

SEPTEMBER 2025



155 Years of Blair Community Schools

This year, Blair Community Schools is proud to celebrate 155 years of educating and inspiring students! That means our district has been serving the community since 1870, just three years after Nebraska became a state in 1867. Over the decades, Blair schools have grown and evolved alongside our town, shaping generations of learners and leaders.

Think about it—when our district first opened, the United States was just beginning to rebuild after the Civil War. Over the years, our classrooms have witnessed incredible changes: the invention of the telephone, the introduction of electricity, the rise of automobiles, and the creation of the internet. Students in Blair have learned through chalkboards, overhead projectors, computers, and now modern technology that connects our classrooms to the world.

To honor this historic milestone, staff celebrated during Homecoming week with commemorative 155th anniversary t-shirts, made possible in part by the generosity of community partners like Washington County Bank. It was a wonderful opportunity for students, staff, and the community to reflect on the proud tradition of Blair Community Schools and the lasting impact our educators have had over more than a century.

As we celebrate this milestone, we also look forward to the future—continuing our commitment to inspire, empower, and educate every student, every day, and adding new chapters to the rich history of Blair Community Schools.



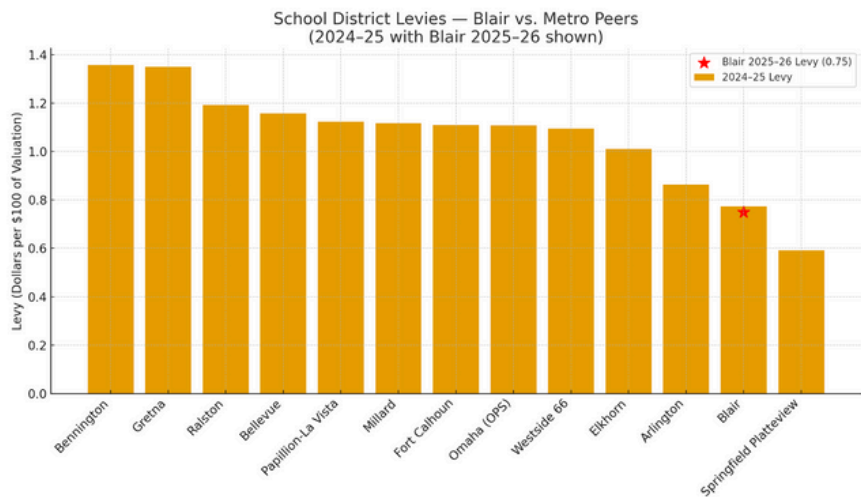
**Celebrating 155 Years of
Excellence in Education**

Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Randy Gilson

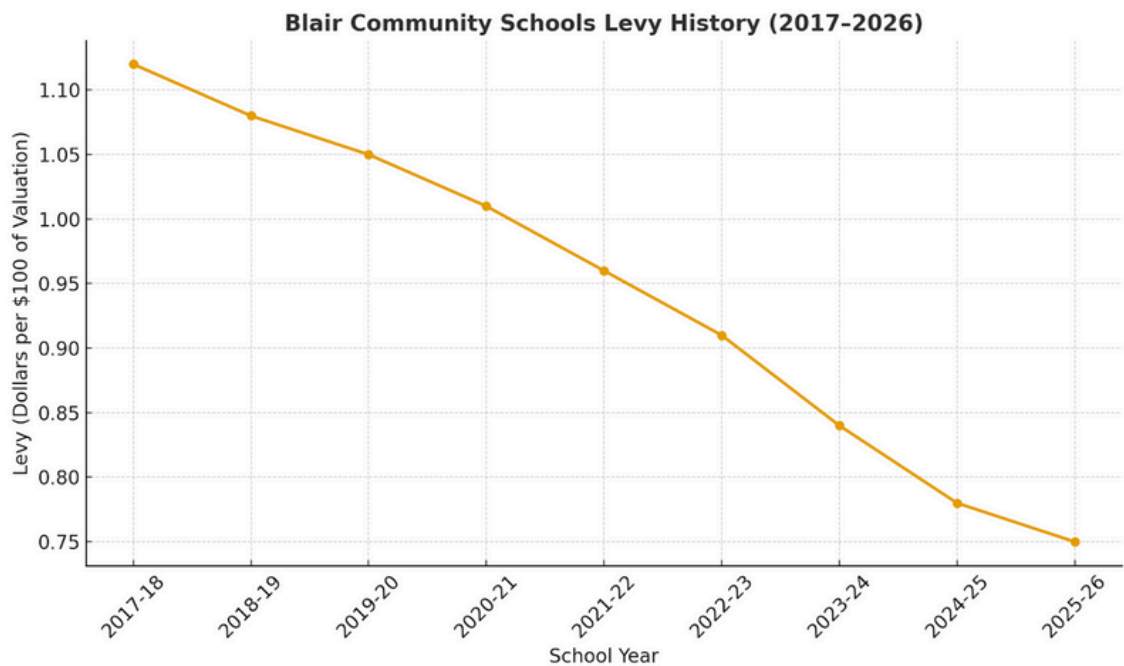


Dear Blair Community,

As we begin October, I want to share some exciting updates on our district's budget, safety priorities, and the many great things happening in our schools. At the recent Board of Education meeting, the budget process was completed with an important outcome for our community. Our total levy has once again been lowered to 75 cents. Over the past eight years, Blair has steadily reduced its levy, demonstrating both financial responsibility and the strong support of our taxpayers. Today, our levy ranks among the lowest in the greater metro area and across the state for a district of our size. This reflects our ability to operate efficiently while continuing to deliver excellent opportunities for our students.



We are also appreciative that the Board approved an increase in spending authority of 1.5%, which provides an additional \$435,675 for the year. This action gives us the flexibility to address needs, plan for the future, and continue providing the high-quality education our community expects. Thanks to years of careful planning, we have also built up both our cash reserve and our special building fund. These resources give us confidence that we have multiple options to address important facility needs in the months ahead.



Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Randy Gilson

One of our ongoing priorities is student and staff safety. While additional funds for major facility changes were not included in this year's budget, our focus remains strong on replacing and upgrading classroom door locks at Arbor Park and Deerfield Elementary. We are also exploring relocating the main offices at Arbor Park Elementary, Otte Middle School, and the South Early Childhood Center to areas closer to the entrances in order to provide more secure access points for our schools. With the reserves we have built and the spending authority increase, we are confident that we will find ways to move forward on these projects.

Beyond finances, the year is off to an outstanding start. Our recent Homecoming Week was a tremendous success, bringing together students, families, alumni, and community members to celebrate Blair traditions and school spirit. The parade, pep rally, and football game all showcased the pride we share in our schools. Looking ahead, parent-teacher conferences are quickly approaching. These conferences are one of the most valuable opportunities for families and teachers to connect, review student progress, and set goals for success. I encourage all parents to take part in this important partnership.

Thank you for your continued support of Blair Community Schools. Together, we are ensuring that our students have access to outstanding educational opportunities in an environment that is both safe and supportive.

With Bear Pride,

Randy Gilson, Ed. D.

Randy Gilson, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Blair Community Schools



Parent-Teacher Conferences – Mark Your Calendar!

We are excited to announce that Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday, October 15th, and Wednesday, October 16th, from 2:30 to 6:30 PM. These conferences provide a valuable opportunity for families to connect with teachers, discuss student progress, celebrate successes, and address any questions or concerns you may have about your child's learning.

Elementary School: Elementary teachers will be reaching out to parents via email to schedule conference times. This ensures that every family has dedicated time to meet with their child's teacher and receive personalized feedback on academic progress, classroom behavior, and social development.

Middle School: Parents at the middle school should have received an email with a sign-up link for a conference time. During your scheduled time slot, you will have the opportunity to meet with all of your child's teachers in convenient locations—both the Gym and the Cafeteria will be set up to accommodate families. This format allows you to efficiently connect with teachers across subjects while gaining a comprehensive view of your child's school experience.

High School: At the high school, conferences are drop-in style. Families are welcome to visit anytime between 2:30 and 6:30 PM to meet with their child's teachers. No appointments are necessary, giving parents the flexibility to stop by at a time that works best for their schedule. This is a great chance to ask questions, review grades, and discuss strategies for academic success.

We strongly encourage all families to attend conferences at every grade level. Building a strong partnership between home and school is essential to supporting your child's growth, both academically and socially. Your involvement and engagement make a significant difference in your student's education, and we look forward to seeing you during these important conferences.



Blair Community Schools

Where all students learn.

HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS



Photo Credit: BHS Student, Morgan Archer

Blair High School

Blair High School had an incredible Homecoming Week! From spirit days and the parade to the pep rally and Friday night's game, our students, staff, and families showed amazing school pride. It was wonderful to see the community come together to celebrate our traditions and support our athletes and student leaders. Thank you to everyone who helped make this week so special!

Looking ahead, Blair High School will host Parent-Teacher Conferences on October 15th & 16th from 2:30–6:30 PM in the Auxiliary Gym. No appointment is needed—just stop by to visit with your student's teachers. We look forward to connecting with families and continuing to support every student's growth and success.



Otte Blair Middle School

September has been a productive and exciting month at Otte Middle School. Students recently completed MAP testing, giving teachers valuable data to guide instruction and support academic growth. We are proud of the effort and positive attitude our students showed during these assessments.

Fall sports are off to a strong start, with athletes demonstrating teamwork, dedication, and school pride. Thank you to our coaches and families for supporting these opportunities. Homecoming Week was celebrated with enthusiasm, from dress-up days and the parade to the pep rally and Friday night's game. These traditions bring joy and strengthen connections among students, staff, and families.

Thank you for your continued support as we work to make OMS a safe, positive, and engaging place for students to learn and grow.

HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS



Arbor Park Elementary

September was full of energy at Arbor Park as we geared up for and celebrated Homecoming Week. Students had a blast with dress-up days, showing off their school spirit, and joining the parade. Walking together as a school to cheer on the Bears was a highlight, and it was awesome to see so many families lined up along the route supporting our kids. It was a week filled with pride, fun, and community.

Beyond Homecoming, classrooms have been busy getting into the swing of the year. Students have been working hard on their beginning-of-year reading and math checks, which help teachers know what to review and where to stretch learning. We've also had some great moments of connection, like our first "learning buddies" meet-up between 5th graders and kindergarteners, and celebrating our Arbor Kind of Kid award winners for their kindness and leadership. It's been a great start to the year!



Deerfield Elementary

September has been an exciting and productive month at Deerfield Elementary! Students recently completed MAP testing, giving teachers valuable data to guide instruction and support each child's academic growth. We are proud of the effort and positive attitude our students showed during testing.

Our fall activities are off to a great start! Students are participating in clubs, recess games, and classroom projects that encourage teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving. We also celebrated Homecoming Week with fun dress-up days, activities, and school spirit events that brought students, staff, and families together.

Looking ahead, Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held in October. Information will be coming home from your child's teacher with details about dates and times. These conferences are a great opportunity to connect with your child's teachers and support their learning. Thank you to all our families for your ongoing support!

HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS



South Early Learning Center

South Early Childhood Staff has been busy learning routines and procedures. Our All Day Preschool Team went through KickStart Literacy Training to supplement their Creative Curriculum. We are excited about using language and literacy resources in our lesson planning and daily schedules. HALF and ALL DAY Teachers are continually assessing children's growth in early childhood domains through daily data collection. Classrooms recently worked on alliteration and rhyming. We are excited to start our upcoming Insect and Pet Studies. Our GOLD Fall Checkpoint is approaching in October. We are excited to see the growth our kids are making in their age bands.

Fire Safety week will take place the week of October 6th at South Preschool. The firefighters will teach a lesson and then answer kids' questions. They will also show the kids the fire truck.

Mrs. Chrans was recently featured as the Enterprise Teacher of the Week. The editorial and photos of her, support staff, and kids featured our studies connected to the outdoor garden at South.

We are grateful for our continued, community and parent partnerships that make our early learning experiences a success!





Activities & Events

It's been an exciting month of September at Blair! Last week, we celebrated Homecoming, and it was wonderful to see students and staff showing their school spirit throughout the week. Congratulations to Homecoming King Blaise Baughman and Homecoming Queen Casandra Mata!

We are proud to host the EMC Girls Golf Championships on September 30, 2025, right here in Blair. We wish our golfers the best of luck as they compete! The performing arts are also in full swing. Our musical, *The Addams Family*, will take the stage the weekend of October 16, 2025. This promises to be a fun and entertaining show for the whole community.





On the middle school front, our 8th-grade football team is off to an incredible start and remains undefeated this season! Additionally, the Junior High Marching Band earned first place at the Columbus Marching Band Festival—an amazing accomplishment for our talented students.

Finally, at the first-ever middle school-exclusive cross country meet in Bennington, our girls' team brought home first place, showcasing their hard work and dedication.

We are proud of all our students for their achievements and spirit—both on the field and in the classroom. Go team!

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

Follow us on social media!

 FACEBOOK	 INSTAGRAM
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