

JUNE 2026



Board of Education Updates

The Blair Community Schools Board of Education met on June 8 and June 17, addressing a number of important items related to leadership, student opportunities, facility improvements, and long-term planning.

At the June 8 meeting, the Board appointed Herta Bouvia to fill the remainder of the term following a recent resignation. Bouvia brings valuable experience, having previously served on the Board, including as president. The Board also approved Beth Villotta as board secretary and recognized Angie Conety for her many years of dedicated service to the district.

The Board accepted an \$8,000 donation from the Blair Bear Backers to support a partnership with Larsen Athletic Academy for the summer weights and conditioning program, which has already seen strong student participation. Additionally, a cooperative agreement with Ft. Calhoun Community Schools was approved for girls golf for the next two school years.

As part of ongoing safety improvements, the Board approved a \$245,000 bid from DR Anderson for a secure entrance project at Otte Middle School. The project is expected to be completed prior to the start of the upcoming school year.

During the June 17 special meeting, the Board approved a \$2.327 million bid for the Arbor Park secure entrance project, with construction beginning soon and completion scheduled for 2027. The Board also approved the adoption of several updated policies as part of the district's transition to KSB Law, with additional policies to be reviewed in future meetings.

The Board also reviewed the district's current financial position and discussed potential strategies to ensure long-term financial stability. While no formal action was taken, these discussions will continue as planning begins for the 2026–27 budget.

Thank you for your continued support of Blair Community Schools. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.



Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Don Johnson

Dear Blair Community,



There's a common perception that folks who work in schools have the summer off. That would be nice, but it's certainly not the case. Summer is one of the busiest times of the year for us at the Central Office.

One of the biggest undertakings each summer is preparing the budget for the upcoming school year. At our June 17 Special Board Meeting, the Board heard from Sidney Superintendent Andy Farber, who has been working with our Finance Director, Tom Shearer, and me on financial planning for the next one to five years. Right now, we are operating efficiently, but the reality is our expenditures continue to rise while our revenues are not keeping pace. If that trend continues, it could create some challenges down the road. I appreciate the Board's awareness of this and their proactive approach, and we'll continue to keep folks updated as we work through the best path forward to ensure long-term financial stability.

Summer is also when we can really dig into our buildings. This year, we have construction projects at Otte Middle School and Arbor Park Elementary, where we are adding secure entrances. These projects are a priority as part of the Board's ongoing commitment to safety and will help keep our kids and staff safer for years to come. The Otte project is already underway and should be completed before school starts. The Arbor Park project will take a bit longer, with completion expected in late spring. We are also beginning to explore additional projects, including a secure entrance at the South building and improvements to the auditorium rigging system.

There's a lot more going on behind the scenes as well. Our custodial teams are hard at work deep cleaning buildings, staff are ordering curriculum and supplies, and we're providing training to ensure we're ready to hit the ground running in the fall. Another major focus this summer is a full policy review. Many of our policies were outdated, and we are in the process of adopting updated policies through KSB Law. Folks can expect to see those updates reflected in our handbooks moving forward.

Finally, I want to recognize Angie Conety, who has retired after 13 years of service to Blair Community Schools. Angie served as the Board and Superintendent Secretary and was a true professional and strong supporter of our schools and our kids. Being a Blair graduate, this district meant a lot to her, and it showed in her work every day. She will be missed. We wish her all the best as she begins this next chapter and enjoys more time with her family.

As always, thank you for your continued support of Blair Community Schools. We appreciate our community and look forward to another great year ahead.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Don Johnson

Dr. Don Johnson
Superintendent
Blair Community Schools

Welcome New Teachers

On Thursday, June 11, we were excited to host our New Teacher Orientation, welcoming 15 new educators to the Blair Community Schools team. This annual event provides an opportunity to introduce staff to our district's mission, culture, and expectations while helping them build connections and feel supported as they begin their journey.

Throughout the day, teachers participated in sessions on curriculum, instructional practices, technology tools, and student support services. They also toured buildings, met staff and administrators, and experienced what makes Blair such a special place to live and work. Their energy and enthusiasm were inspiring, and we are confident they will make a positive impact across our district.

A highlight of the day was connecting with their assigned mentors—experienced educators who exemplify collaboration and a strong commitment to student success. The afternoon was spent working alongside these mentors, building relationships and becoming familiar with their schools. As we look ahead to the 2026–27 school year, we are excited for the fresh perspectives these educators will bring. Please join us in welcoming our newest teachers to the Blair Community Schools team.

Camp Invention Brings STEAM Fun to Blair



The first week of June was filled with creativity, curiosity, and hands-on learning as Blair Community Schools hosted Camp Invention, a nationally recognized STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) program. With 87 enthusiastic campers in attendance, along with 6 middle school Leaders-in-Training and 8 high school Leadership Interns, the building was buzzing with energy as students explored innovation through imaginative projects and team challenges.



Camp Invention is known for sparking curiosity and confidence in young learners by encouraging them to think like inventors. Throughout the week, students worked in small groups to tackle real-world problems, design creative solutions, and build exciting prototypes. From creating their own inventions to exploring how machines work, campers had the opportunity to stretch their thinking while having fun.

In addition to building critical thinking and collaboration skills, Camp Invention also provided meaningful leadership opportunities for our middle and high school students, who supported campers, guided activities, and helped create a positive and engaging environment for all.

Students developed confidence as they experimented, faced challenges, redesigned, and ultimately succeeded—all in a supportive and fun setting. The laughter, excitement, and “aha!” moments were a true highlight of the week.

We are thankful for the staff, interns, and volunteers who made this experience possible. Judging by the smiles and creative energy on display, Camp Invention was a tremendous success—and we look forward to bringing it back again next summer!

District Building Renovation Updates

Blair Community Schools is making meaningful progress this summer on facility improvements that have been thoughtfully discussed and planned for several years. Among the most significant of these projects are enhanced security entrances at Otte Blair Middle School and Arbor Park Elementary—an important step forward in the district's ongoing commitment to student and staff safety.

In February, the Board of Education approved the architectural plans for these secure entrance upgrades following years of conversation, evaluation, and prioritization. Ensuring a safe and secure learning environment has remained a top priority for the district, and this project reflects both community input and a proactive approach to school safety.

Construction at Otte Middle School began on June 15 and is expected to be completed prior to the start of the school year in August. Work at Arbor Park Elementary is scheduled to begin soon. Once complete, both buildings will feature secure, monitored entry points designed to better control visitor access during the school day. These improvements will allow staff to more effectively screen and welcome guests while maintaining a safe environment for students and employees.

These projects are part of a broader, ongoing commitment to safety improvements across the district. Additional updates completed this year include the installation of increased security cameras in all buildings, improved outdoor lighting, enhanced lighting at the activity entrance at the high school, and updated classroom door locks to ensure doors remain secured at all times. Classroom security blinds were also installed to provide an added layer of protection in emergency situations.



Construction crews are working throughout the summer to ensure projects stay on schedule and are ready for students and staff this fall. District leadership will continue to monitor progress closely to ensure quality and timely completion.

Blair Community Schools remains committed to continuous improvement, with a focus on both safety and student experience. These long-anticipated security upgrades, along with other facility improvements, reflect the district's dedication to creating environments where students can learn, grow, and thrive. As the new school year approaches, these enhancements will help ensure that our schools are not only welcoming, but also secure places for all.



Activities & Events

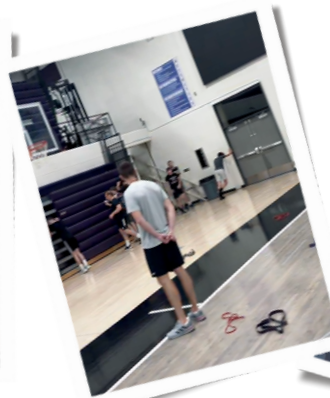
Summer may mark the end of the traditional school year, but our buildings and fields are full of activity. Across the district, students are engaged in a variety of enriching opportunities designed to keep them learning, growing, and having fun.

Athletic camps are in full swing, with students building skills in football, volleyball, basketball, track, wrestling, and more. Beyond athletics, these camps promote teamwork, leadership, and school pride, thanks to the positive, high-energy environments created by our coaching staff.





Camp Invention returned at Arbor Park Elementary in early June, bringing together more than 80 campers for a week of hands-on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) experiences. Students explored creative problem-solving, designed inventions, and tackled engaging challenges while building critical thinking skills.

Through our partnership with Metropolitan Community College, students also participated in College for Kids, exploring interests in technology, the arts, career pathways, and more in a college-style setting.

From athletic training to innovation and exploration, summer in Blair Community Schools is anything but quiet. We're grateful for the staff, families, and community partners who make these opportunities possible. [A full list of youth summer activities can be found on our website.](#)



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