



River Valley Middle School

104 School Lane
Blairsville, PA 15717
Phone: (724) 459-5500
Fax: (724) 459-3392

Dear RVMS Families,

It's hard to believe how fast summer flies by, but welcome back to River Valley Middle School! We hope you are feeling recharged, rested, and ready for the new school year. We are looking forward to an exciting new year at RVMS and I wanted to give you some reassurance of things that will remain in place for the 2025-2026 school year and a quick heads up of some changes and updates to expect.

First, what remains in place:

Friday Early Dismissals: We will once again have early dismissals for students every Friday. This provides more time for academic enrichment and participation in extracurricular activities for students, and more time for professional development for our faculty and staff.

Friday Clubs: At least once, but we're aiming for twice a month, all students will participate in clubs of their choice, fostering a greater sense of community and exploration beyond the classroom setting.

Transition 6 and Panther Learning Time 7 & 8: Both launched for the 2024-25 school year, Transition 6 and PLT 7/8 gave students a much needed period in the day to get organized, caught up and/or stay on track with their academic course load, as well as provide additional opportunities for academic interventions and enrichment, counseling services, and other activities like assemblies and guest speakers.

River Valley Cyber Academy: The RVCA will remain on our campus this year. This initiative underscores our commitment to providing diverse learning opportunities that cater to modern educational needs.

While consistency is good, there are a few changes and new opportunities for MS students:

New morning arrival window: All district buses and student drivers will arrive at RVMS/HS between 7:15 and 7:25 AM, and that same window will apply to student dropoff by parents. No student(s) will be permitted to enter the building until 7:15 AM.

Middle School Counselor: Mrs. Bethany Faulk will take over as the MS Counselor as Ms. Tammy Buffone has returned to her roots with a move into our Special Education department. We are excited to have them both providing services and supporting MS students for the new school year.

Chromebooks stay at school: Due to a high number of, as well the rising cost of and shortage of parts to repair Chromebooks, MS students will return to their homeroom at the end of the school day and leave their Chromebooks on a charger overnight. This will ensure their safekeeping and be fully charged for the start of each school day! Mrs. Bouy will be set up during Open House with a table to accept cash, check and card payments for Chromebook insurance/outstanding balances.

Elective rotation changes: The delivery model of elective rotations will pivot from quarterly and semester-long courses offered on a daily basis, to semester and year-long courses being offered on a six-day rotation, meeting every other day. This provides greater flexibility to our band and chorus students and more evenly distributes the impacts of snow days and testing windows. We are excited to offer a new course *Exploring Digital Media*, that will expose eighth grade students to our newest STEAM program *Creative Productions*. We are also excited to bring back *Intro to Spanish* after a one-year hiatus, which will be offered to seventh and eighth grade students.

We look forward to a fantastic year ahead filled with learning, growth, and achievement. Your active participation and enthusiasm contribute immensely to making River Valley Middle School a vibrant and inclusive community. We pride ourselves on being proactive, transparent and meeting the needs of our students. If there is anything that we can do to make your child's school experience better, please never hesitate to reach out by phone or email to let us know how we can intervene and help!

Last, but certainly not least, to get the school year off to a great start, we are hosting an **Orientation and Open House** on Monday, August 18th, 2025. The **Orientation will start at 6:00 PM** for rising 6th graders coming to us from Blairsville and Saltsburg Elementary Schools, but all newly enrolled MS students from outside the district are welcome to attend as well. Then, from 6:30-7:45 PM, we will host an **Open House** for all three grade levels where students can pick up a hard copy of their 2025-26 schedule, walk the hallways and meet our staff, as well as learn more about exciting opportunities for the new school year. If any sixth graders wish to see their schedule prior to Orientation/Open House and parents do not yet have PowerSchool access, please call the MS/HS Office and Mrs. Bouy will provide login information.

We cannot wait to see you and your child(ren) and get this new school year off to a terrific start!

We Are . . . River Valley!!!

Best regards,

Eric J. Westendorf

Eric J. Westendorf
Middle School Principal

Bethany Faulk

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Middle School Counselor