truly engage with their learning and with each other.

Over the past few years, Blair Community Schools has expanded student opportunities outside the classroom by adding new activities like Unified Track, Unified Bowling, Middle School Cross Country and Volleyball, High School Swimming, Girls Wrestling, Robotics, SkillsUSA - Manufacturing, Welding, and Marching Band. These programs are thriving, with growing participation and strong displays of teamwork, school pride, and leadership. We encourage all students to get involved in multiple activities and fine arts as part of a well-rounded school experience.

Looking ahead, the City of Blair is preparing for potential growth and development that could bring more families and students to our district. This is a promising opportunity, and we've already started the conversations and planning needed to ensure we are ready to grow thoughtfully and responsibly. We will continue to listen, collaborate, and act with care as we shape the future of Blair Community Schools together. Whether your child is stepping into school for the first time or beginning their final year with us, know that we are honored to walk beside you on this journey. Welcome back to school and we hope you have a fantastic year!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Gilson, Ed.D." in a cursive script.

Randy Gilson, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Blair Community Schools

Back to School – Student Supply Lists

It's almost time to sharpen those pencils and dust off the backpacks—the 2025–2026 school year is just around the corner!

To help families prepare, student supply lists are now available for all grade levels. You can find them linked directly in this newsletter and on the Blair Community Schools website under the Parent Resources section.

Each list includes the essential items your student will need to start the year off right—from notebooks and folders to pencils and art supplies. Teachers and staff have worked hard to make these lists clear and manageable to ensure students feel prepared and ready for a great year of learning.

If your family needs help securing school supplies, please reach out to your school office. Community partners and local organizations have generously provided resources to support families.

[Click here to view the 2025–2026 Supply Lists](#)

We can't wait to welcome students back to school!



Important Dates and Reminders for Back-to-School

Mark your calendars! The 2025–2026 school year is just around the corner. Here are a few important dates:

- August 7th @ 6:30 - K-5 PTO Meeting at Arbor Park School Library
- August 7th - Kindergarten Roundup
 - Last Names A - K : 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
 - Last Names L - Z : 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- August 11 - 9th Grade Open House - 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- August 13 – First Day of School (Grades 9–12)
- August 14th - Elementary Open House
 - Last Names A - K : 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
 - Last Names L - Z : 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- August 14th - 7th & 8th Grade Open House - 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- August 18th - 6th Grade Open House - 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Paperwork for the upcoming school year is completed online through our [Family Information Portal](#). This is accessed via the “Parent/Student” tab on the school webpage ([linked here](#)). Beginning August 11th, parents can view their child's teacher assignment as long as the on-line verification has been completed and/or updated.

Be sure to follow your school's social media accounts and the district website for up-to-date announcements as we approach the new school year.



We're excited to announce that Blair Community Schools has officially moved to Bound as our all-in-one platform for everything related to athletics and activities!

What does this mean for you? You now have one central hub for all schedules, scores, stats, team rosters, digital tickets, notifications, and more — all in one easy-to-use place. Whether you're looking for this week's game times or want to follow your student's team throughout the season, Bound makes it easier than ever to stay connected and informed.

To get started, visit gobound.com/ne/schools/blair or download the Bound app on your mobile device. Once there, you can follow Blair High School teams, sign up for real-time notifications, purchase tickets, and track scores and standings. Everything you need to support Blair activities is now just a click or tap away.

It's like having ESPN for our school community — tailored just for Blair! Thank you for your continued support of Blair activities. We can't wait for you to explore [everything Bound has to offer](#).

Summer Updates: Getting Our Schools Ready for Fall

While students have been enjoying their summer break, maintenance and custodial teams across Blair Community Schools have been hard at work preparing our buildings for a successful start to the school year.

This summer's updates include:

- Deep cleaning and floor refinishing in all classrooms and common areas
- Painting, small repairs, and safety inspections district-wide
- Technology upgrades in several classrooms and offices
- Improvements to outdoor spaces and playgrounds

We are grateful to our operations staff for their dedication to ensuring that our schools are clean, safe, and welcoming for students and staff. Their behind-the-scenes work plays a vital role in setting the tone for a great school year!

Blair Community Schools is also excited to announce a shift in our 1:1 technology program—students will be using iPads instead of Chromebooks starting this fall. This transition is part of our continued commitment to providing high-quality digital tools that support learning, creativity, and engagement across all grade levels.

The decision to move to iPads was made after a thorough review of instructional needs, curriculum compatibility, and long-term cost effectiveness. iPads offer improved battery life, enhanced functionality for classroom apps, and greater flexibility for students across subject areas—from reading and writing to art, music, and STEM.

We're excited for the opportunities this upgrade will bring to our classrooms!



Activities & Events

Blair Community Schools has been full of energy this summer, with students training, practicing, and building their skills in preparation for the upcoming 2025–2026 activities season. We're excited to officially kick things off when fall practices begin on August 11!

As a reminder, all student-athletes must have an updated physical on file before participating. Please check with the Activities Office if you're unsure whether your paperwork is current.

Be sure to check our online activities calendar to stay up to date on game days, competitions, performances, and more!

We're also welcoming incoming freshmen with the Freshman Activity Fair on August 13 during the school day. Students will learn about the wide variety of clubs, sports, and teams available at Blair High School. Getting involved is one of the best ways for students to connect with school, make friends, and succeed academically.





Don't miss the Blair Schools Foundation Family Fun Night on Friday, August 22! The evening includes:

- Volleyball scrimmage at 5:30 PM
- Football scrimmage at 7:00 PM
- Performances by the BHS choir, marching band, dance team, and cheerleaders
- Cross Country's Friday Night Lights run, with the community invited to join on the track
- Games and entertainment for kids throughout the evening

It's a great way to celebrate the start of the school year and show your Bear pride! For more details, visit the [Blair Schools Foundation Facebook page](#).



Follow us on social media!

 FACEBOOK	 INSTAGRAM
 YOU TUBE	 X (FORMERLY TWITTER)