



Board of Education Updates

The Blair school board held a work session on May 11th to discuss strengthening ties with the Blair Community Schools Foundation. City Administrator Phil Greene also presented plans for three new housing developments in the area.

During this session, the board discussed several concerns regarding the new housing. Specifically, members evaluated potential student enrollment surges, impacts on school funding, and safety concerns.

The regular meeting opened with the acceptance of three generous donations for national convention travel. RVR Bank, Sid Dillon, and the Blair Community Schools Foundation contributed a combined total of \$4,000.

Key policy and operational approvals included a revised facilities use policy, the 2027–2028 school calendar, and hiring KSB Law. The board also renewed the Taher food service contract, funded a new South Preschool fence, and approved temporary office space at Arbor Park.

Personnel updates featured the hiring of Molly Henshaw as the new Otte business teacher, alongside the resignations of Chris Whitwer and Sarah Bosek. The board accepted member Ginger Fredrick's resignation and approved a recruitment process to fill her remaining six-month term.

Closing the meeting, the board expressed gratitude to all staff members for their dedication to the students throughout the school year. They concluded by wishing the entire school community a fantastic summer.

A Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Don Johnson



A Great Finish to the 2025–26 School Year

As we close another successful school year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to the Blair Community Schools Board of Education for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve as Interim Superintendent. Stepping into this role has certainly felt like “drinking water from a fire hose,” but thanks to the incredible people surrounding me, we have made tremendous progress together.

I am deeply appreciative of our Board members, administrators, teachers, and support staff for embracing the revitalization efforts underway throughout Blair Community Schools. The passion, commitment, and pride demonstrated across our district have been inspiring to witness. Together, we are building momentum that will continue to move Blair Community Schools forward.

As we look ahead to next fall, we are excited to further strengthen our partnership with our taxpayers and community members through a district-wide Communication Audit. This process will include a community survey and focus groups designed to help us better understand how we can improve communication and collaboration with our stakeholders. Strong partnerships between schools and communities create stronger educational opportunities for students, and we are committed to taking that partnership to the next level.

This spring also brought tremendous success for Blair student-athletes competing on the state stage. Both the Girls Soccer Team and our Track & Field athletes proudly represented Blair Community Schools at state competition. Congratulations to the Blair Girls Soccer Team for finishing as State Runner-Up and representing our community with excellence, determination, and class.

Our Track & Field team also achieved remarkable success. Congratulations to Hayden Daggett, Class B State Champion in the 400-meter dash and new school record holder. Congratulations as well to our Class B State Champion 1600-meter relay team consisting of Chase Cottle, Colin McCabe, Declan McCabe, and Hayden Daggett. Colin and Declan also earned individual medals in the 400-meter and 800-meter events. We are incredibly proud of all these outstanding student-athletes and coaches for their hard work and dedication.

One of the greatest honors of this school year was having the opportunity to speak at the graduation ceremony for the Blair High School Class of 2026. This senior class is truly exceptional. Among them were numerous scholarship recipients, honor graduates, and students who have chosen to serve our country through military service. During my remarks, I challenged them to become difference-makers in the world, and I sincerely believe this group of graduates possesses the talent, character, and compassion to make a lasting impact on society.

Finally, I had the privilege of addressing our entire staff during the Blair Community Schools End-of-Year Breakfast, where we honored five outstanding educators retiring from our district. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to Jennifer Fowler (32 years), Karla Gregory (34 years), Linda Harman (30 years), Julie Miller (28 years), and Lisa Leinen for their years of dedicated service to students and families. Their reflections, wisdom, and appreciation for one another and for Blair Community Schools were truly inspiring. They leave behind a legacy of excellence and commitment that has positively impacted countless lives.

To our retirees — congratulations, thank you, and enjoy this well-deserved next chapter.

As we conclude the 2025–26 school year, I want to thank everyone who makes Blair Community Schools such a special place. Your support, dedication, and belief in our students continue to make a difference every single day.

Have a safe and wonderful summer.

Good luck, and God bless!

Dr. J.

New Head Basketball Coach at BHS

The Blair High School community is bidding a bittersweet farewell to Chris Whitwer as he and his family move to Arizona. Coach Whitwer was far more than a leader on the court; he was an impactful teacher and mentor who left a lasting mark on countless students. The entire Whitwer family, including his wife and three children, became a beloved part of the Blair community, and we wish them nothing but the best in their new adventure.

Stepping into the head coaching role is Trey Lansman, a familiar face whom the community fully trusts to lead the Bears forward. Having served as an assistant for the past two years, Coach Lansman brings both expertise and a deep understanding of the program's tradition. We are excited to rally behind him and look forward to the great things he will achieve with the team.



While we will truly miss the Whitwers' presence in our halls and stands, we are confident that the future of Blair basketball remains in excellent hands. Coach Lansman's deep knowledge of the game and his genuine passion for player development make him the perfect fit to carry the torch forward. We have full trust in his leadership and vision for the program, and the entire community is ready to cheer him on as he guides the Bears to new heights in the seasons to come.

Deerfield and Arbor Park Honor the Red, White, and Blue

On May 6, 2026, fifth-grade students from both Deerfield and Arbor Park Elementary came together at Deerfield for the annual Flag Education Ceremony. This collaborative event provided a powerful, hands-on learning experience centered on patriotism, history, and community tradition.

During the ceremony, students had the unique privilege of learning directly from veterans representing local American Legion Honor Guard chapters. The veterans guided the fifth graders through the history of the American flag, detailing proper traditions, daily care, and respectful etiquette. A deeply moving highlight of the day was a formal flag retirement ceremony, which demonstrated the ultimate sign of respect for worn colors.

To commemorate the meaningful day, every student received their own American flag to take home. Blair Community Schools extends its heartfelt gratitude to our local veterans for sharing their time, wisdom, and stories with the next generation. The event left a lasting impression of respect, tradition, and gratitude on all who attended.



5th Grade Clap Outs

Each year, Arbor Park and Deerfield Elementary celebrate a special tradition—the 5th Grade Clap Out. On the last day of school, our 5th graders take their final walk through the building as younger students and families line the sidewalk to cheer them on with applause, bubbles, and noisemakers. It's a joyful and often emotional sendoff that celebrates their elementary journey and all they have accomplished.

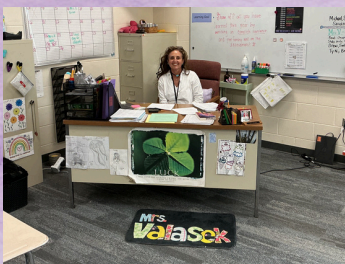
As they leave our schools behind, these students are ready to begin an exciting new chapter as 6th graders in middle school. We are incredibly proud of our 5th graders and wish them continued success in the years ahead.




Teacher Appreciation Week


On May 4-8 BCS celebrated Teacher Appreciation. The hallways of Blair Community Schools are filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the educators who serve as the backbone of our district. Our teachers are far more than instructors; they are mentors, advocates, and steady guides who show up every day with a commitment to seeing every student succeed. From the early morning lesson planning to the late afternoon extracurriculars, they pour their hearts into their work, creating a safe and inspiring environment where students feel truly seen. We recognize that we wouldn't be where we are today without their tireless dedication, and we are incredibly proud to have such a passionate team shaping the future of our community.

Every day, these remarkable individuals go above and beyond to take care of our students, balancing academic excellence with genuine compassion. Whether they are helping a student master a difficult concept or providing a word of encouragement during a tough day, their impact reaches far beyond the classroom walls. They are the heart of Blair Community Schools, and their influence will be felt for generations to come. To all of our teachers: thank you for your patience, your expertise, and your unwavering belief in our kids. We truly appreciate everything you do, and we are honored to celebrate you this week and every day.





OTTE MIDDLE SCHOOL 4TH QUARTER HONOR ROLL



We are proud to celebrate the outstanding academic achievements of our students who earned and maintained a GPA of 3.5 or higher in their core subjects.

≡ Congratulations Honor Roll Students! ≡

6TH GRADE

Ella Ammon, Graham Anibal, William Bacon, Audrey Baker, Brooklyn Ballinger, Phoenix Bartlett, Noah Baughman, Mason Beifus, Emerson Benner, Kennedy Benner, Lucy Blobaum, Hazel Boeckman, Alexa Boone, Malin Bornhorst, Matthew Brandl, Jack Brensel, Olive Bruck, Charlotte Campbell, Madilyn Carnley, Tyswini Chessmore, Cheyenne Corradon, Scarlett Corvabon, Aiden Dame, Charlotte Danglar, Elsie Echtenkamp, Elizabeth Ehle, Ava Erwin, Delilah Fangmeier, Brooklynn Farris, Rhett Fischer, Isabella Foged, Hadley Grabbe, Isalah Haider, Mildred Heimann, Avery Herber, Joseph Himes, Brenden Hopple, Ainsley Jennings,

Ryker Jennings, Zayne Jensen, Lyfa Jewell, Kaiya Johnson, Landri Jones, Briella Kastrup, Kendall Kempcke, Brynlee Kerkman, Kaydence Knutson, Colton Kroupa, Makenna Kühr, Evangeline Kunkle, Kinsley Kwapiński, Hadley Leehy, Macy Leggett, Zaylee Letcher, Abigail Lord, Avery Madsen, Adelyn Marquiss, Greta Mccoy, Sophie Miller, Malcolm Moseman, Brayden Mostek, Claire Mostek, Cooper Norine, Sydney Preister, Kendra Quick, Alexander Radnor, Isabella Radnor, Harper Rasmussen, Nora Reuter, Wyatt Rogers, Emma Shamburg, Emma Shank, Maci Smith, Clark Sturm, Cecilia Suverkrubbe, Jensen Synnott, Noah Terwilliger, Lydia Thompson, Lily Tweedy, Sawyer Uphoff, Claire Vakiner, Charlotte Wacker, Jacob Washington, Anna White, Gabriel Wilkins, Violet Winz, Leena Yeaton, William Young

7TH GRADE

Adela Aguilera, Bree Archer, Henry Aschoff, Henzleigh Baker, Eloise Barondeau, Tucker Beckenhauer, Jillian Beebe, Journii Bird, Aubrey Bonney, Deklyn Bornhorst, Liam Brown, Gracy Camenzind, Isabel Chrans, Tyler Christensen, Easton Clements, Everett Clements, Declan Cole, Mateo Cueva, Anna Dangler, Abel Duckworth, Aubree Ellenberger, William Filows, Amaya Flynn, Leaanna Fouk, Lindsey Grabowski, Braden Gutierrez, Henry Hagan, Bentley Hanson-Patterson, Caroline Henson, Jenica Henton, Reed Holz, Reagan Huckins, Gwernyth Johnston, Lauren Keough, Alayna Keslar, Chesney Kosch, Will Mann, Saily Martinez, Camila Mata, Dylan McGill,

Alejandro Mendoza, Haley Mertz, Brant Michalski, Finn Miller, Paisley Nay, Zoey Nemecek, Bailey Nichols, Charles Paper, Brooke Rasmussen, Aubrey Reed, Bethany Rodriguez, Quinn Rytch, Rory Scheetz, Logan Schneider, Ellie Schrad, Josie Sears, Kaylea Shank, Harper Spader, Mckenzie Starzyk, Abigail Sullivan, Adley Tessendorf, Lillian Tetrick, Brantley Thompson, Charlotte Wells, William Whitver, Grayson Wilson, Lauren Wimer

8TH GRADE

Brylen Baumert-Rasmussen, Alonna Blackman, Brogan Boerma, Eliana Burnham, Noah Burnham, Nathan Buttery, Lily Campbell, Liam Chessmore, Elisiah Christiansen, Jeremiah Cothran, Brock Deutschman, Daniel Dodds, Aria Dubon, Adalee Field, Jayne Foster, Nathaniel Fullmer, Reese Goldyn, Grady Grabbe, Amelia Grant, Andrew Greenwood, Savannah Haney, Reno Hansen, Callan Herber, Beckham Hiles, Allison Hill, Logan Himes, Grayden Japp, Kinzie Johnson, Gavin Jones, Alivia Kessler, Alexis Kern, Easton Kruse, Blake Kuenning, Zoey Kuhl, Devon Lantry, Alexander Lord, Sophie Lyon, Zoey Maguire, Noah Marquiss, Myka Matejka, Benjamin Mcallister, Isobel Mcbeth, Kelton McCombs, Briar McCrill, Erin McGill,

Hayley McIntosh, Alexandra McWilliams, Alex Munger, Johan Najera-Trevizo, Marleigh Newsum, Greyson Nixon, Ever Packett-Lind, Rachelle Petersen, Ruth Petersen, Gracelynn Policky, Adalynn Preissler, Owen Randall, Avery Santin, Nathaniel Schmidt, Allison Shamburg, Mya Sibson, Gabriella Siecke, Caelyn Smith, Everette Standen, Kaley Starzyk, Brielle Steffen, Thaddeus Sueverkrupp, Lillian Suverkrubbe, Owen Swaney, Ava Wacker, Liam Warren, Sophie Warren, Paisley Wilkins, Grayson Winz, Bentley Wolff, Nahla Wright

We are proud of your hard work and dedication! | **KEEP STRIVING FOR GREATNESS!**

Arbor Park Teacher Earns Pay It Forward Recognition

Arbor Park Elementary art teacher Mrs. Cherri Yost was recently honored through the 3 News Now Pay It Forward Campaign in partnership with First Interstate Bank. Mrs. Yost was surprised with a \$500 award, a well-deserved recognition of her passion, creativity, and unwavering commitment to her students and school community.

Cherri's impact reaches far beyond the art room. As those who nominated her shared, art supplies are not cheap, yet she consistently finds ways to stretch a limited budget to provide meaningful and engaging experiences for her students. Her classroom is a place where students feel encouraged to take risks, express themselves, and take pride in their work.



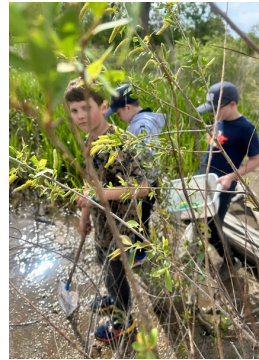
In addition to her work in the classroom, she helps organize the annual student art exhibit at the Blair Public Library, celebrating student creativity and connecting the school with the wider community. She exemplifies what it means to go above and beyond for kids, ensuring that every student has access to high-quality, enriching experiences in the arts. We are incredibly proud to have her as part of the Arbor Park and Blair Community Schools team!

[Click here to watch the interview with Mrs. Yost.](#)

5th Grade Outdoor Education

Each year, Arbor Park and Deerfield Elementary celebrate a special tradition—the 5th Grade Clap Out. On the last day of school, our 5th graders take their final walk through the building as younger students and families line the sidewalk to cheer them on with applause, bubbles, and noisemakers. It's a joyful and often emotional sendoff that celebrates their elementary journey and all they have accomplished.

As they leave our schools behind, these students are ready to begin an exciting new chapter as 6th graders in middle school. We are incredibly proud of our 5th graders and wish them continued success in the years ahead.



Elementary Fun Day Brings Smiles and School Spirit

Arbor Park and Deerfield Elementary students enjoyed a day full of excitement and activity during Elementary Fun Day, held on Friday, May 15th. The event transformed the school grounds into a celebration of movement, teamwork, and fun as students rotated through a variety of games and activities they have learned throughout the year in PE class.

Organized by PE teachers Mrs. Leggott and Mr. Jensen, Fun Day showcased the skills students have built in physical education in a playful, high-energy setting. Teachers and staff from across the building helped run stations and support students throughout the day, making it a true team effort.

Families were invited to attend and cheer on students as they participated, adding to the excitement and community feel of the event. A popular highlight was the snow cone station, which helped students cool off while enjoying a sweet treat between activities.

The PTO also played an important role in making the day special, providing free Blair tattoos for all students. Their support added an extra layer of fun and school pride to an already memorable event.

Elementary Fun Day continues to be a favorite tradition, bringing students, staff, and families together to celebrate a successful year of learning, growth, and play.



Happening In Our Schools



Blair High School

Blair High School enjoyed an incredible spring sports season, and we are very proud of the hard work, dedication, and teamwork shown by our student-athletes. Across all programs, our teams represented Blair with pride, energy, and sportsmanship, making this a season to remember. It was exciting to watch students grow both on and off the field as they competed and supported one another throughout the spring.

We also celebrated graduation on May 17th, a meaningful milestone for the Class of 2026 and their families. The end of the school year is always a whirlwind of excitement and activity as we wrap up another successful year. We wish our seniors the very best as they head into their next adventures, and we look forward to a relaxing summer break before welcoming students back in the fall.



Otte Blair Middle School

As the school year comes to a close, we reflect on a year full of growth, learning, and memorable experiences at Otte Middle School. From the classroom to extracurricular activities, our students have worked hard, supported one another, and made the most of every opportunity. We are proud of all they have accomplished and grateful for the dedication of our staff who make Otte such a positive place to learn and grow.

Thank you to our families for your continued support and partnership throughout the year. We hope everyone enjoys a safe, relaxing, and well-deserved summer break. We look forward to welcoming our students and staff back in the fall, refreshed and ready for another great year at Otte Middle School!

Happening In Our Schools



Arbor Park Elementary School

As the school year came to a close, Arbor Park Elementary was filled with celebration, reflection, and time spent enjoying one another. Our 5th grade students marked the end of their elementary journey with a memorable visit to DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, where they connected with nature and shared the experience with their families. They also joined Deerfield students for a meaningful flag ceremony, learning about the history and symbolism of the American flag before each receiving one to take home.

Students across all grade levels wrapped up the year with one of the most anticipated traditions—Fun Day. The day was packed with outdoor activities, friendly competition, and plenty of opportunities to laugh and make lasting memories with classmates. It was the perfect way to celebrate a year of growth and accomplishment. We thank our Arbor Park families for their continued support and wish everyone a fun, safe, and relaxing summer break!



Deerfield Elementary School

May was filled with excitement, learning, and special traditions at Deerfield Elementary as students and staff celebrated the final weeks of the school year. Our 5th graders enjoyed their annual Outdoor Education Day at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, where students and parents spent the day exploring, learning, and making lasting memories together. We also held a meaningful flag ceremony, where students learned about the history of the United States flag and each student received their own flag to take home.

Students also took part in one of the highlights of the year—Fun Day! Despite the heat, the day was a huge success filled with games, laughter, and school spirit, with one student even overheard saying, “Best Fun Day Ever!” To round out the month, students and staff enjoyed one last PJ Day on the second to last day of school. We are proud of our students and staff for a fantastic year. As summer begins, we wish all Deerfield families a safe and relaxing break and look forward to welcoming everyone back next school year!

Happening In Our Schools



South Early Childhood Center

Preschool students at South wrapped up the school year with fun, laughter, and plenty of time together making lasting memories. The final weeks were filled with outdoor play and special moments, highlighted by our exciting Family Fun Day.

Families joined their children for a day full of water activities, obstacle courses, bubbles, chalk, and even a dance party! It was a wonderful way to celebrate a successful year of learning and growth. Thank you to our families for your support—we wish everyone a fantastic and relaxing summer!

A Season to Remember: Blair Girls Soccer Championship Run

The Blair High School girls soccer team capped off an unforgettable season with a thrilling, hard-fought battle in the state championship match, narrowly falling 2-1 to Lincoln Pius X. From the opening whistle, the Bears played with fierce determination, leaving everything they had on the pitch. While the final scoreboard brought heartbreak, it could not diminish an incredible season defined by grit, sisterhood, and a lasting legacy of excellence that has made the entire community incredibly proud of these girls.



The unforgettable run to the finals was deeply fueled by the amazing hometown support in the stands. The Blair community showed up in massive numbers, packing the stadium with creative, supportive signs, while an electric student section kept the energy alive through every single minute of the game.



The team is incredibly grateful for the overwhelming wave of pride and love from their fans, which made this championship journey a truly magical experience they will cherish forever.

Summer Reading Opportunities for K–5 Students

As summer approaches, BCS wants to share resources to help your child continue building strong reading skills.

The Nebraska Reading Improvement Act requires that summer reading opportunities be made available for students in grades K–3 who continue to experience reading challenges. These opportunities may be school-based, community-based, or online. BCS's goal is to ensure every student has access to meaningful reading practice over the summer months.

To support all families, the Nebraska Department of Education has created the NebraskaREADS Summer Reading Adventure Packet, filled with fun and engaging activities found at this [link](#).

In addition, students can continue using school-supported programs such as IXL and Lexia over the summer for extra practice via the class link until July 1, 2026.

Encouraging your child to read regularly—even just a few minutes each day—can make a big difference in maintaining progress and building confidence for the upcoming school year.

Below are additional links and information on tips and tricks for reading at home.

- [Family Early Literacy Resources](#)
- [NebraskaReads Family Resources](#)
- [NebraskaREADS Summer Reading Adventure](#)
- [Read at Home Plan](#)

Thank you for your continued support in fostering a love of reading!

Class of 2026 - Graduation Ceremony

On Sunday, May 17, families, friends, and faculty gathered for the long-awaited graduation ceremony honoring the Class of 2026. The afternoon marked a meaningful culmination of years of hard work, early mornings, and late-night studying. Excitement filled the venue as seniors processed in, their caps and gowns representing both the close of one chapter and the beginning of another.

As each name was called, the room erupted in cheers and applause, reflecting the strong community support behind every graduate. We are incredibly proud of our seniors and the dedication they showed in reaching this milestone. Watching them move their tassels to the left and officially become Blair alumni was a powerful reminder of their perseverance and growth.

Congratulations to the Blair High School Class of 2026! Your community celebrates your accomplishments and looks forward to the many ways you will continue to make an impact in the future.





Activities & Athletics

It has been an unforgettable spring for Blair High School athletics, filled with competitive grit, postseason runs, and moments that made the entire town immensely proud. On the diamond, the Bears baseball team wrapped up an incredible season with a fighting 13-12 record, showcasing tremendous growth and determination through every single inning. On the links, the boys golf team fought hard to finish 11th in a highly competitive B-4 District tournament, capping off a season of great individual milestones. Our court and field athletes kept the postseason momentum alive, as the girls tennis team attended the State Tournament on May 26–27, and the Track and Field program sent seven elite athletes to compete for medals at the State Championship meet.

The inspiring spirit of Blair sports was also on full display with our Unified Track and Field team, who brought a highly successful and rewarding season to a close as the community loved cheering them on every step of the way. Meanwhile, it was a historic spring on the soccer pitch for both of our programs. The boys soccer team battled fiercely all year to finish with a strong 7-6 record before falling just short against Waverly in a tough district tournament match. On the girls' side, the Bears put together an absolutely dominant 17-1 season, marching all the way to the State Championship game before falling in a heartbreaking 2-1 battle to Lincoln Pius X.

None of these incredible athletic achievements would have been possible without the unwavering dedication of our fans. The Blair community showed up in massive numbers all year long, bringing electric student sections and creative signs that kept our athletes lifted through every battle. Though the school year is wrapping up, greatness is built in the off-season. Summer weights, agilities, and open fields or gyms are right around the corner, and all athletes are highly encouraged to show up consistently to get better over the summer. Thank you to the players, coaches, and fans for a spectacular year of Blair athletics—we are so proud of you, and we will see you very soon!





Registration is open for various Blair Bears youth summer athletic camps on the Bound platform, offering specialized training in various sports. These programs allow local youth to train with high school coaches and athletes to develop skills.

[Click here to register for summer camps.](#)

We appreciate your support of our students, and encourage you to join us to watch our students shine!

[Please click here for a full list of current activities and events.](#)

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